

2013-2018

WYCHAVON

Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan



How we will:

Grow our business

Save money and reduce what we do

Charge for things people value

Foreword

In 2008, we published our *Way Forward 2008 – 2013* report, which set out a clear direction of travel for us to support delivery of the priorities and goals in our corporate strategy. That five year plan underpinned our ambition to remain one of the most successful district councils locally and nationally. Council agreed an updated *Way Forward* report in July 2009, reflecting the changed circumstances resulting from the economic downturn.

Since then we have had the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, the 2012 Autumn Statement and, most recently, the 2013 Spending Round announcements. The combination of these mean that we know we have a 42% cut in our grant funding over the four years to 2014/15. This will be followed by a tough three years to 2017/18, with a further £1.23 million cut in grant anticipated. Together these bring the total reduction in our funding from central government to around 59% for the period from 2010/11 to 2017/18.

Despite the year on year financial pressures, we have protected services and frozen Council Tax increases for three years. Our level of ambition has remained undiminished, as reflected in our new corporate strategy, which we adopted in 2012. However, the continuation of prolonged and sustained grant reductions, along with inflation and other budget pressures, means that there is an unprecedented stress on our business ahead.

We now face one of the biggest challenges we've ever had to deal with. We have to close a financial gap in our budget of over £4 million by 2017/18. This presents us with a number of dilemmas about how we operate in the future and the level of services and activities we can provide.

We have some difficult decisions to make. However, we know that if we plan early and with rigour, we can successfully tackle this unprecedented situation. This Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan sets out our response to the financial and service challenges ahead, while still maintaining our focus on delivering on our outward facing priorities of a strong economy, a strong environment and strong communities. The plan puts forward solutions, under each of the themes of Grow, Save and Charge, so we can successfully close the gap in our funding.

We recognise that our public sector partners are facing similar proportionate reductions in their funding. We are confident that this plan is responsive enough to be able adapt to any impacts these reductions may have on us as they become more apparent.

We know that our ability to deliver for our residents and businesses needs to be supported by a strong council working at its best. Our principles of a lean establishment, a mixed economy of service provision, and low levels of Council Tax remain true. We are determined to protect services where at all possible, to continue to provide value for money for residents and minimise the impact of budget reductions on our communities and on our staff.



Paul Middlebrough
Leader of the Council



Jack Hegarty
Managing Director



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Executive summary

Our Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan is our response to the significant financial and service challenges that we face and the need to plan ahead for a future with far fewer resources.

The 2013 Spending Round announcement set limits for government expenditure in 2015/16 and intentions for the period to 2017/18. As expected, further cuts to public spending were outlined, with local government being hit the hardest.

Like many councils, we will see an unprecedented reduction in our funding over the next five years. In 2012/13, our budget was £11 million. Our financial projections indicate that we can expect a total reduction in our funding from central government of around 59% between 2010/11 and 2017/18. This will leave us with a gap in our budget of over £4 million by 2017/18.

Addressing such a significant budget shortfall is one of the biggest challenges we've ever had to deal with. It presents us with a number of dilemmas about how we operate in the future and the level of services we can continue to provide.

With healthy revenue balances and good property investments, we are in a relatively strong financial position. Since 2011/12, we have saved nearly £2 million, with the majority coming from management and staffing savings, efficiencies and joint working. Despite year on year financial pressures, to date residents have seen little in the way of service reductions and there have been few staff redundancies.

Our previous savings model has served us well. Protecting services where at all possible and minimising the impacts on our communities and staff will continue to be key principles going forward. However, to maintain a balanced budget, we need a different approach and one which integrates with our strategic priorities of a strong economy, a strong environment and strong communities.

A savings plan alone is unlikely to be sustainable, so our new business plan is underpinned by these three components:

- **Grow:** how we will bring new money into the council and play our role in stimulating the local economy in line with our first corporate priority.
- **Save:** how we will reduce our costs in line with what people feel is acceptable, either by doing things differently or reducing the levels of less valued services.
- **Charge:** how we will raise income through charging for things people value and selling some of our services to other organisations.

The process we embarked on to develop this plan was inclusive and engaging. We first involved managers and councillors in a workshop to generate ideas under the themes of Grow, Save, Charge in the autumn of 2012. More recently, in October 2013, we held a Members' workshop where councillors gave their views on saving and charging options and impacts for many service areas.

We also undertook a major spending priorities consultation exercise with residents and businesses to get a steer from them about what services they see as important and where they would be prepared to see cuts or accept higher charges for services. The views of the 1,721 residents and 53 businesses who participated have helped inform our decision making. For example, participants' views enabled us to make an early decision to stop the food waste collection service.

Our implementation plan identifies our proposals for achieving £2.144 million of savings in 2013-15 and a further £1.016 million in 2015-18 under our three themes of Grow, Save and Charge. It outlines the rationale for each proposal and highlights where there are impacts on communities, partners and our own organisation. We have yet to identify a further £1.2 million of savings during the second half of the plan.

Under **Grow**, we plan to generate £550,000 in 2013-15 and £295,000 in 2015-18. We will do this through Business Rate growth, changes to how we use the New Homes Bonus, service insourcing of transactional work through our partnership with Civica, investment projects, better use of our existing assets and, where appropriate, acquiring new land.

For **Save**, we intend to achieve £1,389,000 in 2013-5 and £601,000 in 2015-18. This includes a further £200,000 in staffing levels through strong vacancy management and moving people around the organisation where the work is most needed. We will also reduce management costs by a further £150,000 in the second half of the plan.

In terms of services, we have already taken the decision to stop our food waste collection, saving £587,000. We propose to save an additional £100,000 on Community Contact Centres over the life of the plan as face to face contact decreases and people increasingly do business with us online. Our new service review programme will achieve a further £150,000 by transforming services and making processes more efficient. We will reduce spending on our public toilet, street cleaning and ground maintenance contracts by £140,000 in the first two years with further savings in the latter part of the plan. We will reduce spend on environmental health services by over £200,000 during the life of the plan. We will also deliver savings through changes to heritage and conservation, grants and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) support, communications, CCTV and community safety.

Under **Charge**, the plan includes generating an additional £205,000 of income in 2013-15 through Council Tax Support, offering consultancy services to others and increasing some of our fees and charges. We propose generating a further £120,000 in 2015-18 through rent reviews of our property assets and more from fees and charges. The plan also assumes a 2% Council Tax increase from 2014/15.

Our Grow, Save, Charge plan is a dynamic document and, therefore, does not seek to meet the entire funding gap in the latter years at this stage. It does, however, fully address the first two years of the plan in terms of deliverable savings, growth or income and we expect to have identified how to meet the entire shortfall by year two. We will update the plan annually. We fully expect that it will change over time with new opportunities or policy decisions affecting the bottom line.



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the plan

This plan is our response to the significant financial and service challenges that we face and the need to plan ahead for the future with far fewer resources. However, it is not simply about saving money, it is also about all the things we need to do to make us financially stable so that we can continue to deliver our ambitious four year strategy and to thrive as a strong council.

In this section, we begin by providing some context about our other strategies and plans and the way we work. This is followed by an explanation about how we have developed this plan through involving councillors and managers, and seeking residents' views. Later, in section 4, we include the headline results from our *Balancing the budget* consultation exercise, which over 1,700 residents and businesses participated in.

In section 2, we outline our current financial position and how we have already achieved £1.9 million of savings since 2011/12. In section 3, we set out the size of the financial challenge we face and the level of savings we need to make over the next four years. We also highlight some potential opportunities for growth.

The final part of the plan puts forward our response, based on our predictions of the scale of the challenge, and how we intend to secure a sustainable future for the organisation. There are three key components. Firstly, we want to **Grow** our business to bring new money into the council and play our role in stimulating the local economy. Secondly, we will **Save** money by reducing our costs – either by doing things differently or reducing the levels of less valued services. And finally, we will **Charge** more for some services and raise income through selling some of our services to other organisations.

1.2 How our plans fit together

Our [2012 – 2016 corporate strategy](#) gives us a clear direction and focus. It sets out our three strategic priorities, which are: strong economy, strong environment and strong communities. These are underpinned by specific goals, success measures and our annual promises to make the district an even better place to live and work.

Our [Strong Council Improvement Plan](#) is more inward looking. It sets out the things we need to do to maintain a healthy organisation, such as improving customer service and staff engagement. We review our Medium Term Financial Strategy (Money Plan) each year when we set our annual budget. The Money Plan projects our income and expenditure over the next five years, therefore providing an early warning about the extent of our future funding levels.



As Figure 1 shows, we see this Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan providing a solid basis for delivering our strategy, improvement plan and Money Plan commitments. The diagram also shows where other significant plans fit in.

Figure 1: How our strategies and plans fit together



1.3 The way we work

Our [values](#) articulate what we stand for as a council. They not only set out what residents can expect when dealing with us, they also set out what we expect of our staff. The challenges we now face make the case for value for money and innovation even stronger as we need to find better, yet cheaper ways of doing things.

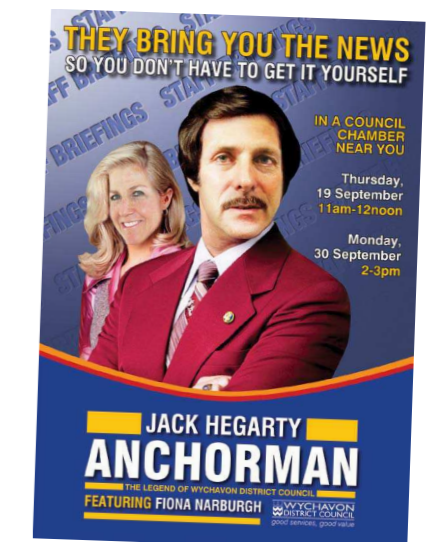
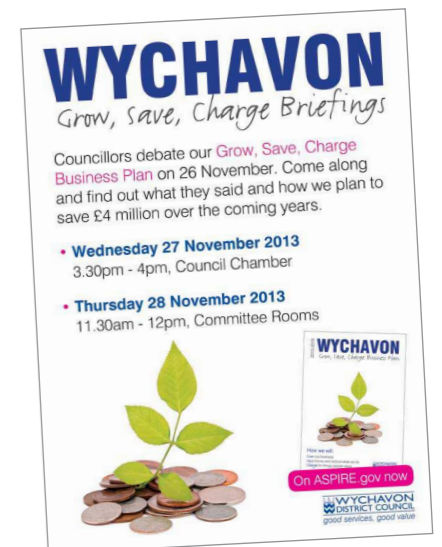
We have a very open and involving style of leadership. We regularly hold briefings for all staff to keep them informed and give them opportunities to share their concerns and contribute their ideas. We know that we can't deliver any of our ambitions without a motivated team of staff.

We are placing greater emphasis on briefing staff about budget issues and making sure that they know that our Grow, Save, Charge work is underpinned by two key principles:

- **Minimising the impact on residents, by protecting services where at all possible.**
- **Minimising the impact on staff, particularly in terms of redundancies.**

The style of management at every level in the council is important in terms of living up to our values. In addition, each year, we assess our managers against the seven characteristics of a Wychavon manager (Appendix 1). One of the most important attributes is delivering on priorities.

Appendix 1 contains more details about the way we work including our values and leadership principles. The leadership principles, which were developed with both officers and councillors, determine how we run the business.



1.4 How we developed this plan

We always involve people in developing our plans and strategies. We do not have a monopoly on good ideas and know that our plans are stronger with insight from our staff, councillors and partners. Responding to the budget challenge is no different.

In developing this plan, we fully recognised that while public involvement would be very helpful in determining the relative value of our frontline services and areas where we could make reductions, a savings plan alone is highly unlikely to be sustainable. Moreover, knowing that reducing the quality of our services remains a last resort, the plan had to be underpinned with key themes which create growth, deliver savings or increase our income: Grow, Save, Charge.

Grow is about demonstrating our commitment to growth through development, investment and property management. It also means capturing the benefits of Business Rate growth and taking a pragmatic approach to future use of New Homes Bonus receipts.

Save involves addressing staff and managerial capacity needs, recognising that we will need to make savings on our salaries budget. This theme includes evolution of our *Better not Busier* business improvement programme into a new efficiency and transformation service review model. Save is also about challenging spend on high quality and valued services and revisiting existing contracts to explore where service levels could be altered.

Charge focuses on seeking additional income from services where reasonable and taking a medium term view of Council Tax levels.

We first involved our senior and middle managers in generating ideas that could be explored under the themes of Grow, Save, Charge in October 2012. These sessions created a long list of ideas, which we then asked councillors and managers to 'rank' at a workshop in Evesham in November 2012.

We took the outcomes from the Evesham workshop and prioritised issues at a Senior Management Team away day in late November. We then worked some of these up into spending and charging choices, which formed the basis of a major budget consultation exercise with residents and businesses during the spring and summer of 2013.

Section 4 contains details of the consultation and a summary of the headline results.

Taking the findings of the budget consultation exercise, managers developed savings and charging options for 13 service areas. We identified the potential impacts that different levels of savings or charges would have on communities, partners and the council. Appendix 2 contains the options and impacts template we used.



The service areas considered at the workshop

Bulky waste
Car parking charges
CCTV
Community Contact Centres
Communications and information
Community safety
Council Tax increases
Environmental health
Grants/LSP support
Heritage and conservation
Public toilets
Street cleaning and litter collection
Tourism and events

In October 2013, we held a Scrutiny sponsored Grow, Save, Charge workshop for all councillors. The purpose was to give councillors an opportunity to get involved in shaping our budget decisions and the development of this plan. 27 councillors attended. In preparation for the workshop, they received a pack containing saving and charging options and impacts for the 13 service areas.

During the evening councillors heard brief presentations about these and had an opportunity to ask managers questions about them before selecting the options which were most acceptable to them. Appendix 3 contains a write-up of the workshop and the outcomes.

Later in October, our Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the outcomes of the Member workshop and made a series of recommendations to the Executive Board.

In early November, our Localism and Communities Advisory Panel considered the options and impacts for three of the service areas relating to the Panel's work. The areas they looked at were Community Contact Centres, grants and LSP support, and, tourism and events. Appendix 4 contains the outcomes of this session.

On 5 November, our Joint Consultative Committee, which comprises councillors and representatives from UNISON and our Staff Sounding Board, received a presentation about the Grow, Save Charge Business Plan and considered the potential impacts on staff. The Committee made the following three key points:

- Appreciation of the council's commitment to protect services and staff during these difficult financial times.
- Concern about the health and wellbeing of remaining staff as workloads increase.
- The need to keep the Staff Sounding Board and UNISON informed at all stages.

The Executive Board has taken into account the wealth of information and views expressed by residents, businesses, Members and staff in reaching decisions about what appears in Section 5.3, which will provide the basis of our actions to close the budget gap over the next five years.

This is a rolling business plan, which we will update each year. This first iteration of the plan seeks to fully address the budget gap in the first two years of the plan. We recognise that we will need to take significant decisions over the next 12 months to provide security that the outstanding budget gap in the latter part of the plan can be properly mitigated.

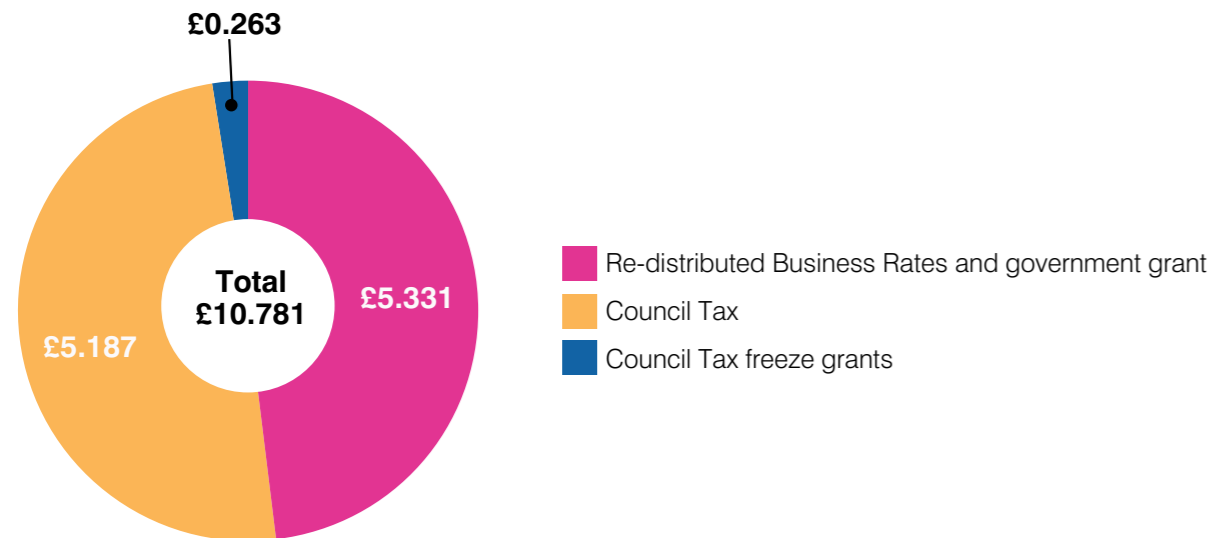


2. Our current financial position

2.1 Our finances

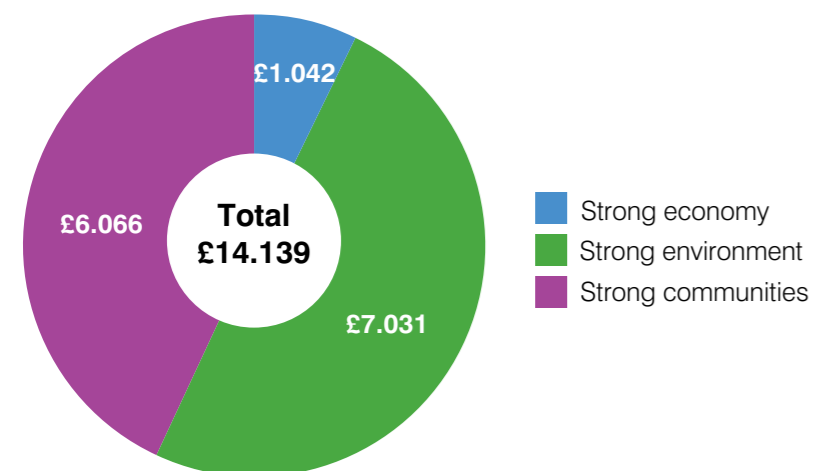
Our total income for 2012/13 was £10.781 million. As Figure 2 shows, this came from Council Tax, redistributed Business Rates and government grants. In 2012/13, we received a further Council Tax freeze grant of £0.132 million from the government as we opted to freeze our element of the Council Tax bill for the second year in a row. Our projected total income for 2013/14 is £10.657 million.

Figure 2: Our income in 2012/13 (£ million)



In 2012/13, we spent a total of £14.139 million on delivering services under our three priorities. This was 4.7% more than the £13.510 million we spent on services in 2011/12. Our projected revenue expenditure for 2013/14 is £15.332 million. Capital charges, investment income and use of reserves and balances account for the difference between our income and expenditure.

Figure 3: Our expenditure on services in 2012/13 (£ million)



2.2 What we have saved so far

With healthy revenue balances and good property investments, we are in a relatively strong financial position. We have been able to plan our response to previous funding reductions in order to minimise the impact on residents and staff.

In 2011, we adopted a five point plan to deliver annual savings of £1.9 million in response to reductions in our government grant over the first two years (2011/12 and 2012/13) of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. Table 1 shows our savings targets along with the actual savings we achieved.



Table 1: Our five point savings plan

	Target savings	Actual savings
Efficiencies and joint working	£537,000	£532,000
Increasing income from our assets	£130,000	£100,000
Management and staff savings	£600,000	£813,000
Increasing income from our services	£510,000	£315,000
Service reductions	£134,000	£134,000
Total	£ 1.911 million	£1.894 million

As we planned, the majority of savings came from management and staffing. Rather than making staff redundant, we largely achieved this through not replacing staff when they left the organisation, reductions to our Senior Management Team and reducing contracted hours for some posts on a voluntary basis.

2.3 The 2013/14 position

The announcement of further budget reductions for 2013/14 and 2014/15 were made too late for us to address them as part of our 2013/14 budget process. We had hoped for a more generous settlement for rural district councils, in 2013/14 at least, following ministerial announcements, particularly around the recognised additional cost of providing services in rural areas.

The Council therefore agreed to set a budget aimed at using £674,000 of revenue balances in 2013/14 but with a clear intent of reducing this by the end of the financial year. We accept that the ongoing deficit position, which will become significantly larger in 2014/15, needs to be addressed prior to setting the budget for that year.

3. The financial challenge

3.1 The 2013 Spending Round announcement

The Spending Round announcement in June 2013 set limits for government expenditure in 2015/16 and intentions for the period to 2017/18. As expected, further cuts to public spending were outlined and, within the public sector, local government will be the hardest hit.

The reductions in our government grant, indicated in Table 2, assume a start-up funding reduction for us of 15% in 2015/16 followed by a further 5% in each of the following two financial years. For 2016/17 and 2017/18, this is a central assumption, based on overall levels of expenditure for local government. But as we know, district councils, particularly rural districts, often fair much worse than the rest of the sector.

Table 2: Actual and projected reductions in our government grant

Year	Grant/start-up funding (£ million)	Reduction (£ million)	Cumulative reduction (£ million)	Cumulative reduction
2010/11*	7.129			
2011/12	6.117	1.012	1.012	14%
2012/13	5.331	0.786	1.798	25%
2013/14	4.937	0.394	2.192	31%
2014/15	4.142	0.795	2.987	42%
2015/16	3.416	0.726 (est)	3.713	52%
2016/17	3.166	0.250 (est)	3.963	56%
2017/18	2.916	0.250 (est)	4.213	59%

Along with expenditure limits, further support to freeze Council Tax in 2014/15 and 2015/16 was also announced as part of the 2013 Spending Round. Referendum limits for Council Tax increases for those years have been set at 2%.

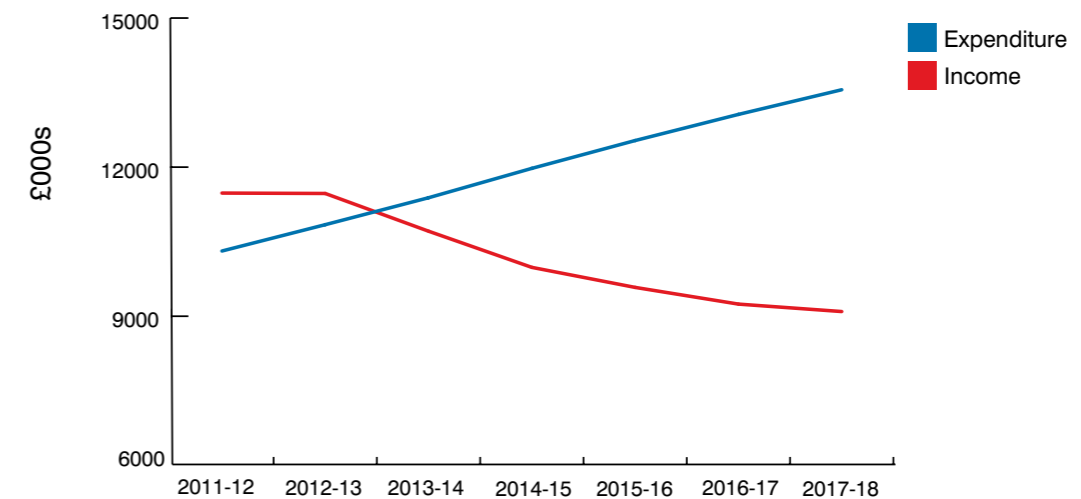
Our level of Council Tax has been frozen since 2010/11. Whilst government support for this has been available on a short term basis, the longer term financial impact of this should not be underestimated. If we had increased Council Tax by 2% per year for the last three years, then the additional ongoing income generated in 2013/14 would be almost £300,000.

Our longer term financial projections show that by 2017/18 our budget gap will increase to over £4 million. Figure 4 illustrates this. Clearly, this will mean further revisions to our business plan as more savings will be required.

Cash resources for new capital expenditure remain equally tight but we have the opportunity to sell our property investments to allow further investment to take place. We also have the ability to borrow prudentially for investment purposes and are currently pursuing this for the Evesham town centre development scheme. We need to carefully examine the revenue implications of any borrowing, given the funding gap described above.



Figure 4: Our income and expenditure



3.2 What we need to save

The 2013/14 current year budget deficit of almost £700,000, coupled with the further reduction in our government grant along with known budget pressures, such as inflation on contracts and increased pension costs, results in a projected deficit for 2014/15 of over £2 million. Our challenge is to address that shortfall, prior to setting the budget and Council Tax for 2014/15 in February 2014. The longer term position is more of the same. Table 3 shows our current savings targets to 2017/18.

Table 3: What we need to save

Period	Amount (£ million)
2013/14 and 2014/15	£2.00
2015/16	£1.25
2016/17	£0.50
2017/18	£0.50
Total	£4.25

Having already reduced our size and capacity over the past few years in response to a reduction in resource levels, our ability to continue to save without impacting on services or our performance is now extremely limited. However, the need to address the ongoing and widening gap and maintain a sustainable financial position is unavoidable. It is time for a different solution, which will address the financial reality but will continue to protect residents.

3.3 Opportunities to grow

The Local Government Resource Review resulted in the retention locally of 50% of Business Rates growth. Therefore, we have a financial incentive to promote a growth in the business base of the district. Similarly, the New Homes Bonus (NHB) in its current guise rewards councils for increasing housing numbers in their area. Whilst the Business Rates retention scheme presents additional risks to us in terms of losses, we now have a stake in the growth of the district. Responsibility for the cost of Council Tax Support (previously Council Tax Benefit) also encourages councils to promote economic prosperity.

Whilst there are significant financial challenges facing us over the medium term, there are also opportunities for us and the communities of Wychavon. This plan sets out these opportunities and other measures to achieve financial sustainability.

4. Balancing the budget consultation

4.1 What we did

In the spring and summer of 2013, we undertook a major spending priorities consultation exercise with residents and businesses to help us manage the reduction in our budget and make decisions about future service levels and spending cuts.

We designed a survey, which included questions about service priorities; the savings and charging choices respondents would make when faced with the need to find savings; and, views on Council Tax increases.

We included savings and charging choices based on some of the ideas that had come from our sessions with managers and councillors, as well as areas where we have discretion over the quality and quantity of services we provide.

We appointed MEL Research Ltd to carry out face to face interviews with a representative sample of 300 residents and to run three follow-up focus groups, which took place in August.

A total of 1721 residents and 53 businesses took part in the survey. The business results are less robust because of the lower number of responses. A summary of the headline results is presented below. The full results are available in a separate [report](#) produced by MEL, which is on our website.

4.2 Service priorities

We asked residents to select their three most important and three least important services from a list of 20 services. As Figure 5 shows, residents' top choices for the most important services were street cleaning and litter collection, and parks, play areas and open spaces, with over three in ten selecting these two services. These were followed by economic development and regeneration, selected by 26% and environmental health, selected by a quarter of residents.

For businesses, economic development and regeneration topped the list of most important services, 53% of businesses that responded chose this service.

Figure 5: Top ten most important services for residents

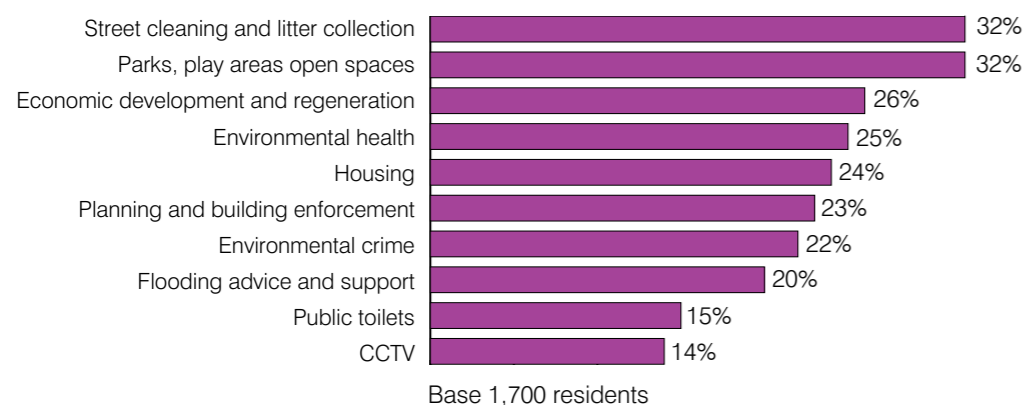
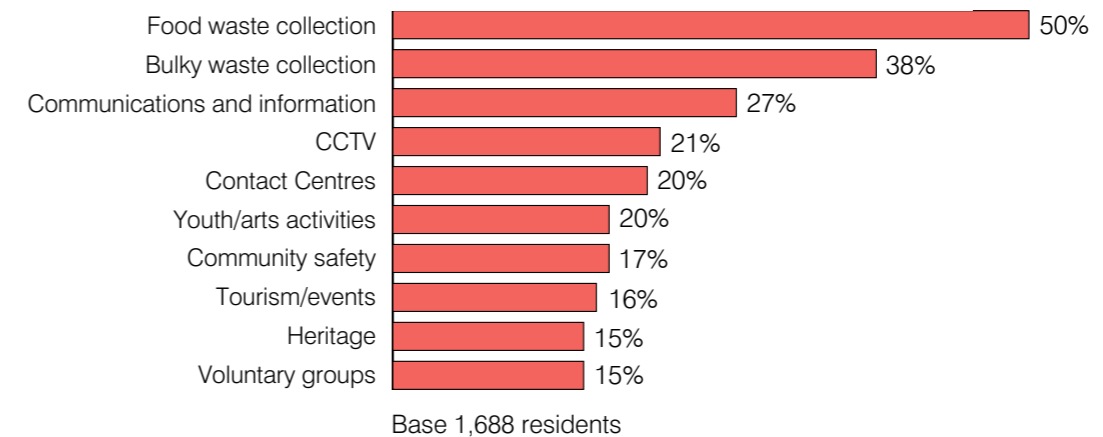


Figure 6 shows that the three least important services to residents are the food waste collection service at 50%, the bulky waste collection service at 38% and communication and information services at 27%. The least important services for businesses were communications and information, and CCTV.

Figure 6: Top ten least important services for residents

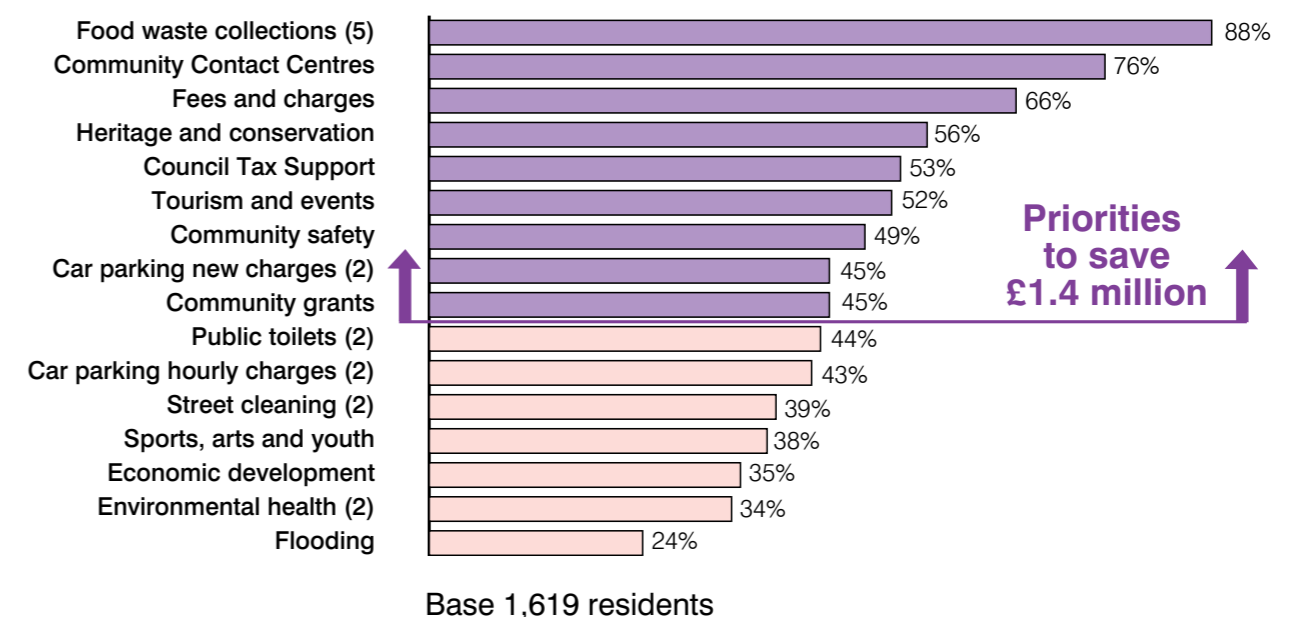


4.3 Savings and charging choices

We asked respondents to put themselves in our shoes and imagine they needed to save £1.4 million of the £2 million savings we need to make over the next two years. We presented them with 16 different services or packages of services that we spend significant amounts of money on and charges that generate an income for us. Each choice was assigned one, two or five points to indicate the level of savings or income they could generate. One point was equivalent to £100,000. We asked respondents to pick savings and/or charging choices which added up to 14 points in total.

Figure 7 shows residents' savings and charging choices. The overwhelming majority, almost nine in ten (88%), selected the food waste collection as a service to be considered for savings. Within the 14 point total, this was followed by Community Contact Centres, increasing fees and charges, heritage and conservation, Council Tax Support, tourism and events, community safety, new car parking charges and grants to the community and voluntary sector.

Figure 7: Services selected by residents for savings and/or charges



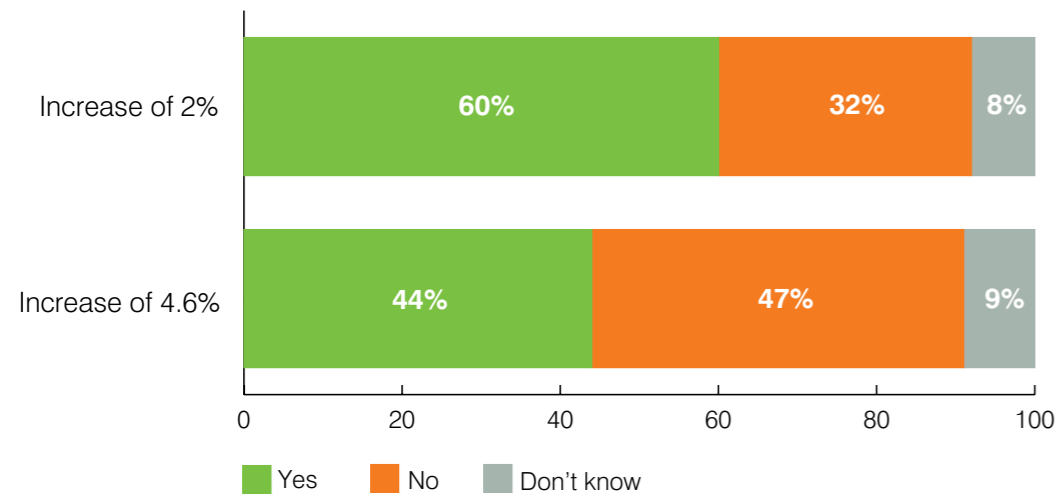
All one point choices except where shown in brackets.

4.4 Council Tax increases

We have frozen the Wychavon element of the Council Tax bill for the last three years. So we wanted to find out whether residents would support a 2% increase in order to save service reductions of £100,000 from the previous saving and charging choices exercise. Under these circumstances, six in ten (60%) of residents would support a 2% increase in Council Tax.

As Figure 8 shows, the level of support drops to 44% if the increase in Council Tax was raised to 4.6% to offset £200,000 in savings.

Figure 8: Support for Council Tax increases if fewer savings and charges were an option



A 2% increase would raise almost £100,000 of additional income for us every year and a 4.6% increase would raise over £200,000 for us every year. For an average Band D household, this is equivalent to paying £2.17 or £5.00 extra a year.

4.5 Focus group discussions

MEL ran three focus group discussions with residents to help us understand the reasons, motivations and behaviours behind residents' service saving and charges choices. The discussion groups focussed primarily on the eight services identified within the quantitative results that amount to the £1.4 million saving. The exception to this was the food waste collection service; this was excluded from the topics for the focus groups given the overwhelming majority that selected it for savings in both the residents and business surveys. Additionally, public toilets and car parking hourly charges were included in the focus group discussions as they were the next nearest choices to the target budget.

Residents attending the focus groups did not support any proposals that are likely to impact on the economic prosperity of the area, such as reducing the level of support for tourism and events and increasing car parking charges. However, they did support making savings to services such as community safety, heritage and conservation and public toilets.

There were mixed views about potential savings from a reduction in the support and grants made to voluntary and community groups. Given the choice of a 2% Council Tax increase or additional car parking charges, then the majority would vote in favour of an increase in Council Tax, which as one person put it, "is the price of a cup of coffee".

The residents involved wanted us to make evidence based decisions and to be able to justify those decisions.

5. Grow, Save, Charge – our response to the financial challenge

5.1 A new approach: Grow, Save, Charge

Our previous savings model has served us well. However, to maintain a balanced budget going forward, a salami slicing approach to services and staffing capacity is unlikely to deliver the savings we need to find and will be less ambitious. So we have developed a more sophisticated approach and one which integrates with our strategic priorities.

This business plan includes three components:

- **Grow:** how we will bring new money into the council and play our role in stimulating the local economy in line with our first corporate priority.
- **Save:** how we will reduce our costs in line with what people feel is acceptable, either by doing things differently or reducing the levels of less valued services.
- **Charge:** how we will raise income through charging for things people value and selling some of our services to other organisations.

Our business plan is built on the following principles:

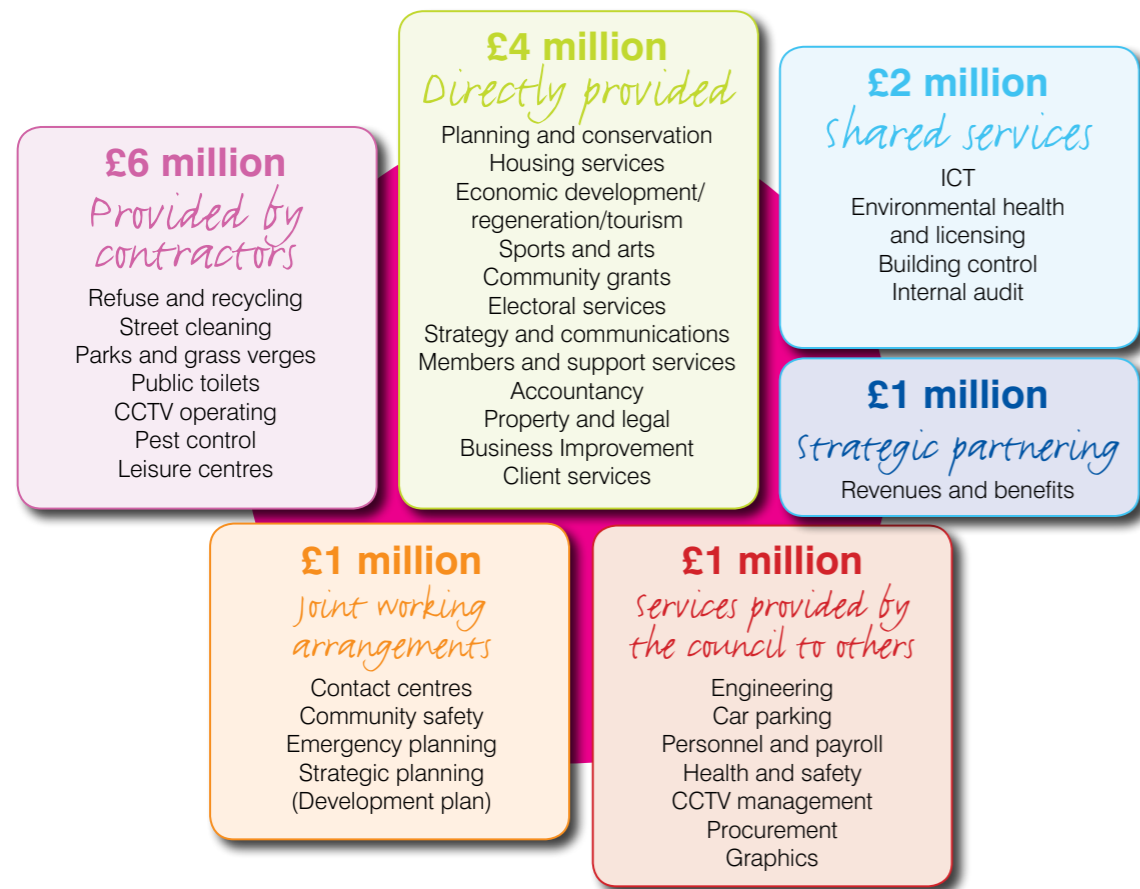
- Minimising the impact on residents, by protecting services where at all possible.
- Minimising the impact on staff, particularly in terms of redundancies.
- An understanding of the current financial position and risks.
- An understanding of future local government funding and risks.
- Knowledge of customer priorities and budget choices.
- A commitment to meeting customer demand in new ways.
- A commitment to best use of investment opportunities.
- A prudent approach to taxation and charging.
- Addressing governance and service delivery models for both frontline and supporting services.
- Maintaining a lean organisation.

5.2 Is our current business model fit for the future?

For many years, we have operated a model of a mixed economy of service delivery, which has proved very successful in both controlling and reducing our revenue costs.

As Figure 9 shows, this model includes contracting out services such as waste, street cleaning and parks maintenance; a not for profit leisure trust; shared service arrangements with other councils and strategic partnering with the private sector. This has resulted in a lean workforce; we currently have just over 200 full-time equivalent staff.

Figure 9: Our current business model



In the current financial context, this model poses three main risks:

- Being locked into contractual arrangements that are not flexible and limit our scope for making significant savings until contracts expire.
- Being locked into joint working arrangements that can be difficult to break and deliver further savings without complete partner agreement.
- Limited capacity in the organisation to deliver.

However, these risks can be properly mitigated and pose no significant risk to our approach. In relation to contracts, experience has shown that cost reductions through negotiation on our existing contracts has not been problematic and any new contractual arrangements will fully reflect the flexibility that the future business planning landscape requires. This is equally true of joint working arrangements. Finally, in relation to capacity, our approach of securing appropriate external resources to deliver projects or fluctuating demands on services will mitigate that risk.

During the life of this plan, we will focus on the following service delivery models:

- Contracted services/out sourcing, including renewal of contracts and pursuing joint procurement with other councils.
- Strategic partnering with the private or third sector.
- Joint working in various forms.
- Not for profit trusts.
- Direct service provision.

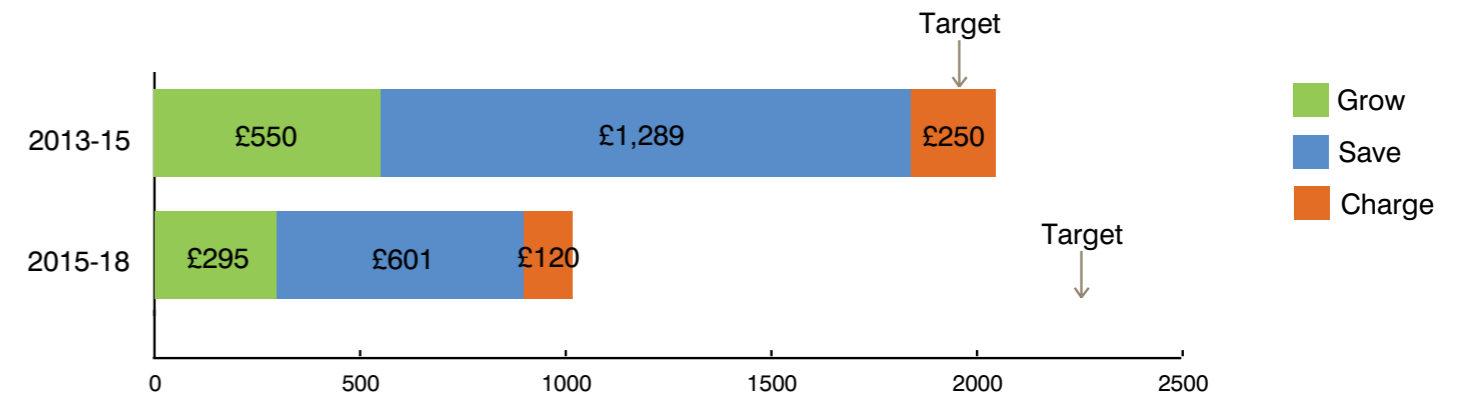
Our lean workforce has a good track record of flexible working and multitasking in different service areas. A new programme promoting and providing skills training on flexible working is underway. With a small workforce, the ability to be agile and demand responsive will be essential to the successful implementation of this plan. Our new Workforce Strategy ensures we properly plan for the future of the organisation in these challenging times.

5.3 Implementation plan

On pages 22 to 27 we set out our Grow, Save, Charge action plan. This sets out what we propose to do to generate growth, make savings and increase our income during the lifetime of the plan, the rationale for each area and how much each could generate.

Figure 10 shows the financial impact of implementing all of the actions in the plan. In 2013-15, this would give us a surplus of £144,000 against our £2 million target. In 2015-18, there is a shortfall of over £1 million against our target of £2.25 million. This is to be expected given the size of the financial challenge, but we expect to have identified how to meet the entire shortfall by year two.

Figure 10: Financial impact of implementing all the actions in the plan (£ thousand)



We will commit the plan to regular review as known financial challenges and policy decisions change and new ones emerge. We will update the plan annually and share our progress at least annually.

5.4 Wider impacts

Some of the proposals in the plan will have wider impacts beyond purely financial ones. A number of the actions have staffing implications, in particular:

- The staff savings targets (£100,000 in the first two years and £100,000 in the following three years) and the management review target of £150,000.
- The efficiency and transformation programme (service reviews) where we have set a target of £50,000 in the first two years and £100,000 in the following three years.
- Other specific services identified for savings set out in the implementation plan, such as Community Contact Centres, heritage and conservation, and community safety.

We have assessed the likely impacts of some of the Save and Charge proposals on residents, businesses and partners. Appendix 5 contains a summary of the main impacts.

In addition, we have carried out more detailed Equality Impact Assessments for proposals relating to the food waste collection service, Community Contact Centres, heritage and conservation, public toilets, street cleaning, grants and LSP support, bulky waste and the Council Tax Support scheme.

In the longer term, we will need to carry out Equality Impact Assessments before making significant changes to the community safety service, CCTV and environmental health services and, potentially, for other actions that we identify for inclusion in the second half of the plan.

Grow: how we will bring new money into the council and play our role in stimulating the local economy

Area of growth	Rationale	Years 1 and 2 (2013/14 – 2014/15)	Years 3, 4 and 5 (2015/16 – 2017/18)
Business Rate growth	New local government finance arrangements allow for local retention of part of any Business Rate growth. Wychavon is part of a Business Rates pool to spread risks. We have taken a positive approach to economic growth and have anticipated growth in the Business Rate base for the latter part of this plan period.	None assumed	£100,000
New Homes Bonus (NHB) – increased grant from government to reward new housing growth	Government changes to local government finance now mean that NHB is part of our 'spending power'. We want to achieve the right balance between contributing to this plan whilst also retaining our scheme to reward local communities that have received new housing growth.	£500,000	No increase assumed pending longer term future of NHB
Service insourcing – this can also be referred to as strategic partnering	A tri-council project with Civica and the South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service (SWRBSS) was launched in October 2013 (the 'Orchard Centre'). Any growth arising from the expansion and development of the partnership will reward the three local authorities. We will also explore other strategic partnering opportunities during the life of this plan.	£25,000	£50,000
Better use of our assets	This includes a rationalisation of our land holdings, which is already under way, and extra rental income from service insourcing to the Civic Centre for the Orchard Centre.	£25,000	£25,000
Development and investment projects	We will continue to invest for return where there is a demonstrable community benefit and/or regeneration effect and where our return on investment is economically beneficial. A number of projects will contribute to growth in this area but returns will be realised in the latter part of the plan period.	None assumed	£100,000 from 2016/17
Land opportunity purchases	We will make opportunity land purchases subject to their strategic importance. This is likely to have a short term negative financial impact until land is either developed or sold.	None assumed	£20,000 (from 2016/17) for potential revenue benefits from capital receipts
Total		£550,000	£295,000

Save: how we will reduce our costs either by doing things differently or reducing the levels of less valued services

Area of saving	Rationale	Years 1 and 2 (2013/14 – 2014/15)	Years 3, 4 and 5 (2015/16 – 2017/18)
Food waste collection service	Our spending priorities consultation showed that stopping the food waste service was the top savings choice for residents. Council agreed on 24 September 2013 to stop the service from January 2014.	£587,000	No further savings
Staffing capacity	Our management and staffing levels are very lean. Nonetheless, we have assumed a further £200,000 reduction in staffing costs during the life of the plan from all tiers as a proportionate and reasonable target.	£100,000	£100,000
Review management structures	There will be a need from 2015/16 to address the top and middle tier management capacity needs of the organisation.	None assumed (other than in general staffing savings)	£150,000
SWRBSS/Civica insourcing	The tri-council project with the SWRBSS was launched in October 2013 achieving significant and on-going savings. (See also Grow for more details about the Civica deal)	£200,000	None assumed
New efficiency and transformation programme	Service reviews are an important tool to identify efficiencies and transformation opportunities. Our Better not Busier programme has served us well in relation to service efficiencies. However, we have now agreed a new methodology for service reviews, which will provide an expeditious yet rigorous tool for efficiency and transformation. We have identified four service areas for the first tranche of service reviews. These are: housing, client services, financial administration, post and printing.	£50,000	£100,000
Community Contact Centres	Our spending priorities consultation showed a high level of respondents identifying the Community Contact Centres as a savings choice. Reduced footfall and reduced partner funding means our current models of face to face contact will change to a more sustainable model. The strategy is to keep a viable presence in all three towns but transform the way in which we provide the service.	£50,000	£50,000

Area of saving	Rationale	Years 1 and 2 (2013/14 – 2014/15)	Years 3, 4 and 5 (2015/16 – 2017/18)
Heritage and conservation	Our spending priorities consultation showed that people are prepared to see us reduce the amount of advice we give and projects we do to protect and improve historic buildings and conservation areas. We need to balance this against our strong environment priority. We see a specialist shared service arrangement with neighbouring council(s) as the most appropriate way forward for securing quality of service whilst delivering savings.	£25,000	None assumed
Community safety service	The service is highly valued by those who use it, but this needs to be balanced against the spending priorities consultation results, which indicated it is a lower priority for residents. We are proposing a transitional year in 2014/15 to deliver a reduced and remodelled service from 2015/16.	None assumed	£30,000 (from 2015/16)
Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)	We set up a joint CCTV monitoring facility with Worcester City Council at the Civic Centre three years ago and this yielded efficiencies for both councils. Future external funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office is under review. We will pursue a remodelled service achieving a different balance between monitoring costs and recording costs with effect from 2015/16	None assumed	£45,000 (from 2015/16)
Contract management This covers public toilets, street cleaning, litter collection, grounds maintenance and parks.	Street cleaning and litter collection was the most important service for residents in our spending priorities consultation and second in the face to face feedback, after parks, play areas and open spaces. We have 12 award winning public toilets and we have five green flag parks in the district. While these are highly regarded services, they are also high spending services. We propose to seek a balance between reducing costs and maintaining our reputation for quality services.	£143,000 (through contract changes for street cleaning, litter collection, public toilets and parks). We have already identified £20,000 annual savings from grounds maintenance.	£46,000 (from public toilets and recycling centres)

Area of saving	Rationale	Years 1 and 2 (2013/14 – 2014/15)	Years 3, 4 and 5 (2015/16 – 2017/18)
Grants to voluntary and community groups and LSP funding	We currently provide annual support towards the running costs of the CAB (£25,000) and the district's three Volunteer Centres (£30,000), our community grants programme (£45,000) and we give £20,000 to support each LSP with delivering projects. This support is currently funded by Year 1 NHB and will be an additional cost to council if it continues beyond 2016/17. The three Volunteer Centres have benefited from transition support from us following the changes to the concessionary fares arrangements. This is the final year of the arrangement, so a £15,000 saving can be made. The years 1 and 2 target of £30,000 will be achieved by a reduction in funding to the three volunteer centres (£15,000) and a reduction in funding of £5,000 to each of the three LSPs (£15,000).	£30,000	£30,000 by further reducing LSP funding from 2016/17
Communications and information	Communications remains important especially in the current public sector funding climate. We are pursuing new opportunities to reduce costs and meet the £10,000 target saving as well	£10,000	None assumed
Environmental Health services	Worcestershire Regulatory Services now provides Environmental Health services (except environmental crime) on our behalf. Negotiations have resulted in a further £200,000 of savings based on an equitable funding model being agreed for 2014/15. Members have expressed some concerns about reductions in costs having an impact on the service. There is also some appetite to look at possible new governance/service delivery models for this large shared service.	£194,000	£50,000
Total		£1,389,000	£601,000

Charge: how we will raise income through charging more for some things and selling some of our services to others

Area of charging	Rationale	Years 1 and 2 (2013/14 – 2014/15)	Years 3, 4 and 5 (2015/16 – 2017/18)
Council Tax Support	The Executive Board has agreed changes to our Council Tax Support scheme and our major preceptors have agreed contributions to our additional costs of collection.	£150,000	None assumed
Rent reviews of our property assets	Rent reviews are due on our major investment properties, thus securing potential new income.	None assumed	£100,000
Consultancy services to others	We already provide car parking and communications services to other organisations. We are pursuing other opportunities to market specialist services.	£25,000	None assumed
Council Tax levels (a 2% rise would have a neutral impact as this has already been assumed in our Money Plan projections)	In the spending priorities consultation, 60% of all residents agreed with a 2% increase in the Wychavon part of the Council Tax bill to try and protect other services. The Executive Board has proposed increases in line with referendum limits over the life of the plan. Therefore, we have assumed a 2% rise in the plan (pending the annual budget meeting in February 2014).	Nil	Nil
Car parking new charges – (including evenings and Sunday charging)	There were very mixed views expressed on car parking options in the spending priorities consultation. We have agreed that the most appropriate way forward is to carry out a strategic review of car parks in the district.	None assumed	None assumed pending the outcome of any future strategic review
Bulky waste collection	We provide a free bulky waste collection service via our contractor, currently at a cost of £38,000 per year to us. This is no longer a free service in most other local authority areas and we are proposing a reconfiguration of the service into a chargeable one.	£10,000	None assumed
Fees and charges for services (excluding car parking)	Consultants are currently reviewing fees and charges for all Worcestershire councils and this will inform any changes to charges as part of our budget setting in February 2014. It is reasonable to assume some upward trends on specific discretionary charges.	£20,000	£20,000

Area of charging	Rationale	Years 1 and 2 (2013/14 – 2014/15)	Years 3, 4 and 5 (2015/16 – 2017/18)
Treasury management	Interest rates are unlikely to rise before 2015/16 as the Governor of the Bank of England is now linking future investment rate increases to decreasing unemployment levels. There may be a positive impact in the latter part of the business plan period.	Nil	Not yet known
Total		£205,000	£120,000

Summary table	2013-15	2015-18
Total target	£2,000,000	£2,250,000
Total identified for Grow	£550,000	£295,000
Total identified for Save	£1,389,000	£601,000
Total identified for Charge	£205,000	£120,000
Total	£2,144,000	£1,016,000
Surplus/shortfall	+ £144,000	- £1,234,000

Appendix 1

The way we work

A1. Our values

We have five values that demonstrate what we stand for as a council. These not only set out clearly what residents can expect when dealing with us, they also set out what we expect of our staff.

As can be seen from our five values we are a council that balances the business like approach with our values of value for money, brilliant customer service and great services every time with our sense of humour and positive attitude – and desire to keep improving and innovating. The financial challenges ahead make the case for innovation even stronger, challenging us to find better, yet cheaper ways of doing things.

A2. The characteristics of a Wychavon Manager

We have set out seven attributes we expect all our managers to demonstrate. These are:

Energise - positive energy and ability to enthuse others

Innovate - initiating ideas and making change happen

Relate - building strong relationships

Direct - setting clear goals and direction

Coach - building confidence and capability in others

Thrive - enjoying what you do (right fit)

Execute - delivering on priorities

They are scored on these as part of our annual Personal Development Reviews and their peers and staff give feedback on their performance too.

A3. Our ten leadership principles

We have ten leadership principles that determine how we run the business, our ethos and our approach to leading the organisation

1. We will continue to adopt an entrepreneurial not municipal culture
2. We will measure our success by the resident and customer satisfaction value we give
3. We will involve, communicate openly with, and engage our staff so they are motivated to do their best for residents
4. We will run excellent core services and invest in them
5. We will apply value for money principles in everything we do
6. We will actively performance manage the business as part of routine management/ leadership
7. We will retain a positive approach to partnership working and joint working with other public and private sector organisations where it improves quality, reduces cost and builds on our reputation
8. We will only grow the establishment where there is a clear business case to be made



9. We will 'invest to save' where there are robust cases to do so

10. We will maintain excellent officer and Member relationships with the 'Team Wychavon' positive attitude and team working approach

A4. Our Strong Council Improvement Plan

We developed our fourth priority, strong council, to set out the things we knew needed to be in place to maintain a healthy organisation. Indeed we have made good progress on key things like a single planning reception, a new look website and live web chat, refresher customer service training, researching recycling performance and costs elsewhere, and starting to develop a new Workforce Strategy.

A peer review with Elmbridge was really helpful in checking our progress on these actions. In December we had a local Government Association peer challenge offering insight on what other things we should be picking up in the next Strong Council Plan.

2012 -14 **WYCHAVON**
Strong council plan

1 Brilliant customer service

- Implement our new look website with our top transactional tasks and a live web chat ie customer service advisor.
- Review our high volume letters and emails for simplicity, clarity and friendly tone.
- Move towards a single Civic Centre reception ie, integrate planning reception.
- Undertake refresher customer service training, picking up results of mystery shopper exercise with Elmbridge.

2 Great services, every time

- Set clear and robust measures to track and report on performance of shared services.
- Undertake a Better not Busier (BNB) cross cutting review of how we and partners contribute to a 'Strong Economy'.
- Review our recycling and waste services and research what the top performers do.
- Use BNB to improve efficiency and performance in community services, planning and housing.

3 Fun, motivated and positive

- Implement the staff survey action plan, including roll out of the Bradford Factor and report progress to staff.
- Keep our managers skilled up and deliver courses on identified needs ie, PDRs, dealing with poor performance, and capability.
- Implement community leadership training for members so they can better fulfil their community voice and listening roles.
- Agree a work plan and development programme to ensure an effective Staff Sounding Board.

4 Value for money

- Develop an effective way to evaluate and improve value for money in our services.
- Have a plan for different financial scenarios and what that means for our business model.
- Prepare for the 2013/4 Local Government Resource Review.
- Set out a new Workforce Plan to effectively deliver the new strategy and adapt to changing context.

5 Innovative, always improving

- Use benchmarking to identify top performers in key services and implement relevant findings.
- Relaunch ideas for savings and improve our play back of what's changed (you said, we did).
- Develop stronger relationships with town and parish councils.
- Invite our peers back to challenge our performance, the delivery of our strategy and improvement plan.
- Modernise our meetings for greater public involvement.

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WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value

Appendix 2

Grow, Save, Charge decisions

Impact assessment template

Service details	Service name Service summary		
Net cost of service in 2013/14	£	Income received in 2013/14	£xxx from
Customer profile	Include brief details about who our customers are – e.g. location, age, ethnicity, types of residents. Where we have addresses/postcode data this should include a MOSAIC profile of customers.		
Consultation results	Savings and charging choices We will add a summary of the results of the budget consultation here.		
Other relevant information	Include any other relevant information here, such as lessons learnt from other areas/similar service changes or reductions.		
Grow, Save, Charge options	Savings	Savings/income	
	Include one or more options for service reductions /increasing income or charges here.	£	
Summary of impacts (including equality impacts)	£		
	<p>Impact on communities Include a summary of the likely impacts of the options on residents and businesses, including the equality impacts. Please use our equality impact assessment form and then include a summary of the results here.</p> <p>Impact on partners If relevant, include a summary of the likely impacts of the options on partners.</p> <p>Impact on us If relevant, include a summary of the likely impacts of the options on the council, e.g. impact on other services, reputation.</p>		
Completed by	Name and role of person completing the template		

Appendix 3

Outcomes of Members' workshop

24 October 2013

This report presents the outcomes of the Scrutiny sponsored Grow, Save, Charge workshop for Members, which took place on 24 October. The purpose of the workshop was to give all councillors an opportunity to get involved in shaping our budget decisions and our Grow, Save, Charge business plan. 27 councillors attended (see page 39). In preparation for the event, Members received a pack of saving and charging options and impacts for 13 service areas.

Welcome and purpose

Cllr Andrew Dyke, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced the workshop and outlined the purpose. He explained the format for the evening, which consisted of a mix of presentations, interactive investigations, selecting saving/charging options, a facilitated discussion and rapid feedback of Members' choices. The workshop would assist the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its pre-scrutiny of the Grow, Save, Charge business plan.

The financial challenge and our plans to meet it

Jack Hegarty gave a short presentation reminding Members of the scale of the financial challenge we face and our plans to meet it. We will see a 59% reduction in our Government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18, giving us a financial gap of £4 million by 2017/18.

Jack outlined the principles of our Grow, Save, Charge business plan, which will be updated annually as risks and assumptions change. He reminded Members of the headline results from our recent budget consultation exercise with residents and businesses. He also covered the timings of savings and how we will deal with the services not on the list for debate at the workshop.

Saving and charging options and impacts

Officers gave two minute presentations outlining the options and impacts for each of the 13 service areas listed on the right. These were followed by interactive investigations, where Members had an opportunity to speak to managers and test out what they had heard and ask questions about the information provided in their packs.

For each of the services, Members completed sheets (See pages 40-43) indicating which option was most acceptable to them and whether we should introduce changes in the short term (during 2014/15) or longer term. The results of the Members' options choices are presented below. The base refers to the number of councillors who responded to each question.

What will the business plan do?

- Tackle the biggest financial and service challenge we have faced
- Set out how we will make budget decisions over the next few years
- Be open and inclusive
- Be updated annually as risks and assumptions change



The areas to focus on tonight

- Bulky waste
- Car parking charges
- CCTV
- Community Contact Centres
- Communications and information
- Community safety
- Council Tax increases
- Environmental health
- Grants/LSP support
- Heritage and conservation
- Public toilets
- Street cleaning and litter collection
- Tourism and events



a) CCTV

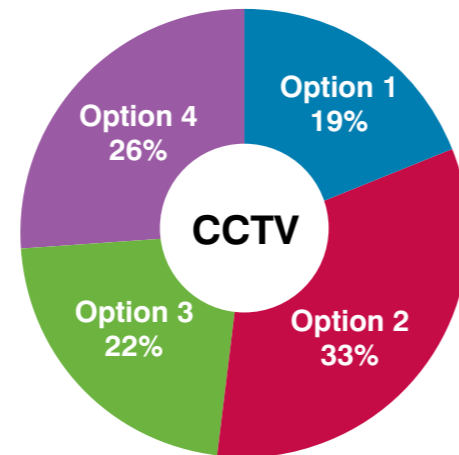
Options

1. No change.
2. Reduce monitoring during the working day.
3. Just record CCTV images. No monitoring.
4. Stop the service when the monitoring contract ends.

Over three quarters of Members support some level of reduction in our CCTV service. 63% are willing to see changes made in the short term. Views were fairly evenly spread across all four options; option 2 received the highest level of support from a third of Members. Members with rural Wards are more willing to see the service stopped completely, whereas those with urban wards would prefer to see less dramatic reductions.

Other comments

- Investigate selling the service to monitor industrial estates more thoroughly.
- Outsource the service.
- Renegotiate with Worcester City Council.



Base: 27 responses

b) Community safety

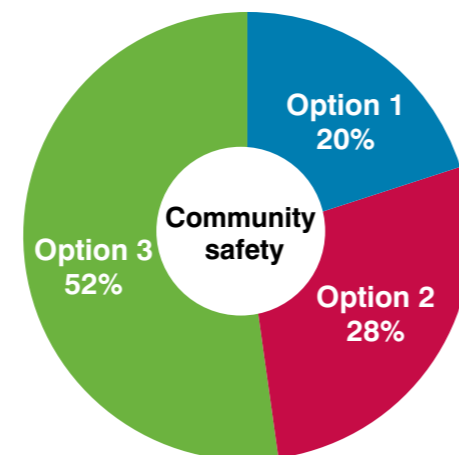
Options

1. No change.
2. Reduce the staffing costs of the service.
3. Stop the service and meet our statutory obligations in other ways.

80% of Members support a reduction in our community safety service, with just over half willing to see the service stopped completely. The majority are willing to see changes made in the short term. Of the five Members who voted for no change, four cover urban wards.

Other comments

- Outsource the service.
- Use police and CPOs more.



Base: 25 responses

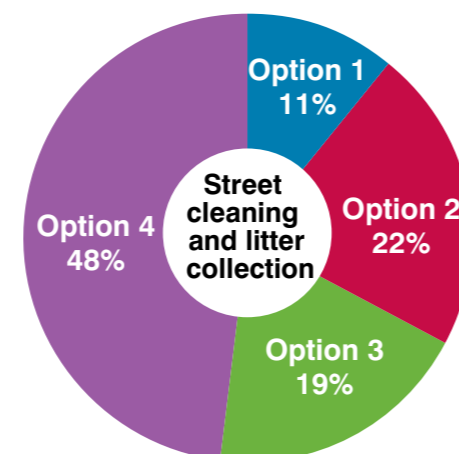
c) Street cleaning and litter collection

Options

1. No change.
2. Reduce one mechanical street sweeper, reducing frequency of cleaning in most areas.
3. Reduce mechanical sweeping of pavements in medium and low intensity areas.
4. Option 2 and Option 3.

The majority of Members (89%) support a reduction in our street cleaning and litter collection service. 65% are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Views differed about the level of change, but nearly half chose option 4. There were no apparent differences between rural and urban wards.



Base: 27 responses

d) Public toilets

Options

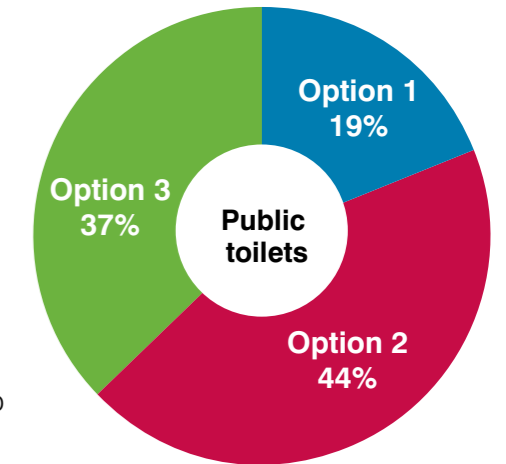
1. No change.
2. Replace the 5 fully attended toilets (cleaner on site) with a mobile service providing 4 cleans a day.
3. Option 2 but reduce to 3 cleans a day in winter and for all other toilets reduce from 3 to 2 cleans a day in winter.

81% of Members support reducing the costs of our public toilets service. 75% are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Views were fairly evenly split between options 2 and 3. Urban Members were more likely to favour option 2 and rural Members were more likely to favour option 3.

Other comments

- Try to get the big five toilets sponsored.



Base: 27 responses

e) Environmental Health

Options

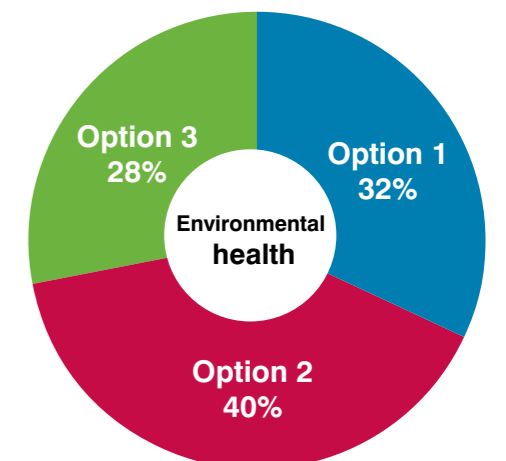
1. No change.
2. Stop free pest control service for those on means tested benefit. Reduce dog warden service and air quality monitoring. Reduce noise, nuisance and food safety services by around 10%.
3. Option 2 plus further more significant reductions to nuisance and food safety services.

Two thirds of Members support reducing the costs of the environmental health service. Views were fairly evenly spread across all three options; although option 2 was favoured slightly more than the other two. There were no significant differences between rural and urban Members.

Several Members felt that the environmental health service is already below the standard it should be and needs improving.

Other comments

- Renegotiate a better service.
- Improve efficiency and access to Worcestershire Regulatory Services.
- We don't get a service now.



Base: 25 responses



f) Heritage and conservation

Options

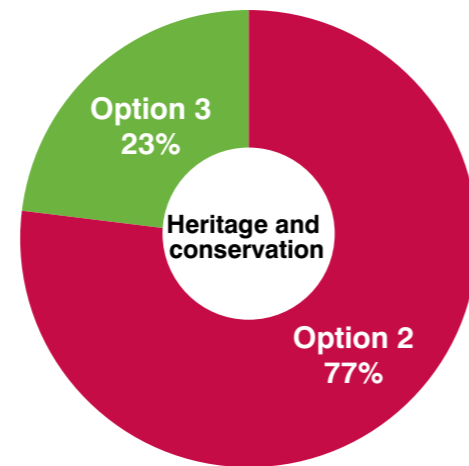
1. No change.
2. Enhanced collaborative working as Planning Specialist Services with Malvern Hills and Worcester City Councils.
3. Reduce the service by a third.

All Members support reducing the costs of the heritage and conservation service, with three quarters selecting option 2. 70% are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Of the five Members who voted for option 3, four cover urban wards.

Other comments:

- Charge more for advice.



Base: 26 responses

g) Community Contact Centres

Options

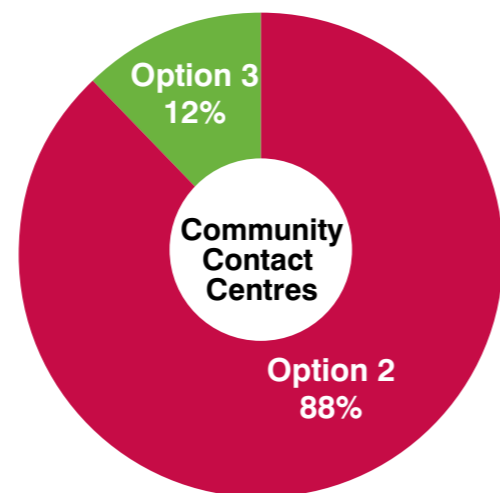
1. No change.
2. Keep the three centres open but with reconfigured operational arrangements.
3. Stop the service in Droitwich and Evesham.

All Members support reducing the costs of our Community Contact Centres, with the majority (88%) selecting option 2. 61% are willing to see changes made in the short term.

No urban Members chose option 3.

Other comments:

- Work with other local public services, town council, etc.



Base: 25 responses

h) Communications and information

Options

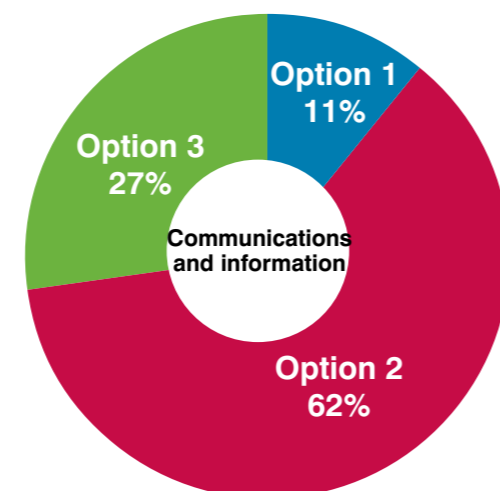
1. No change.
2. Reduce the costs of the service.
3. Make more radical reductions to the costs of the service

The majority of Members (89%) support reducing the amount we spend on communications and information. Nearly all (90%) are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Option 2 was supported by nearly two thirds. There were no apparent differences between rural and urban wards.

Other comments

- Hope the savings are achieved with efficiency management measures
- We do not sell ourselves well enough.
- Could we think about an internet version of the magazine? Every month?
- Look to source more income from outside work.



Base: 26 responses

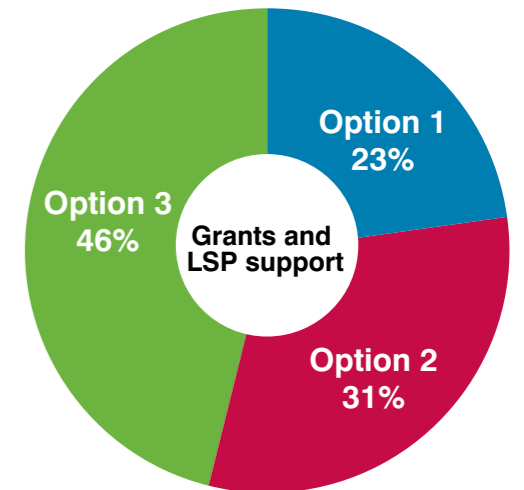
i) Grants and LSP support

Options

1. Continue as now until March 2017.
2. Reduce funding to one or more of: community grants, volunteer centres, CAB, LSPs.
3. Staged reduction in funding for one or more of the organisations and give notice of our intention.

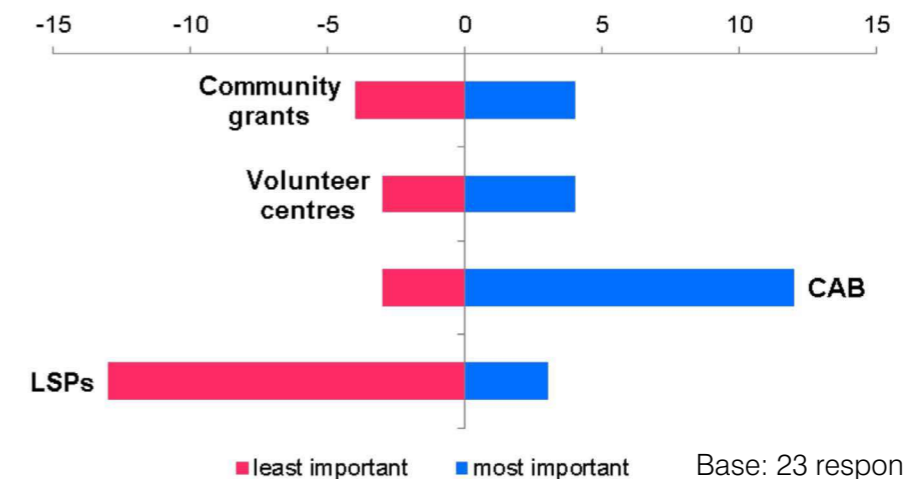
Three quarters (77%) of Members support reducing the amount of funding we give as community grants and to support volunteer centres, CAB and LSPs. 65% are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Views were fairly split between the three options. Option 3 was favoured by nearly half. There were no apparent differences between rural and urban wards.



Base: 26 responses

We asked Members to identify which one of the four groups that receive grant support was most important to continue funding and which one was the least important. As the chart below shows, just over half (56%) felt CAB was the most important, with the remaining views evenly spread across the groups. 57% felt that LSPs were the least important, again with the remaining views evenly spread across the other groups.



Base: 23 responses

j) Tourism and events

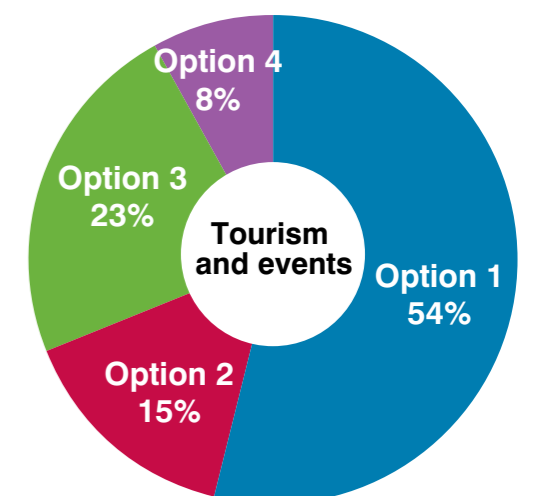
Options

1. No change.
2. Reduce our overall costs
3. Reduce our support to only a small number of key events across the district.
4. Stop support for all events and festivals.

Tourism and events is the only service where over half (54%) of Members do not want to see a reduction. Of the other 46%, all but one are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Half of those willing to see the service reduced chose option 3. There were no differences between rural and urban wards.

One Member felt there was a potential disparity between these results and those for LSP support.



Base: 26 responses

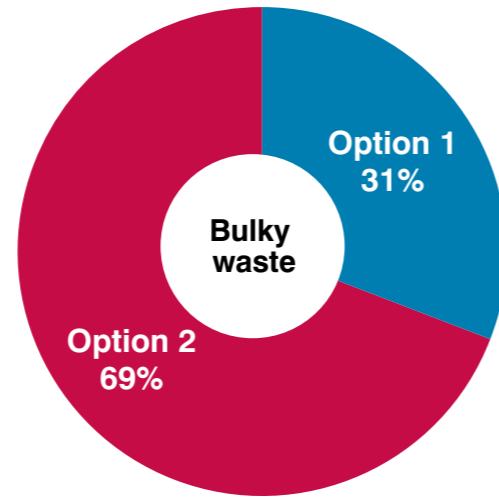
k) Bulky waste

Options

1. No change now. Remove free service when contract expires in 2017.
2. Remove free service and charge £18 per unit.

Over two thirds of Members support charging for the bulky waste service. Nearly all are willing to see changes made in the short term.

Several suggested different charges, such as £10 or £20 per item.



l) Car parking charges

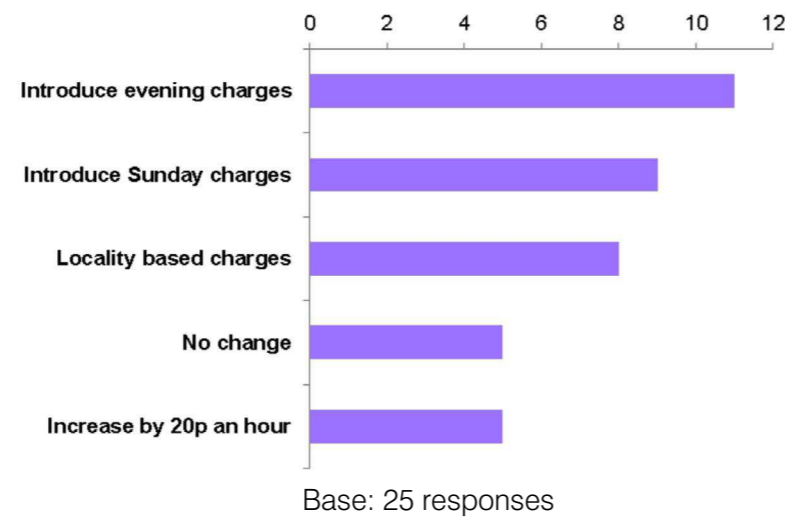
Options

1. No change.
2. Increase by 20p an hour.
3. Introduce evening charges.
4. Introduce Sunday charges.
5. Consider locality based charges instead of long and short stay.

Members could select as many options as they wanted for car parking charges. The results were quite mixed, with no overall majority for any of the options.

44% chose introducing evening charges and a third (36%) chose introducing Sunday charges. A third chose locality based charges. 20% selected no change and the same proportion selected increase charges by 20p an hour.

Three times as many rural Members selected option 5 as urban Members.



m) Council Tax increases

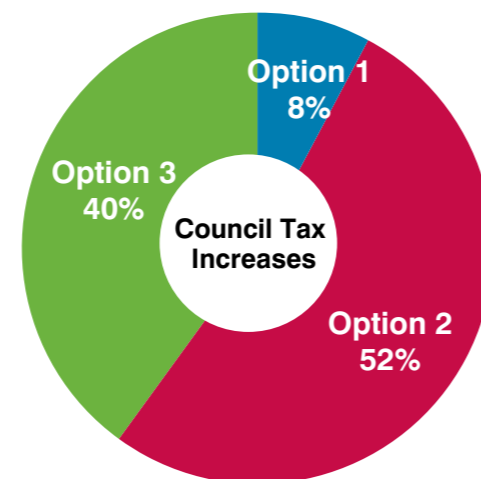
Options

1. Freeze Council Tax in 2014/15, followed by 2% increases per year.
2. Increase Council Tax by 2% per year from 2014/15.
3. If permitted, increase Council Tax by 4.6% or £5 in 2014/15, followed by 2% annually.

All but two Members support increasing Council Tax. Half support an increase of 2% a year from 2014/15 and 40% support a higher increase, if permitted.

Other comments:

- Would 1% be more palatable to the public if other cuts are made elsewhere to services?
- Would the public be happier to accept a 1% increase and accept with grace say car parking increases?



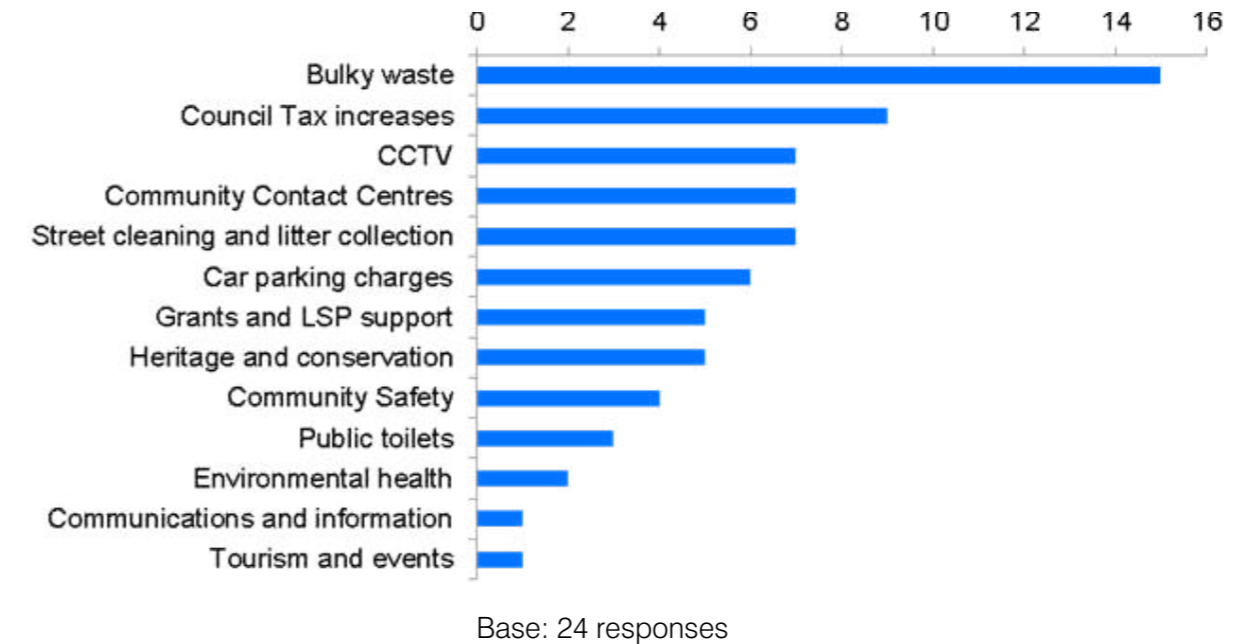
Base: 25 responses

Most and least willing to change

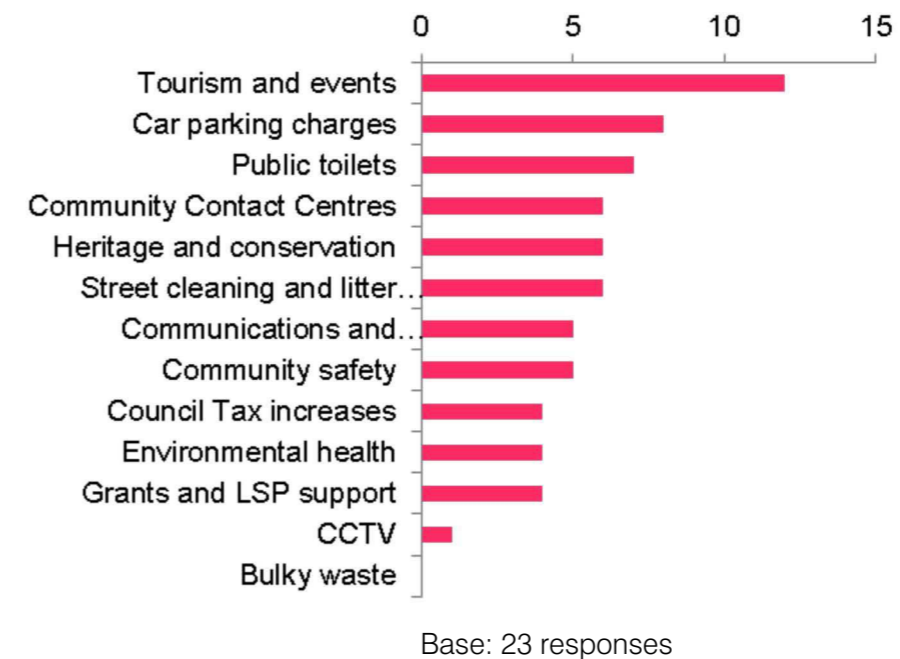
We asked Members to consider the 13 services and to indicate which three they would be most willing to see changed to generate savings or more income and which three they would be least willing to see changed. The results are presented below.

Bulky waste and Council Tax increases topped the list of things Members are most willing to see changed, while tourism and events and car parking charges are the top two things Members least want to see changed.

Most willing to see changed



Least willing to see changed



Discussions about the Grow, Save, Charge Plan

Jack Hegarty and Vic Allison shared the proposals in each section of the Grow, Save, Charge plan and facilitated a discussion around these. Members raised questions in relation to the main elements of the plan and were supportive of the principles.

There were three main areas of discussion:

a) Use of New Homes Bonus: Members were generally receptive to a higher figure being included in the plan over and above the originally suggested £200,000 per annum. Members were also very strongly in favour of trying to keep a reward for parishes on the same principles as the current New Homes Bonus Protocol but recognised that the level of reward may need to change.

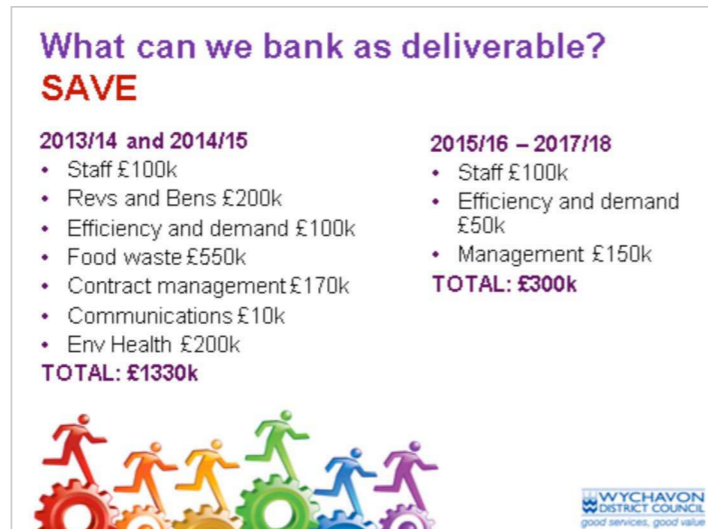
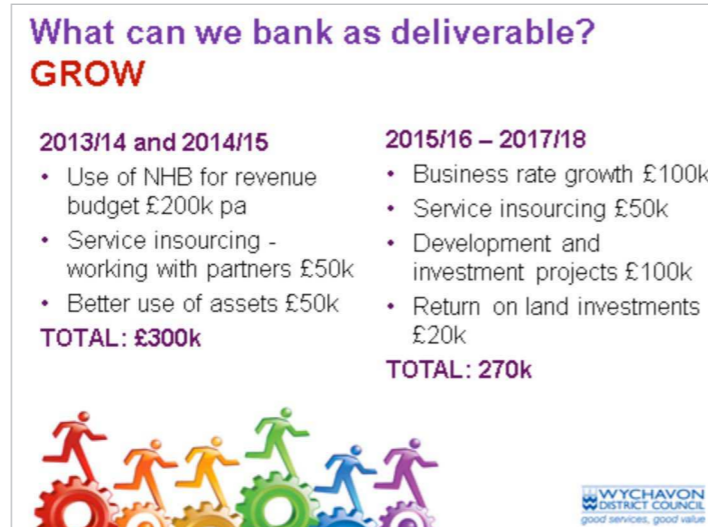
b) Use of reserves: Members expressed an interest in how we use revenue balances (and sought clarity between the term 'cash balances' and revenue balances). Members were supportive of the use of internal borrowing to support investments.

c) Council Tax Support: Members were advised that positive discussions were underway with Worcestershire County Council and other major preceptors in respect of recognition of the additional costs of collection. Other billing authorities in Worcestershire would also benefit from Wychavon's approach.

Other comments

During the evening, councillors had an opportunity to highlight any other areas where they felt we could generate savings or increase income. The following suggestions were made:

- Review of SMT services/costs.
- Review of Member numbers.
- Negotiate CCTV charges with the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Two people suggested smarter work on enforcement and community wardens, combining similar areas such as fly tipping, most planning enforcement, litter, dog fouling.
- Find a private partner for Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) so the service could ultimately be self-financing and give a better service (like Revenues and Benefits).
- Use WRS with private partners as a vehicle to charge for training food establishments.
- Possibly sub-contract Financial Services (where feasible) – Civica?
- Pass responsibility for conservation area planning reports to town and parish councils who have local knowledge and views of residents.



- Increase sponsorship on all communications.
- Be more adventurous in our investments and review our assets for sale.
- Sell off all major car parks – to generate capital for better investment.
- Sell the Civic Centre, mentioned by several.
- Big opportunity to think outside the box. - look at generating more income through departments.
- Cost of heating offices.
- Are we able to contribute on the detail when services drill down to the specifics?

Conclusions

All Members support reducing the costs of the Community Contact Centres and heritage and conservation service. They gave a clear indication that savings should be achieved by reconfiguring the operational arrangements of the three Contact Centres and collaborating with other councils on a Planning Specialist Services.

There is strong support for reducing the costs of the following services: CCTV, community safety, street cleaning, public toilets, communications and information, grants and LSP support.

Members gave a clear indication about how savings should be achieved for the community safety and communications services. Views are more mixed on the level of service reductions for CCTV, street cleaning, public toilets, grants and LSP support. On the latter, Members indicated that grant funding for CAB is most important and funding for the LSPs is least important.

While there is support for reducing the costs of the environmental health service from two thirds of Members, views on the level of reductions are mixed and a number of Members expressed concerns about the current level of service.

Tourism and events is the only service where over half of Members do not want a reduction in service.

There is strong support for introducing charges for bulky waste and increasing levels of Council Tax. There are more mixed views on increasing car parking charges.

Workshop attendees

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Alastair Adams | 15. Glenise Noyes |
| 2. Bob Banks | 16. Tom Noyes |
| 3. Graeme Beale | 17. Barrie Parmenter |
| 4. Bob Brooks | 18. Judy Pearce |
| 5. David Brotheridge | 19. Margaret Rowley |
| 6. Ron Davis | 20. Frances Smith |
| 7. Nigel Dowty | 21. John Smith |
| 8. Andrew Dyke | 22. Audrey Steel |
| 9. Wendy Dyke | 23. Emma Stokes |
| 10. David Lee | 24. Peter Tomlinson |
| 11. Tom McDonald | 25. Charles Tucker |
| 12. Paul Middlebrough | 26. Liz Tucker |
| 13. Tony Miller | 27. Val Wood |
| 14. Richard Morris | |

Saving and charging options: part one

Name (optional)	Ward type Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/>	If urban, which town does it cover?
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- For each service listed below, circle the **one** option which is most acceptable to you.
- Tick either the short term or longer term box to indicate when you think we should introduce any changes. Short term means during 2014/15 and longer term means from 2015/16 onwards.
- Please hand in your sheet as soon as you have completed it.

Service	Options and savings/income				Short term (Tick 1)	Longer term
	1. No change	2.	3.	4.		
Example service	1. No change	2. Reduce levels by 50% £40,000	3. Stop the service	£80,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CCTV	1. No change	2. Reduce monitoring during the working day £15,000	3. Just record CCTV images, no monitoring £45,000	4. Stop the service when the contract ends £120,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community safety	1. No change	2. Reduce the staffing costs of the service £possible cost to us	3. Stop the service and meet our statutory obligations in other ways £10,000	£40,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Service	Options and savings/income				Short term (Tick 1)	Longer term
	1. No change	2.	3.	4.		
Heritage and conservation	1. No change	2. Enhanced collaborative working as Planning Specialist Services with Malvern Hills and Worcester City Councils £50,000	3. Reduce the service by a third	£61,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street cleaning	1. No change	2. Reduce one mechanical street sweeper and frequency of street cleaning in most areas £42,500	3. Reduce mechanical sweeping of pavements in medium and low intensity areas £54,000	4. Option 2 and Option 3 £96,500	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public toilets	1. No change	2. Replace the 5 fully attended toilets (cleaner on site) with a mobile service providing 4 cleans a day £58,000 approx	3. Option 2 but reduce to 3 cleans a day in winter and for all other toilets reduce from 3 to 2 cleans a day in winter £72,000 approx		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental health	1. No change	2. Stop free pest control service for those on means tested benefit. Reduce dog warden service and air quality monitoring. Reduce noise, nuisance and food safety services by around 10%. £50,000	3. Option 2 plus further more significant reductions to nuisance and food safety services £100,000		We will not introduce any changes until 2015/16 at the earliest	
Grants and LSP support	1. Continue as now until March 2017	2. Reduce funding to one or more of: community grants, volunteer centres, CAB, LSPs £30,000 pa for 2014/15, 15/16 and 16/17	3. Staged reduction in funding for one or more of the organisations and give notice of our intention £15,000 in 2014/15, £30,000 in 15/16 and £60,000 16/17		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants and LSP support	Which one is it most important we continue funding? Community grants <input type="checkbox"/> CAB <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer centres <input type="checkbox"/> LSPs <input type="checkbox"/>		Which one is it least important we continue funding? Community grants <input type="checkbox"/> CAB <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer centres <input type="checkbox"/> LSPs <input type="checkbox"/>			

Saving and charging options: part two

Name (optional)	Ward type Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/>	If urban, which town does it cover?
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Service	Options and savings/income					Short term	Longer term	
Community Contact Centres	1. No change	2. Keep the three centres open but with reconfigured operational arrangements £100,000 approx	3. Stop the service in Droitwich and Evesham £130,000			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bulky waste	1. No change now. Remove free service when contract expires in 2017.	2. Remove free service and charge £18 per unit. £30,000 approx				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communications and information	1. No change	2. Reduce the costs of the service £10,000	3. Make more radical reductions to the costs of the service £15,000			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Car parking charges	For car parking charges, please circle all of the changes that are acceptable to you.							
	1. No change	2. Increase by 20p an hour £200,000	3. Introduce evening charges	4. Introduce Sunday charges £100,000	5. Consider locality based charges instead of long and short stay £unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Service	Options and savings/income			Short term	Longer term	
Tourism and events	1. No change	2. Reduce our overall costs for supporting tourism and events £10,000	3. Reduce our support to only a small number of key events across the district £20,000	4. Stop support for all events and festivals £70,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council Tax increases	1. Freeze Council Tax in 2014/15, followed by 2% increases per year	2. Increase Council Tax by 2% per year from 2014/15 +£94,000 per year	3. If permitted, increase Council Tax by 4.6% or £5 in 2014/15, followed by 2% annually +£218,000 in 2014/15, then £94,000 a year		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thinking about the 13 services we have looked at tonight, which three are you **most** willing to see changed to generate savings or more income and which three are you **least** willing to see changed?

Service	Most willing (tick 3)	Least willing (tick 3)
a) Bulky waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Car parking charges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) CCTV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Communications and information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Community Contact Centres	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Council Tax increases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Environmental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Grants and LSP support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Heritage and conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Public toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Street cleaning and litter collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 4 Localism Communities Advisory Panel session

4 November 2013

This report presents the outcomes of a Grow, Save, Charge workshop session held during the Localism and Communities Advisory Panel meeting on 4 November. The purpose of the session was to give the Panel an opportunity to discuss the options and impacts for three service areas, which fall within the Panel's sphere of influence. In preparation for the meeting, we sent the Panel saving and charging options and impacts for the three services.

The following eight panel members were present:

1. Michael Amies - community co-optee
2. Janet Cresswell - community co-optee
3. George Mackison - community co-optee
4. Barrie Parmenter - Wychavon District Council
5. Peter Pinfield - Wychavon District Council
6. Margaret Rowley - Wychavon District Council
7. Audrey Steel - Wychavon District Council
8. Val Wood - Wychavon District Council

The financial challenge

Jack Hegarty gave a brief reminder of the scale of the financial challenge we face and our plans to meet it. We will see a 59% reduction in our Government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18, giving us a financial gap of £4 million by 2017/18.

Saving and charging options and impacts

The session focused on the following three service areas: Community Contact Centres, tourism and events, and grants and LSP support. Jack outlined the savings options and impacts for each of these services and Panel members had an opportunity to ask questions.

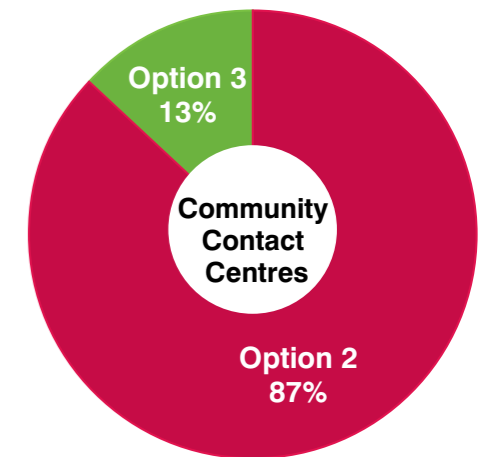
For each of the services, all eight Panel members present completed a sheet indicating which option was most acceptable to them and whether we should introduce changes in the short term (during 2014/15) or longer term. The results of their options choices are presented below.

a) Community Contact Centres

Options

1. No change.
2. Keep the three centres open but with reconfigured operational arrangements.
3. Stop the service in Droitwich and Evesham.

All Panel members support reducing the costs of our Community Contact Centres, with the majority (87%) selecting option 2. 83% are willing to see changes made in the short term.

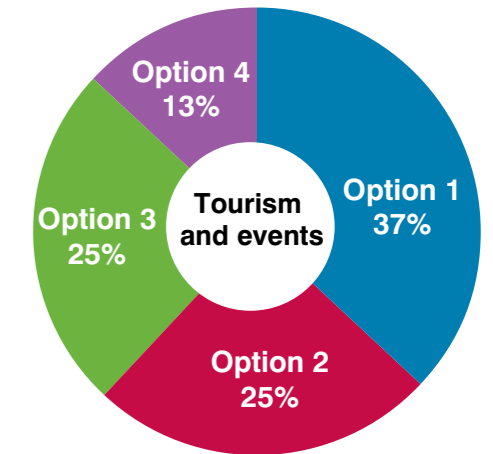


b) Tourism and events

Options

1. No change.
2. Reduce our overall costs
3. Reduce our support to only a small number of key events across the district.
4. Stop support for all events and festivals.

63% of Panel members support reducing the amount we spend on tourism and events. Half selected option 2 or 3. 60% are willing to see changes made in the short term.



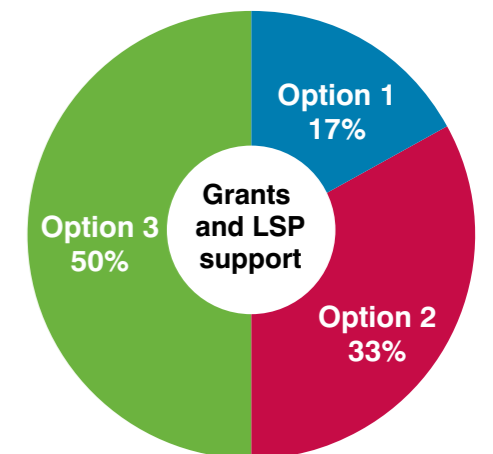
c) Grants and LSP support

Options

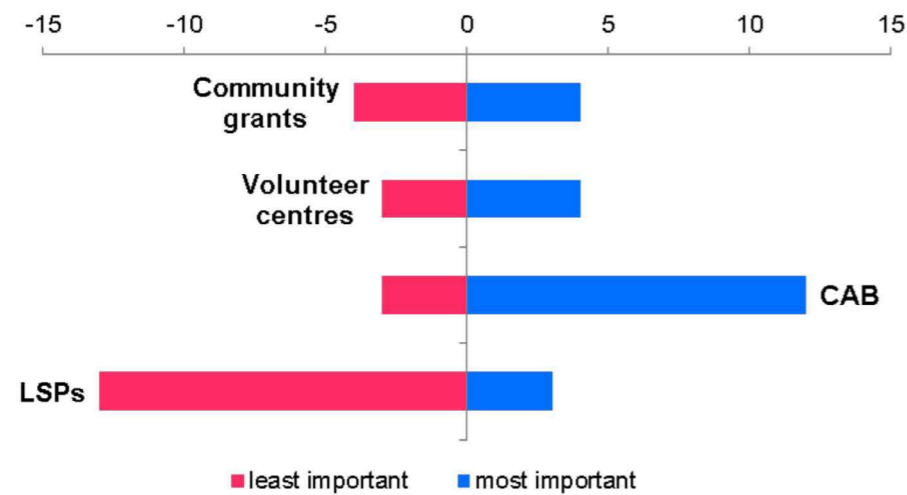
1. Continue as now until March 2017.
2. Reduce funding to one or more of: community grants, volunteer centres, CAB, LSPs.
3. Staged reduction in funding for one or more of the organisations and give notice of our intention.

83% of Panel members support reducing the amount of funding we give as community grants and to support volunteer centres, CAB and LSPs. Option 3 was favoured by half.

80% are willing to see changes made in the short term.



We asked the Panel to identify which one of the four groups that receive grant support was most important to continue funding and which one was the least important. As the chart shows, 71% felt CAB was the most important the remaining 29% said community grants were the most important. 57% felt that community grants were the least important, with the remaining views evenly spread across the other recipient.



Almost all the comments Panel members made were about grants and LSP support:

- The LSPs do a good job co-ordinating local opinion. It is important that they remain local. There is no scope for sharing, but they can function with lower financial support as they duplicate community grants.
- Grants cost the council money, LSPs attract funding from outside bodies so should not be linked with the others.
- Volunteer centres should continue as they are now.
- Could combine grants and LSP support due to their similar processes and impacts.
- Retain LSP contact with the local community through representative structure.
- If we reduce any of the grant funding it is key that we give the public information about what other avenues they have available.

In terms of events, one person suggested that we should pick the 'best' events and focus on supporting them. They also suggested we could create a reserve to kick start good new ideas.

Conclusions

All Panel members support reducing the costs of the Community Contact Centres. They gave a clear indication that savings should be achieved by reconfiguring the operational arrangements of the three Contact Centres.

Views are more mixed on the level of service reductions for both tourism and events and grants and LSP support. On the latter, Panel members indicated that grant funding for CAB is most important and funding for community grants is least important.

Appendix 5 Summary of wider impacts

This Appendix contains a summary of the impacts of some of the Save and Charge proposals in this plan. More detailed [Equality Impact Assessments](#) are also available for some of the proposals.

Food waste collection

Area of saving: stop the service from January 2014.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Summary of impacts: We estimate that nearly one fifth of households (10,000), who currently use the service, will be affected by this change. Our research suggests that across the four collection round types (farm, semi-rural, urban and villages) there are four core types of user. These are:

- Early middle aged parents
- Older people living in large houses in mature suburbs
- Better off empty nesters in low density estates on town fringes
- Comfortably off industrial workers owning their own home.

There is no evidence to suggest that removal of the food waste service will have any significant adverse impacts on any groups of residents with regard to their protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act. The change in service will affect all those who currently use the scheme regardless of their characteristics or the community group to which they belong.

When we stop the service, as now, all households will be able to put all their food waste comingled into their black bins for collection once a fortnight. At present, 80.6 % of all households are already using their black bins to comingle their food waste with residual waste and/or home composting or are not producing any or much food waste.

We will develop a Communications Strategy to ensure a smooth transition of withdrawal of the service and to target receptive households to encourage waste minimisation and home composting.

Community Contact Centres

Area of saving: keep a viable presence in all three towns but transform the way in which we provide the service to reduce costs.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Impact on communities: While changing the availability of contact centres, for example through a reduction in opening hours, may well inconvenience a small number of customers who prefer to contact us face to face, there is no evidence to suggest that this will result in an adverse impact for anyone in relation to a specific protected characteristic. While some may perceive such a change as one that has a negative impact, given the overall declining number of users and the variety of options being available on how the same services can be accessed, the overall impact of such changes will be neutral.

Impact on partners: Keeping all three centres open but reconfiguring operational arrangements may mean we have a reduced service available to partners, however as most of our partners are also looking to reduce costs this could balance out.

Impact on us: Reconfiguring operational arrangements will minimise the impact on more vulnerable residents and still reduce costs.

Heritage and conservation service

Area of saving: develop a specialist shared service with neighbouring councils to secure quality of service whilst delivering savings.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Impact on communities: We will retain a service but there is a likelihood of shift away from face to face and towards self-service for external customers.

Impact on partners: Dependent upon active participation and confirmed commitment from partner authorities. A specialist shared service will deliver savings across the partner councils.

Impact on us: Enhanced capacity and resilience to deliver across the range of services. Reduced access to dedicated 'in-house' service for internal customers. Need to integrate/invest in shared ICT to support both customer self service and the Planning Specialist Service.

Public toilets

Area of saving: reduce our spending on public toilets by removing attendants and reducing the number of daily cleans.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Impact on communities: Public toilet facilities will continue to be available so there should be no major adverse impact on the community. Access to appropriate toilet facilities is important to two particular groups – the disabled and older people who have protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act.

The replacement of the five attended toilets with unattended toilets may have some impact on occasional disabled users who may have forgotten their RADAR key to unlock the disabled toilets. However, this is estimated to be a small number and not all facilities have RADAR locks. Also visitors to the district often talk to the attendants and are given directions etc. We intend to seek sponsorship from the private sector to help fund the continuation of the full time attendants.

The attended toilets tend to be in busy locations with high footfalls, so are more likely to have a dip in cleanliness standards in between cleans. The attendants also stop any anti-social behaviour happening in the toilets and quickly report any activity to the Police.

Impact on partners: MITIE Cleaning provides the cleansing service for our toilets.

Impact on us: Likely reduction in the number of stars the toilets achieve. Without attendants standards may drop in between cleans. Potential increase in our property maintenance costs as a result of increased vandalism in the currently attended toilets. A number of regular users may complain/campaign to keep their attendants. There may be negative press coverage. The number of complaints concerning cleanliness may increase.

Street cleaning and litter collection

Area of saving: reduce the frequency of mechanical street sweeping and pavement sweeping.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Impact on communities: Residents, visitors and businesses may notice a slight reduction in cleanliness standards, including more weeds growing in road kerbs and pavements, but the proposed reduction is aimed at minimising the impact. The proposal should not have any adverse impact on a particular equality group.

Impact on partners: County highways may receive calls regarding complaints over street cleanliness. FCC will have a reduced ability to respond to peaks in demand due to weather /emergencies/seasonal debris.

Impact on us: A reduced level of resources will make it more difficult to deal with peaks in demand and emergencies. Any breakdowns will mean a delay in delivering the service as there will be no spare resources. An increase in ad hoc chargeable works to cope with any fall in standards will happen but it is difficult to estimate the value of this. This could lead to an increase in complaints from the public and bad press coverage plus a reduction in levels of customer satisfaction as well as a downgrading of our Clean Streets status.

Grants to voluntary and community groups, including LSP support

Area of saving: reduce how much funding support we give in grant support and to LSPs.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Impact on communities: Reduction or stopping of funding to the three Volunteer Centres and the CAB will impact on the sustainability of these voluntary organisations. This in turn will impact on existing and future residents who would hope to be supported by advice services (e.g. debt, benefits, housing), community transport schemes (helping the elderly and disabled get to medical appointments and shopping) and a range of other activities that benefit from trained and supported volunteers. These services typically support the more vulnerable in our communities.

Changes to the future community grants and LSP activity support should not have any direct negative impacts on existing customers as the funding would be targeted at new potential activities. However, it should be recognised that the overall amount of funding available for community projects will be reduced and this will have an impact on future outcomes and ability to attract external funding to the district.

Impact on partners: Our funding to the three Volunteer Centres and the CAB directly supports their central costs (premises, staff) which will be difficult to replace from other sources. Consequently the reduction or stopping of funding to the three Volunteer Centres and the CAB will potentially threaten their ability to provide services and potentially threaten their future existence. This in turn will put more pressure on partners such as the health and adult care services.

The current LSP structure provides a structured mechanism for Wychavon to inform and work collaboratively with a wide range of key local and strategic partners. Reducing or stopping of funding to the partnerships will directly impact on the ability of partners to deliver local projects.

Impact on us: The reduction in services provided by the CAB would result in more residents contacting us directly for advice and information which in turn will put pressure on staff. The reduction in local debt advice may also result in more local residents requiring support from the benefits and housing services.

Changes to the community grants programme will potentially reduce our profile and significance with the voluntary sector. The grant programme has provided us with a good opportunity over the decades to understand more fully local potential projects and significantly local champions. In turn this has allowed us to provide support, advice and signposting to a range of other potential sources of funding.

Communications and information

Area of saving: reduce costs of communications.

Equality Impact Assessment: not required as only a small change and reduction in spending.

Impact on communities: Reducing spend on communications staffing would have an impact on the service we're able to offer. It could mean we would have less capacity to deal with media enquiries, manage our reputation proactively, campaigns and promotion, management of future projects such as the website, internal communications and regular products. This will impact on residents because it could harm our reputation and have an impact on staff and residents' satisfaction ratings.

We do have a big push on self service and the website, so we need to be careful about how we approach the resource there however, there may be the potential for shared options that could help with savings on this area.

The magazine is well liked by communities and receives a strong recall rate. It is a cost effective way of getting messages out to the whole community.

Impact on partners: Small impact on partners. Might make joint promotional opportunities take longer or not happen as well.

Impact on us: We would feel this reduction and it would have an impact on our ability to support the organisation to as higher standard as we might like. There might not always be someone on hand to provide, advice, support or to answer questions.

Community safety service

Area of saving: deliver a reduced and remodelled service from 2015/16.

Equality Impact Assessment: initial assessment completed, we will need to revisit this in the longer term before making significant changes to the service.

Impact on communities: This service helps us to work towards building strong cohesive communities. It contributes to making Wychavon a safer place to live, work and visit, helping to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and increasing public confidence. Reducing or stopping the service would have implications for lower level crime issues not being dealt with effectively. The wardens provide a quick service to tackle issues such as drinking in the street and teenagers causing neighbours nuisance and work to persuade people to change their habits. The Police do not respond to these low level nuisance issues and if we can't react to complaints from residents through a warden service then the quality of life of our residents will suffer.

The community profile of the wardens can be viewed as one which helps promote good relations between community groups and therefore helps us to meet one of our equality duties. The service also works with particular social groups such as older people and those from different ethnic groups, providing targeted support. If the service is to continue it may be useful to sharpen the focus of eligibility to ensure we are maximising the service to target those most at risk of discrimination and least able to help themselves.

Impact on partners: The Police rely on the service for help with tackling low level crime. For example assisting Community Support Officers, installing CCTV and security items. A reduction or cessation of the service would impact on county council services, such as domestic violence, offender management and Safer Communities work. There may be wider effects if we reduced or stopped the service, particularly at a time when there is a reduction in local policing across the district.

Impact on us: if we significantly reduced or stopped the service, there would be a serious impact on other service units, such as client services (parks officers in particular) who work very closely with community safety. There are many examples of this work over the past few years, with successful outcomes. There could also be a negative impact on our reputation as the effects would be felt by the most vulnerable residents and particular social groups.

CCTV

Area of saving: pursue a remodelled service achieving a different balance between monitoring costs and recording costs with effect from 2015/16.

Equality Impact Assessment: we will need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment in the longer term before making significant changes to the service.

Impact on communities: Possible reduction in public safety and a much larger perceptual reduction. Corresponding increase in the fear of crime and actual increase in some crimes due to reduced observations. Loss of ability to use cameras for emergencies such as flooding. Potential for increased fly-tipping and littering. Loss of monitoring of retail radio system monitoring which is active during the working day.

Impact on partners: Significantly reduced support for the Police in dealing with crimes, loss of CCTV evidence, increased need for physical presence by Police. Increased impact on Worcester City Council potentially due to city centre issues. However the value of the recorded images is questionable and may prove useless to the Police and partners. Without active monitoring the images may be of short duration with significant time gaps.

Impact on us: Increased need to provide presence at the Civic Centre out of operational hours at additional cost. The system would still be available for use in emergencies by trained, approved staff.

Council Tax Support scheme

Area of charging: make changes to our Council Tax Support scheme.

Equality Impact Assessment: assessment completed.

Summary of impacts: The proposals will affect 3,749 households currently in receipt of Council Tax Support.

The changes will have a positive impact on pension age claimants, who are protected from any changes under national legislation.

The changes will affect working age Council Tax Support claimants who will be required to pay at least 20% of their Council Tax bill.

The changes are likely to have an adverse impact on low income, working age claimants. The potential adverse impact on these groups is justified for financial reasons. On balance, we think it's fairer that everyone pays something towards their Council Tax. The service has always been provided in relation to income rather than eligibility in terms of any specific protected characteristic. To some extent the change will contribute

towards better community relations as it will be fairer for everyone and create less social divisions or resulting community tensions.

The on-going cost of not changing the Council Tax Support scheme is not affordable in the long run for us and our major preceptors and would therefore have a detrimental effect on other services if such changes are not made.

To mitigate against significant adverse impacts, we propose to introduce a £50,000 annual discretionary hardship fund. We will consider cases of exceptional hardship and inability to pay and will consider making discretionary awards from the hardship fund.

Bulky waste collection

Area of charging: reconfigure the service into a chargeable one.

Equality Impact Assessment: [assessment](#) completed.

Impact on communities: If Mosaic shows elderly/disabled/low income households are high users of the service this will affect them most, and those without a car. There may be an increase in illegally fly tipped waste which will be seen by residents and visitors alike.

Impact on partners: Opportunity to help raise awareness of reuse services such as Roundabout, Freecycle, Gumtree, etc.

Impact on us: There may be complaints and bad press coverage as a result of the removal of FOC bulky service. Could help reduce the level of waste we collect which will help improve our recycling rate.

This plan is also available in large print, Braille, on CD or in other languages.
To request a copy in a different format ring 01386 565000.



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