

Committee: Finance & Administration

Agenda Item

Date: 25 November 2010

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Title: 2011/12 Budget Planning update

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report updates Members on key developments affecting preparation of the 2011/12 budget, in particular, the issues arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review announcements, and results of recent public consultation.
2. The headline CSR figures were broadly in line with expectation. However, the detailed Local Government Finance Settlement is due for publication on 2 December. Only then will we know what the funding position shall be. It is possible that the funding for this Council will be worse than the headline averages announced in the CSR.
3. The Strategic Management Board has been carrying out scenario planning so that the implications of a worse case can be quickly elucidated and plans activated should this become necessary.
4. Consultation results indicate broad support for maintaining existing levels of spending on the majority of services.

Recommendations

5. The Committee is recommended to
 - a) Note the contents of this report including the preparedness of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy but also that significant uncertainties remain, which should be clarified on 2 December
 - b) Confirm, in principle, that the Committee shall be minded to recommend the Council to freeze Council Tax in 2011/12 and take advantage of the Government's compensation offer (subject to final determination by the Committee and Full Council in February)
 - c) Ask the Strategic Management Board to determine proposals for allocation of financial resources in light of public consultation results, in the context of knowledge about the Council's funding position.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations at this stage.

Background Papers

7. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

2010 Comprehensive Spending Review – [report on HM Treasury website](#)

2010 Comprehensive Spending Review – [LGA Briefing](#)

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Public consultation results are detailed in the report.
Community Safety	No specific implications
Equalities	No specific implications
Health and Safety	No specific implications
Human Rights/Legal Implications	No specific implications
Sustainability	No specific implications
Ward-specific impacts	No specific implications
Workforce/Workplace	Workforce issues will arise as part of implementing Strategic Solutions Workstreams. A worse case funding scenario would have adverse implications for staff.

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

8. The CSR was published on 20 October, and details the Government's spending plans for the 4 years from 2011/12 to 2014/15. The key issues for UDC summarised below.

Cut in Government Funding

9. A headline average reduction in funding for local government of 28% in real terms i.e. average 7% per year. In cash terms this represents a reduction of almost 20%., or 5% per year; but front-loaded, as shown in the table below.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
CLG Local authority core funding	£28.5bn	£26.1bn	£24.4bn	£24.2bn	£22.9bn
Reduction on prior year	-	8.4%	6.5%	0.8%	5.4%
Cumulative reduction	-	8.4%	14.4%	15.1%	19.6%

10. Councils will not know their individual allocations until the Local Government Finance Settlement is published, expected to be on 2 December. District Councils could fare worse than the headline average.
11. The Council's updated Medium Term Finance Strategy, discussed at the September meeting of this Committee, was based upon a 25% cash reduction in Government funding, evenly spread. That is to say, the MTFS was already anticipating a situation slightly worse than the headline average figures announced. This means that the Council, through its MTFS and programme of Strategic Solutions Workstreams, is well-prepared to cope with the funding cuts.
12. There has been media speculation that the cuts may be front-loaded more sharply than the headline figures indicate; a cut in 2011/12 of up to 15% has been predicted by some commentators.
13. In the event of greater front loading, to an extent the Council will be able to cope with this by making greater use of the Budget Equalization Reserve, especially during the next 2 years; meanwhile the required reductions in running costs will still be achieved through delivery of the Strategic Solutions Workstreams as currently envisaged. This is illustrated by the 3 example scenarios below.

Scenario A: 28% cash cut over 4 years, evenly spread

£m	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Forecasted net budget requirement	9.2	9.3	9.5	10.1
Council Tax	-4.9	-5.1	-5.3	-5.5
Compensation for freeze(see below)	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
Government Funding (net of concessionary fares adjustment)	-3.4	-3.1	-2.9	-2.6
Budget gap	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.9
Use of Budget Equalization Reserve	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1	-0.3
SAVINGS TARGET	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.7

Scenario B: 28% cash cut over 4 years, front loaded 10%, 10%, 4%, 4%

£m	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Forecasted net budget requirement	9.2	9.3	9.5	10.1
Council Tax	-4.9	-5.1	-5.3	-5.5
Compensation for freeze(see below)	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
Government Funding (net of concessionary fares adjustment)	-3.3	-2.9	-2.7	-2.6
Budget gap	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.9
Use of Budget Equalization Reserve	-0.4	-0.4	-0.2	-0.2
SAVINGS TARGET	0.5	0.8	1.2	1.7

Scenario C: 28% cash cut over 4 years, front loaded 15%, 5%, 4%, 4%

£m	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Forecasted net budget requirement	9.2	9.3	9.5	10.1
Council Tax	-4.9	-5.1	-5.3	-5.5
Compensation for freeze (see below)	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1
Government Funding (net of concessionary fares adjustment)	-3.1	-2.9	-2.7	-2.6
Budget gap	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.9
Use of Budget Equalization Reserve	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2
SAVINGS TARGET	0.6	0.9	1.2	1.7

14. A much worse scenario than those exemplified above e.g. a 28% cut all up front is considered to be very unlikely. In such a situation, the Council would need to make more severe cuts next year in addition to use of reserves and the savings that will arise through Strategic Solutions Workstreams. The Strategic Management Board has been developing a contingency plan which could be activated, if needed. Following the Settlement publication on 2 December, an assessment will be made and an indication of the implications for the Council will be reported to the Full Council meeting on 16 December, if the implications are significantly worse than allowed for in the MTFS.

Council Tax Freeze

15. Councils who freeze their council tax next year will have the resultant loss to their tax base funded at a rate of 2.5 per cent in each year of the Spending Review period.
16. The Government will compensate Councils who decide to freeze their element of the Council Tax bill for 2011/12. A freeze would cause a loss to the taxbase going forward so the offer is to provide compensation for each of the 4 years covered by the CSR. The compensation offered is an annual amount equivalent to 2.5% of the 2010/11 taxbase.
17. For budget planning purposes it would assist if the Committee could indicate, in principle, whether it is minded to take advantage of the Government offer to compensate Councils for freezing Council Tax in 2011/12. This is for planning assumption purposes only and shall not be a binding decision; the final determination will be by Full Council in February based upon this Committee's recommendations at that time.
18. There are no clear indications of the Government's Council Tax policy for 2012/13 and beyond.

Welfare Reform

19. The CSR signalled an intention for a significant reform of the welfare system and some outline proposals were announced on 11 November, as mentioned in the Lead Officer's Report earlier on the agenda.
20. One aspect with potentially significant implications for the Council is the announcement that Government will "reduce spending on Council Tax Benefit by 10 per cent and localise it from 2013-14 while protecting the most vulnerable." Details of what this proposal mean are yet to be announced. One possible interpretation is that local authorities wishing to preserve the existing level of support for residents would need to fund the 10%. In UDC, this would be around £0.5m at present day prices.

Reform of council housing finance

21. The Government has confirmed its intention to abolish the housing subsidy system from April 2012 and replace it with a new system of self-financing. Councils in negative subsidy (like UDC) would need to buy themselves out of the system (by taking on a large debt) and in return would be able to retain all rental income locally, enabling investment in existing stock and new build. There is ambiguity in the CSR document about whether Councils would be able to retain capital receipts locally, however. Again, further details are awaited. There are no immediate implications for 2011/12 budget setting.

Curbs on local authority capital spending

22. Under the Prudential Code local authorities are free to borrow for capital purposes without limit provided that the costs of borrowing are prudent, affordable and sustainable. This principle remains, however the Government is seeking to curb council capital spending by increasing the cost of borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board, and by cutting the amount of Government capital funding available. There should be no significant immediate impact on UDC of these restrictions, but when the Council moves into a net borrowing situation in a few years time, capital financing costs will increase and therefore there must be strong control over the capital programme.

Significant uncertainties remain

23. The Government is to adjust the funding of councils to reflect the transfer of responsibility for concessionary bus travel from district councils to counties. The method to make the adjustment has not yet been announced. The Government consulted upon 45 different calculations, which would reduce the grant to UDC by a range of nil to £1m; this compares with a net expenditure of £0.2m. The most likely scenario appears to be a reduction of £0.4m and this has been built into the forecasts; clearly there is a risk of a much worse outcome.

24. The Council depends on specific government grants for certain key services, most significantly Benefits, Leisure PFI and Homelessness. Benefits in particular is a material income stream with around £17 million of specific government grant. The CSR announcements did not contain sufficient detail to predict with confidence the future levels of specific grant.

25. As detailed in a report elsewhere on today's agenda, the Essex Pension Fund is to determine its funding strategy; almost the most likely scenario is that the level of UDC's employer contributions will be held at the current levels, other outcomes are possible.

Public Consultation

26. Further Citizens Panel consultation was carried out in October/November. Participants were asked to indicate, for each service budget area, whether

additional investment should be made, whether the budget should be maintained at the existing level, or whether savings should be made. The key findings were as follows:

- On a portfolio of 41 front facing services panellists identified 30 service areas which they considered warrant budgetary protection. These include the Animal Warden, Pest Control, Planning, Refuse Collection and the council's website
- There were no services significantly flagged up as being in need of investment and improvement. Day Centres (14%), Housing Strategy (17%), Green Waste Collections (19%), Recycling (19%) and Enforcement (17%) did receive relatively high returns in favour of extra funding
- By comparison, 67% felt less money should be spent on Planning Management and Administration and a narrow majority (46% - reduce spending against 44% protect the current level of expenditure) considered the Museum should be subject to a funding decrease
- Committee Administration and Democratic Representation - the latter identified as the budget area under which members allowances, costs and other expenses sit - were both headlined by 74% of panellists as being areas where budgetary reductions could be made, though in each case relatively small numbers, 3% and 11% respectively, called for a complete cessation of the service
- Based on the results, there are no service areas overwhelmingly identified for cessation. Community Information Centres (7%), the Museum (5%) and Energy Efficiency (8%), though, commanded relatively high returns in the 'stop' category.

27. A copy of the survey findings is attached as an Appendix to this report.

28. It is now necessary to assess to what extent the survey outcomes should influence decisions about allocation of financial resources. It is proposed that SMB be asked to formulate some proposals for consideration by Members in January as part of final budget determinations. This will be in the context of knowledge about the Council's funding position.

29. Parish Councils are being asked to comment on the key outcomes from the survey. In addition, consultation with business rate payers is to be carried out. The results from this consultation will inform the SMB proposals.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Government funding is cut by a significantly higher level than expected and/or there is significant front loading	2 (district councils could fare worse than the average)	3 (cuts in services would be inevitable)	Contingency plans are being prepared.
Changes in circumstances and/or new information becomes available that affects the assumptions in the budget strategy	2 (inherent risk of variability in any budget model)	3 (sums involved are potentially significant)	A detailed risk assessment will be prepared and incorporated with budget approval papers in February. The Working Balance is to be maintained at a minimum safe contingency level. Medium Term Financial Strategy outlines clear criteria for decision making.

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

UTTLESFORD VOICES 2

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET

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In the second Uttlesford Voices survey, members of the citizens panel were asked for their opinions on the council's future spending priorities so as to inform the process of setting the 2011-12 budget.

The panel was recruited on behalf of the council by the private market research company BMG Research during April and May 2010 to a baseline of 500 citizens broadly representative of the demographic of the Uttlesford administrative area. Following the first Uttlesford Voices 1 (UV1) survey in June 2010 a number of members indicated that they would like to be removed from the panel. New panellists have accordingly been recruited from a small pool of overflow members previously supplied by BMG. The panel generated a reasonable response of 48.8% with, in total, 244 survey forms being returned. This return rate is slightly decreased on the previous survey due to the shorter response time allocated to the survey (two weeks rather than three) and to the more focused nature of the subject matter. The survey was also sent out in the period just following the announcement of the results of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 (CSR 2010). Verbal feedback from panellists indicates that a number of members declined to return completed surveys due to the assumption that the council's budget would be substantially and materially determined by the CSR 2010 with a consequence that their own views would be obviated.

1.1 Uttlesford Voices 2 (UV 2)

Many respondents to UV1 told us that they felt that the questionnaire did not provide them with sufficient information to make an informed decision. Accordingly, this second survey incorporated both a lengthy introductory statement and summary descriptions under each of the main questions. In the introduction to the UV 2, panellists were told that the questionnaire would be focussing on their views on the council's vision for the Uttlesford District in 2011-12 with a specific emphasis on the priority areas for the council's budget in the year ahead.

Panellists were reminded that Uttlesford District Council sets a budget each year and has to decide how to allocate available money to the wide range of services that are provided. It was also noted that this budget is limited and decisions relating to it are difficult. This means that choices have to be made between different and competing spending priorities. Spending more on one service can mean that spending has to be reduced in other areas.

Front office service areas, i.e. those in which the population of the district might reasonably be expected to take an interest, were represented in terms of income and net costs of providing services, as presented in the Uttlesford District Council 2010/11 Budget Book. Panellists were then asked a series of questions that were designed to find out their opinions on where the council should focus its expenditure.

The results from this survey will be combined with other consultation work that will be undertaken by the council and which in turn will be used to help prepare and agree a budget for the coming financial year, 2011-12. Panellist's responses will help decide the best way to allocate available money and to identify the key service areas that they, as residents of Uttlesford, particularly want.

All the information provided is kept entirely confidential. It is only used to ensure the structured development of services and the results contained in this report reflect the headline views of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel as a group without necessarily identifying the responses of individual panellists.

The questions were especially formulated for the Uttlesford Citizens' Panel following models successfully adopted for budget consultation by Cheltenham Borough Council and Lancaster City Council. In consequence any comparison with previous budgetary resident or user surveys is inapplicable.

1.2 Results summary

Panellists were asked to consider the front facing services provided by the council and select whether spending on those services should be subject to investment,

protection, reduction or, in extremis, whether the council should cease service provision altogether.

The service headings were presented in the manner established by the Budget Book 2010-11, being arranged by area of committee responsibility. A short explanation of the work of each service was added, followed by figures for expenditure and income under the service head reflecting the costs for direct delivery of the service and drawn down from the 2010-11 original budget. As with established accounting procedure, figures in brackets denoted a surplus and unbracketed figures, a cost. Supplementary notes stated where there is a statutory requirement for service provision by the council or another body and provided other ancillary information to enable panellists to make an informed decision.

Key results from the survey are as follows:

On a portfolio of 41 front facing services panellists identified 30 service areas which they considered warrant budgetary protection. These include the Animal Warden, Pest Control, Planning, Refuse Collection and the council's website. There were no services significantly flagged up as being in need of investment and improvement. Day Centres (14.2%, 34 in total), Housing Strategy (16.70%, 40 in total), Green Waste Collections (18.80%, 45 in total), Recycling (18.60%, 45 in total) and Enforcement (17.40%, 42 in total) did receive relatively high returns in favour of extra funding.

By comparison, 66.70% (156 in total) felt less money should be spent on Planning Management and Administration and a narrow majority (46.2% -reduce spending against 43.60% protect the current level of expenditure) considered the Museum should be subject to a funding decrease.

Committee Administration and Democratic Representation - the latter identified as the budget area under which members allowances, costs and other expenses sit - were headlined by 73.80% and 74.40% of panellists respectively as being areas where budgetary reductions could be made, though in each case relatively small numbers, 2.90% and 10.70% respectively, called for a complete cessation of the service.

Based on the results, there are no service areas overwhelmingly identified for cessation. Community Information Centres (7.10%, 17 in total), the Museum (5.50%, 13 in total) and Energy Efficiency (7.90%, 19 in total), though, commanded relatively high returns in the 'stop' category.



METHODOLOGY

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to highlight the findings of the second Uttlesford Voices citizens' panel survey (UV 2) which was run 25 October – 8 November 2010.

This report brings together information on residents' views about how funding should be allocated to the various services provided by Uttlesford District Council and its partners. By surveying the panel, it is possible to obtain views and opinions broadly representative of local residents which can be used to inform the process used by members and officers in setting the council's budget for 2011-12.

2.2. Background

2.2.1 The survey

The second Uttlesford Voices survey was sent out to panellists in late October 2010. The main body of the survey was designed to explore residents' views on where the council's priorities for future spending should lie particularly with regard to planning for the 2011-12 budget. A supplementary section containing questions on customer satisfaction was also included, the results of which will be reported separately.

2.2.2 Rationale

A citizens' panel is regarded as being a cost-effective method for obtaining data on the opinions of a broad cross-section of the population. Such consultation generally achieves relatively good returns making the panel method one of the most effective tools in establishing a broad base of public opinion on a wide range of activities undertaken or planned by the council.

Uttlesford panel recruitment composition				
Age	PANEL		POPULATION *	
	Number	%	Number	%
16-19	9	1.8%	3293	6.0
20-24	17	3.4%	2962	5.4
25-34	55	11.0%	8116	14.8
35-44	80	16.0%	11093	20.3
45-54	110	22%	10764	19.6
55-64	94	18.8%	8051	14.7
65+	129	25.8%	10533	19.2
Not provided	6	1.2%	-	-
Total	500	100.0	54812	100
White	482	96.4	67685	98.2
Mixed	5	1.0	458	0.7
Asian/Asian British	4	0.8	376	0.5
Black/Black British	0	0.0	111	0.2
Chinese/ other	1	0.2	316	0.5
Not provided	8	1.6	-	-
Total	500	100	68946	100
Male	249	49.8	34342	49.8
Female	248	49.6	34601	50.2
Not provided	3	0.6		
Total	500	100.0	68943	100

Table 2.1 Panel recruitment composition

*Source Office for National Statistics (ONS), Age (UV04) population dataset 16-65+ dataset; Ethnic Group (UV09) population dataset all persons dataset; Sex (UV03) population dataset all persons dataset Last Updated: 18 November 2004

Base 500

Customer profiling is undertaken to ensure that panel members represent a cross section of the population as a whole and is used to develop 'customer insight'.

The IDeA and LGA describe insight as:

'the use of data and information about customers to better understand their needs, wants, expectations, behaviours and experiences; and

the active application of this understanding in the design and delivery of services that better meet customers' needs.'¹

Although the panel has been carefully profiled for age, ethnicity, gender and long-term limiting illness so as to be fully representative of the demographic of the district as a whole, (see Table 2.1). It should be noted that it is made up of people who have volunteered to take part, and so comprises an atypical sector of the population. The views expressed are accordingly representative only and cannot be regarded as a completely accurate reflection of the opinions of the Uttlesford district community as a whole.

Panel members tend to be better informed about the council's policies and aims whilst also being generally more concerned with issues affecting the district. Data analysis tools such as 'weighting' promote greater confidence in the overall representativeness of the data by accommodating gaps in demographic coefficients such as gender and age, but it cannot account for attitudinal and behavioural variables. Data derived from panel surveys should, then, be treated as a reasonably accurate representation of public opinion but should not be considered to be as fully complete a response as that given by a larger representative but completely un-self-selected sample of the population.

By surveying the panel, it is possible to obtain views and opinions broadly representative of local residents, but it will not be possible to accurately calculate the level of confidence in the results - confidence interval formulae are employed to make calculations from the baseline of an unbiased and statistically representative sample of the local demographic. Statistical variations in

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- ¹ *Insight: understanding your citizens, customers and communities* © IDeA and LGA - November 2008)

responses may just represent differences in the core sample of the panel rather than the public at large and should be represented as such in the output data. For a sample of the size of the Uttlesford citizen's panel to a baseline of 500 members, the confidence level is 95%. This means that we can be 95 per cent confident that the true value of the responses, set against the variable baselines for different questions – the differing numbers of panel members who answered each question – will be within 4.37 percentage points of the view we might have observed in the overall sample.

2.3. Methodology

2.3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the survey were:

- To explore residents' views on where the council's priorities for future spending should lie particularly with regard to planning for the 2011-12 budget
- To measure levels of satisfaction with various services

2.3.2 Questionnaire development

The questions were developed in conjunction with the council's Chief Finance Officer, service managers and operational specialists within the council.

A total of 41 front office service areas, i.e. those in which the population of the district might reasonably be expected to take an interest, were represented in terms of income and net costs of providing services, as presented in the Uttlesford District Council 2010/11 Budget Book. Panellists were then asked a series of questions that were designed to find out their opinions on where the council should focus its expenditure².

The services were presented under the headings of the committees to which they report with each service heading being accompanied by a brief description of the work and responsibilities that it undertakes. The areas were allocated as follows:

Community & Housing: Animal Warden, Community Information Centres, Community Safety, Conveniences, Day Centres, Emergency Planning, Grants

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² See Appendix 1

and Contributions, Homelessness, Museum, Pest Control, Public Health, Sports Development

Development Control: Planning, Planning Management & Administration

Environment: Assisted Travel, Building Surveying, Car Parking, On Street Parking, Transport Administration, Conservation & Enhancement, Energy Efficiency, Housing Strategy, Land Drainage, Local Amenities, Planning Policy, Solid Waste Management, Street Cleansing, Refuse Collection, Green Waste Collections, Kitchen Waste Collections, Recycling, Trade Waste Collections

Finance and Administration: Committee Administration, Customer Service Centre, Democratic Representation, Enforcement, Land Charges, Offices - Saffron Walden, Revenues Administration, Website

Licensing: Licensing

2.3.3 Methodology

The survey was prepared from questions submitted by officers and service managers and set using SNAP version 10.

Copies of the survey were sent to members of the Uttlesford District Council citizens' panel under the banner of the Uttlesford Voices consultation. The panel was recruited on behalf of the council by the private market research company BMG Research during April and May 2010. Two hundred residents who had originally responded to the National Place Survey for the Department of Communities and Local Government in October and November 2008 were contacted by letter. A further representative cross section of residents was contacted separately and invited to join the panel.

The panel, as supplied by BMG, comprises a group of local residents, broadly representative of the district's population, who will be sent questionnaires on issues relating to Uttlesford District Council and its partners on a regular basis (up to three surveys per year). Panel members are not rewarded for completed questionnaires but are kept informed by a dedicated Consultation pages on the council's website³ and via regular reports and the feedback newsletter *Uttlesford Voices*.

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³ <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/main.cfm?type=CONSULTATION&object=3426>

Questionnaires were sent out by post on 25 October 2010. A reminder letter was sent by post, one week before the closing date to all those who had not yet returned their forms, so as to facilitate an increase in the response rate. The closing date for the survey was Monday 8 November 2010.

Panel members can be identified by their unique panel reference number (UPRN), allowing for some returns to be tracked and reminder letters to be sent out as required. The UPRN can be cross-referenced against the panel database to generate profile outputs for demographic response rates on age, gender, ethnicity and locale.

No questionnaires were sent by email, although respondents, as in UV 1, were asked if they would be prepared to receive future surveys in this format.

3.1-2

3. SURVEY RESULTS, DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1. Overview

Uttlesford District Council sets a budget each year and has to decide how to allocate available money to the wide range of services that are provided.

The results of consultation with those who work, live, visit and do business in the district is an important tool in helping officers and members in preparation for the budget setting process.

Panellists were reminded that Uttlesford District Council sets a budget each year and has to decide how to allocate available money to the wide range of services that are provided. It was also noted that this budget is limited and decisions relating to it are difficult. This means that choices have to be made between

different and competing spending priorities. Spending more on one service can mean that spending has to be reduced in other areas.

Front office service areas, i.e. those in which the population of the district might reasonably be expected to take an interest, were represented in terms of income and net costs of providing services, as presented in the Uttlesford District Council 2010/11 Budget Book. Panellists were asked to consider a portfolio of these front facing services provided by the council and to select whether more money, the same amount of money, or less money should be spent on providing the service. They were also offered an option to advise the council to cease provision of a service all together, though they were advised which statutory services which must be provided by the council or another body. They were further provided with notes⁴ on how income and expenditure is distributed with the council's budgetary process and referred, for detailed information, to the current edition of the council's budget book which is available on the website and for consultation at the Saffron Walden office, Thaxted and Dunmow CICs.

This work was designed to build on and to elucidate the results of the higher level questions on spending priorities which were included as part of the UV 1 survey. Accordingly, where applicable, results from UV 2 have been correlated against the relative returns from UV1.

3. 2. Questionnaire on the council's budget

The results are summarized in the table 3.2.2 below and indicate, as in UV 1, that residents consider that the authority should continue to maintain the same level of spend on the majority of its services. Under Q2.9 in UV1 panel members were asked to comment on expenditure on a selection of services but were not given any information as to costs. Of the 41 front facing services listed in the UV 2 consultation panellists identified 30 service areas which they considered to warrant budgetary protection. These include the Animal Warden, Pest Control, Planning, Refuse Collection and the council's website. When supplied with costs, in general, panellists' opinions varied little with UV 1, though there was a significant surge in support for the comparatively small website service budget of £10,000 per annum.

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⁴ See Appendix 2

The results of UV 1 and UV 2 for these services are collated as:

Service	UV 1	UV 2	
ANIMAL WARDEN	68.50%	59.00%	DOWN
PEST CONTROL	76.90%	73.00%	DOWN
PLANNING	68.6%	62.90%	DOWN
WEBSITE	38.20%	53.50%	UP

Table 3.2.1 UV 1/UV 2 investment in services comparator

There were no services significantly flagged up as being in need of investment and improvement. Day Centres (14.2%, 34 in total), Housing Strategy (16.70%, 40 in total), Green Waste Collections (18.80%, 45 in total), and Recycling (18.60%, 45 in total) did receive relatively high returns in favour extra funding. In UV 1 the only service identified as being in need of extra funding was Benefits Fraud, though this result has been seen as being more in line with general public approval of a clamp down on fraudulent claimants rather than a consideration that the council's service is underfunded. Under UV 2, Enforcement, which was identified as being the service area responsible for tackling benefits fraud, was nominated by 17.40% (42 in total) of respondents for investment and improvement.

By comparison, 66.70% (156 in total) felt less money should be spent on Planning Management and Administration. In UV 1 the majority view (by 68.80% of respondents) under a general heading of 'Planning Applications' was that the current level of expenditure should be maintained. Similarly, the Museum under UV 1 was rated by 66.90% as being worthy of a maintained spending plan. Under UV 2 where panellists were presented with the 2010/11 Original budget for the Museum of £237,000 net cost, a narrow majority (46.2% -reduce spending against 43.60% protect the current level of expenditure) considered the Museum should be subject to a reduction in expenditure.

Committee Administration and Democratic Representation - the latter identified as the budget area under which members allowances, costs and other expenses sit - were headlined by 73.80% and 74.40% of panellists respectively as being worthy of reduction, though in each case relatively small numbers, 2.90% and 10.70% respectively, called for a complete cessation of the service. This follows the broad trend identified in UV 1 where 56.90% had indentified a heading of 'Committee information – public meeting and elected councillors' as one of only three areas where less money should be spent in providing the service.

Based on the results, there are no service areas overwhelmingly identified for cessation. Community Information Centres (7.10%, 17 in total), the Museum (5.50%, 13 in total) and Energy Efficiency (7.90%, 19 in total), though, commanded relatively high returns in the 'stop' category. This was not a category listed in UV 1 so no comparable data is available.

Service	Base	Invest & Improve	Protect	Reduce	Stop	Conclusion
Base score totals	3327	8.50%	57.40%	31.60%	2.60%	
ANIMAL WARDEN	239	5.00%	59.00%	34.30%	2.10%	Protect budget
COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRES	241	4.10%	42.70%	46.10%	7.10%	Reduce budget
COMMUNITY SAFETY	240	16.70%	68.30%	13.80%	1.70%	Protect budget
CONVENIENCES	241	10.40%	67.20%	22.00%	0.40%	Protect budget
DAY CENTRES	240	14.20%	70.00%	15.00%	1.30%	Protect budget
EMERGENCY PLANNING	236	7.20%	50.80%	40.30%	1.70%	Protect budget
GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS	241	8.30%	60.20%	29.00%	2.50%	Protect budget

Service	Base	Invest & Improve	Protect	Reduce	Stop	Conclusion
HOMELESSNESS	238	11.30%	58.40%	28.20%	2.10%	Protect budget
MUSEUM - SAFFRON WALDEN	236	4.70%	43.60%	46.20%	5.50%	Reduce budget
PEST CONTROL	237	8.40%	73.00%	17.70%	0.80%	Protect budget
PUBLIC HEALTH	237	10.50%	68.80%	19.80%	0.80%	Protect budget
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	235	8.90%	48.10%	36.20%	6.80%	Protect budget
PLANNING	232	7.30%	62.90%	28.40%	1.30%	Protect budget
PLANNING MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION	234	1.30%	29.90%	66.70%	2.10%	Reduce budget
ASSISTED TRAVEL	236	14.00%	66.10%	15.70%	4.20%	Protect budget
BUILDING SURVEYING	235	3.00%	54.00%	42.60%	0.40%	Protect budget
CAR PARKING	232	12.10%	47.40%	37.50%	3.00%	Protect budget
ON STREET PARKING	235	9.80%	53.20%	34.00%	3.00%	Protect budget
TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION	238	2.50%	40.80%	52.50%	4.20%	Reduce budget
CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT	240	5.00%	54.20%	38.30%	2.50%	Protect budget
ENERGY EFFICIENCY	240	13.30%	37.50%	41.30%	7.90%	Reduce budget
HOUSING STRATEGY	240	16.70%	39.20%	37.50%	6.70%	Protect budget
LAND DRAINAGE	237	5.90%	64.60%	25.70%	3.80%	Protect budget
LOCAL AMENITIES	240	7.10%	65.80%	25.00%	2.10%	Protect budget

Service	Base	Invest & Improve	Protect	Reduce	Stop	Conclusion
PLANNING POLICY	236	3.40%	41.10%	53.80%	1.70%	Reduce budget
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT	238	5.90%	76.90%	13.90%	3.40%	Protect budget
STREET CLEANSING	240	12.10%	71.70%	16.30%	-	Protect budget
REFUSE COLLECTION	241	10.40%	76.80%	12.40%	0.40%	Protect budget
GREEN WASTE COLLECTIONS	240	18.80%	59.20%	18.80%	3.30%	Protect budget
KITCHEN WASTE COLLECTIONS	241	12.40%	70.10%	14.90%	2.50%	Protect budget
RECYCLING	242	18.60%	70.70%	10.30%	0.40%	Protect budget
TRADE WASTE COLLECTIONS	238	10.90%	69.30%	16.80%	2.90%	Protect budget
COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION	240	0.80%	22.50%	73.80%	2.90%	Reduce budget
CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE	240	3.30%	39.60%	54.60%	2.50%	Reduce budget
DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION	242	0.40%	14.50%	74.40%	10.70%	Reduce budget
ENFORCEMENT	242	17.40%	63.60%	18.20%	0.80%	Protect budget
LAND CHARGES	229	3.10%	60.30%	35.40%	1.30%	Protect budget
OFFICES - SAFFRON WALDEN	242	-	30.20%	69.00%	0.80%	Reduce budget
REVENUES ADMINISTRATION	241	4.10%	47.30%	48.50%	-	Reduce budget
WEBSITE	241	7.50%	53.50%	32.40%	6.60%	Protect budget
LICENSING	239	7.50%	66.50%	25.10%	0.80%	Protect budget

Table 3.2.2 UV 2 results

Headline view:



Base 229-242

For full response data in tabulated format, see Appendix 1

4. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Full response data in tabulated format

Appendix 2 Notes on how income and expenditure is distributed with the council's budgetary process, as supplied to panellists as part of UV 2

Appendix 1 Full response data in tabulated format

Uttlesford Voices 2 - October 2010

Q1.1	COMMUNITY & HOUSING				
		<i>Invest & Improve</i>	<i>Protect</i>	<i>Reduce</i>	<i>Stop</i>
	ANIMAL WARDEN	12 (5.0%)	141 (59.0%)	82 (34.3%)	5 (2.1%)
	COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRES	10 (4.1%)	103 (42.7%)	111 (46.1%)	17 (7.1%)
	COMMUNITY SAFETY	40 (16.7%)	164 (68.3%)	33 (13.8%)	4 (1.7%)
	CONVENIENCES	25 (10.4%)	162 (67.2%)	53 (22.0%)	1 (0.4%)
	DAY CENTRES	34 (14.2%)	168 (70.0%)	36 (15.0%)	3 (1.3%)
	EMERGENCY PLANNING	17 (7.2%)	120 (50.8%)	95 (40.3%)	4 (1.7%)
	GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS	20 (8.3%)	145 (60.2%)	70 (29.0%)	6 (2.5%)
	HOMELESSNESS	27 (11.3%)	139 (58.4%)	67 (28.2%)	5 (2.1%)
	MUSEUM - SAFFRON WALDEN	11 (4.7%)	103 (43.6%)	109 (46.2%)	13 (5.5%)
	PEST CONTROL	20 (8.4%)	173 (73.0%)	42 (17.7%)	2 (0.8%)
	PUBLIC HEALTH	25 (10.5%)	163 (68.8%)	47 (19.8%)	2 (0.8%)
	SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	21 (8.9%)	113 (48.1%)	85 (36.2%)	16 (6.8%)

Q1.2	DEVELOPMENT CONTROL				
		<i>Invest & Improve</i>	<i>Protect</i>	<i>Reduce</i>	<i>Stop</i>
	PLANNING	17 (7.3%)	146 (62.9%)	66 (28.4%)	3 (1.3%)
	PLANNING MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION	3 (1.3%)	70 (29.9%)	156 (66.7%)	5 (2.1%)

Q1.3	ENVIRONMENT				
		<i>Invest & Improve</i>	<i>Protect</i>	<i>Reduce</i>	<i>Stop</i>
	ASSISTED TRAVEL	33 (14.0%)	156 (66.1%)	37 (15.7%)	10 (4.2%)
	BUILDING SURVEYING	7 (3.0%)	127 (54.0%)	100 (42.6%)	1 (0.4%)
	CAR PARKING	28 (12.1%)	110 (47.4%)	87 (37.5%)	7 (3.0%)
	ON STREET PARKING	23 (9.8%)	125 (53.2%)	80 (34.0%)	7 (3.0%)
	TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION	6 (2.5%)	97 (40.8%)	125 (52.5%)	10 (4.2%)
	CONSERVATION & ENHANCEMENT	12 (5.0%)	130 (54.2%)	92 (38.3%)	6 (2.5%)
	ENERGY EFFICIENCY	32 (13.3%)	90 (37.5%)	99 (41.3%)	19 (7.9%)
	HOUSING STRATEGY	40 (16.7%)	94 (39.2%)	90 (37.5%)	16 (6.7%)
	LAND DRAINAGE	14 (5.9%)	153 (64.6%)	61 (25.7%)	9 (3.8%)

LOCAL AMENITIES	17 (7.1%)	158 (65.8%)	60 (25.0%)	5 (2.1%)
PLANNING POLICY	8 (3.4%)	97 (41.1%)	127 (53.8%)	4 (1.7%)
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT	14 (5.9%)	183 (76.9%)	33 (13.9%)	8 (3.4%)
STREET CLEANSING	29 (12.1%)	172 (71.7%)	39 (16.3%)	0 (0.0%)
REFUSE COLLECTION	25 (10.4%)	185 (76.8%)	30 (12.4%)	1 (0.4%)
GREEN WASTE COLLECTIONS	45 (18.8%)	142 (59.2%)	45 (18.8%)	8 (3.3%)
KITCHEN WASTE COLLECTIONS	30 (12.4%)	169 (70.1%)	36 (14.9%)	6 (2.5%)
RECYCLING	45 (18.6%)	171 (70.7%)	25 (10.3%)	1 (0.4%)
TRADE WASTE COLLECTIONS	26 (10.9%)	165 (69.3%)	40 (16.8%)	7 (2.9%)

Q1.4

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION				
	<i>Invest & Improve</i>	<i>Protect</i>	<i>Reduce</i>	<i>Stop</i>
COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION	2 (0.8%)	54 (22.5%)	177 (73.8%)	7 (2.9%)
CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE	8 (3.3%)	95 (39.6%)	131 (54.6%)	6 (2.5%)
DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION	1 (0.4%)	35 (14.5%)	180 (74.4%)	26 (10.7%)
ENFORCEMENT	42 (17.4%)	154 (63.6%)	44 (18.2%)	2 (0.8%)
LAND CHARGES	7 (3.1%)	138 (60.3%)	81 (35.4%)	3 (1.3%)
OFFICES - SAFFRON WALDEN	0 (0.0%)	73 (30.2%)	167 (69.0%)	2 (0.8%)
REVENUES ADMINISTRATION	10 (4.1%)	114 (47.3%)	117 (48.5%)	0 (0.0%)
WEBSITE	18 (7.5%)	129 (53.5%)	78 (32.4%)	16 (6.6%)

Q1.5

Licensing				
	<i>Invest & Improve</i>	<i>Protect</i>	<i>Reduce</i>	<i>Stop</i>
LICENSING	18 (7.5%)	159 (66.5%)	60 (25.1%)	2 (0.8%)

Appendix 2. Supporting notes as supplied to panellists answering the UV 2 questionnaire on the council's budget

Notes

** Income from central government grants: The government supports local council revenue expenditure through a variety of grants, some of which fund specific*

services and/or initiatives e.g. Council Tax Benefits. Housing Benefit and Planning Delivery.

More information about this funding may be found in the Uttlesford District Council 2010/11 Budget Book. The government has set up a separate system to fund revenue spending on council housing (the Housing Revenue Account – HRA).

** Income from fees and charges: There are a number of restrictions placed on the type of service and how much a council can charge. Generally, councils are not permitted to make a profit from their charges. The level of some charges is set by law, (e.g. building control or planning application fees). Other charges must reflect the prevailing market rate and/or the cost of running the service. The council raises income through direct charging for some of the services it delivers. These charges are paid by the public or sometimes by businesses and other organisations.*

** Where a service makes a surplus, that surplus is re-distributed to help support other services.*