



Let's Talk: Consultation on the Council Plan and budget

Final report January 2016

Introduction

'Let's Talk' is Cheshire West and Chester Council's consultation on its four-year plan and how the budget is used to deliver it. The Council has to save £47 million by 2020¹, and the views of local communities are vital in influencing the difficult decisions that lie ahead. The consultation was open to all and specifically targeted at local residents, businesses, partners and community groups. The consultation ran for a 12-week period from 14 October 2015 to 6 January 2016 and used a wide range of methods to hear people's views, including:

- Full consultation document and questionnaire - available online and hardcopy.
- Summary consultation booklet and short questionnaire - available online, hardcopy and Easy Read (a more accessible format for those with learning difficulties).
- An interactive budget simulator, where participants could have a go at setting the Council budget and submit it.
- A public-facing webchat with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Legal and Finance.
- Ten discussion groups – one on each of the Council's proposed priorities.
- A breakfast consultation event with the local business community.
- A half-day interactive event for local partners and community groups.
- A 'consultation cascade' where Council teams took the consultation out to the community.

In all, over 1,800 people and groups participated in the consultation in some form. More information about the consultation process is available on page 48.

This report summarises the consultation findings, to help shape Council plans and priorities over the next four years.

Key messages

Below are the overarching messages that have emerged from the consultation:

- There is strong support for the Council's proposed priorities and direction of travel.
- Priorities that protect those most vulnerable are seen as particularly important.
- An increase in Council Tax is generally supported in order to maintain and protect services. Those who completed the budget simulator opted to raise Council Tax by an average of 2.4%.

¹ Note that at the time of the consultation, the savings target was £47 million, which has since been revised upwards since the Local Finance Settlement in December.



- Partners understand the budget pressures the Council faces and are keen to work with the Council to achieve its priorities.
- Residents, businesses and partners alike agree that integration and joining-up services where feasible, is a positive step that will create efficiencies and improve services.
- There is strong support for monitoring contracts effectively and ensuring that local businesses and community and voluntary organisations are in a position to compete for Council work.
- Some rural communities and market towns would like more support from the Council.

In terms of individual priorities:

- There was concern about the potential to charge for car parking in areas that are currently free (proposal J1 in the Let's Talk booklet).
- Many residents and partners feel Councillors' local budgets (Member budgets) have been very effective and do not wish to see them reduced (proposal G11).

Key headlines for each of the priorities are presented below.

- **All of our families, children and young people are supported to get the best start in life** – This is seen as fundamental by residents, partners and businesses, and will bring long-term benefits to individuals and society. Children's centres are well-regarded and work with complex families is particularly supported. (See page 10 for more information).
- **Vulnerable adults and children feel safe and are protected** – This is the top priority from across all the consultation activities as people feel it is vital that those most vulnerable feel safe and are supported. (More information on page 13).
- **Compassionate and joined up care that supports the independence of older people and vulnerable adults²** – This is the second most important priority. There is significant support for the integration of health and social care and for promoting prevention. Work on social isolation and Dementia are also vital. (See page 16 for more information).
- **Cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods in the country** – There is strong support for addressing antisocial behaviour and some concern about any potential staffing reduction in the Community Safety Team. Energy efficiency initiatives are welcomed as this is a positive investment for the future and will bring environmental benefits. Many also feel that communities would like to get more involved in the future direction of their area. (More information on page 19).
- **Good quality affordable housing that meets the needs of our diverse communities** – Many feel there is an urgent need for more affordable housing in the Borough and are particularly supportive of plans to bring empty homes back into use. There are some concerns with the proposals to save money in this area as people feel it may reduce

² This priority has been re-titled to 'Older people and vulnerable adults are compassionately supported to lead fulfilled and independent lives'



housing services, and/or access to housing services, for vulnerable people. (More information on page 22).

- **Vibrant and healthy communities with inclusive leisure, heritage and culture** – Whilst this is not necessarily participants' top priority there is positive support for the Councils' work to promote health, culture and leisure. In particular, there are strong views on protecting library services and public health services. (See page 25 for more information)
- **Our resources are well managed and reflect the priorities of our residents** – Many see this as fundamental as it underpins our ability to deliver everything else – in line with our communities' views. There is general support for reviewing the number of Councillors to generate efficiencies and concern about reducing local budgets (Member budgets), which many feel bring significant community benefit. (See page 28).
- **People are well educated, skilled and earn a decent living** – This was voted the top priority by partners and is strongly supported by the local business community. This is seen as key to creating prosperity and addressing local 'skills gaps'. (More information on page 31).
- **A great place to do business** – There is overwhelming support for working sub-regionally and devolution. The Council's regeneration projects are also welcomed and the Council needs to maximise the benefits of this for local businesses and the local workforce. (See page 33 for more information).
- **A well connected and accessible Borough** – Residents, businesses and partners see transport links as essential and in need of improvement. There is significant concern about the potential to introduce car parking charges in areas that are currently free as people feel this would have a detrimental effect on town and village centres. (More on page 36).



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Let's talk

Help shape the future of your neighbourhood and your borough

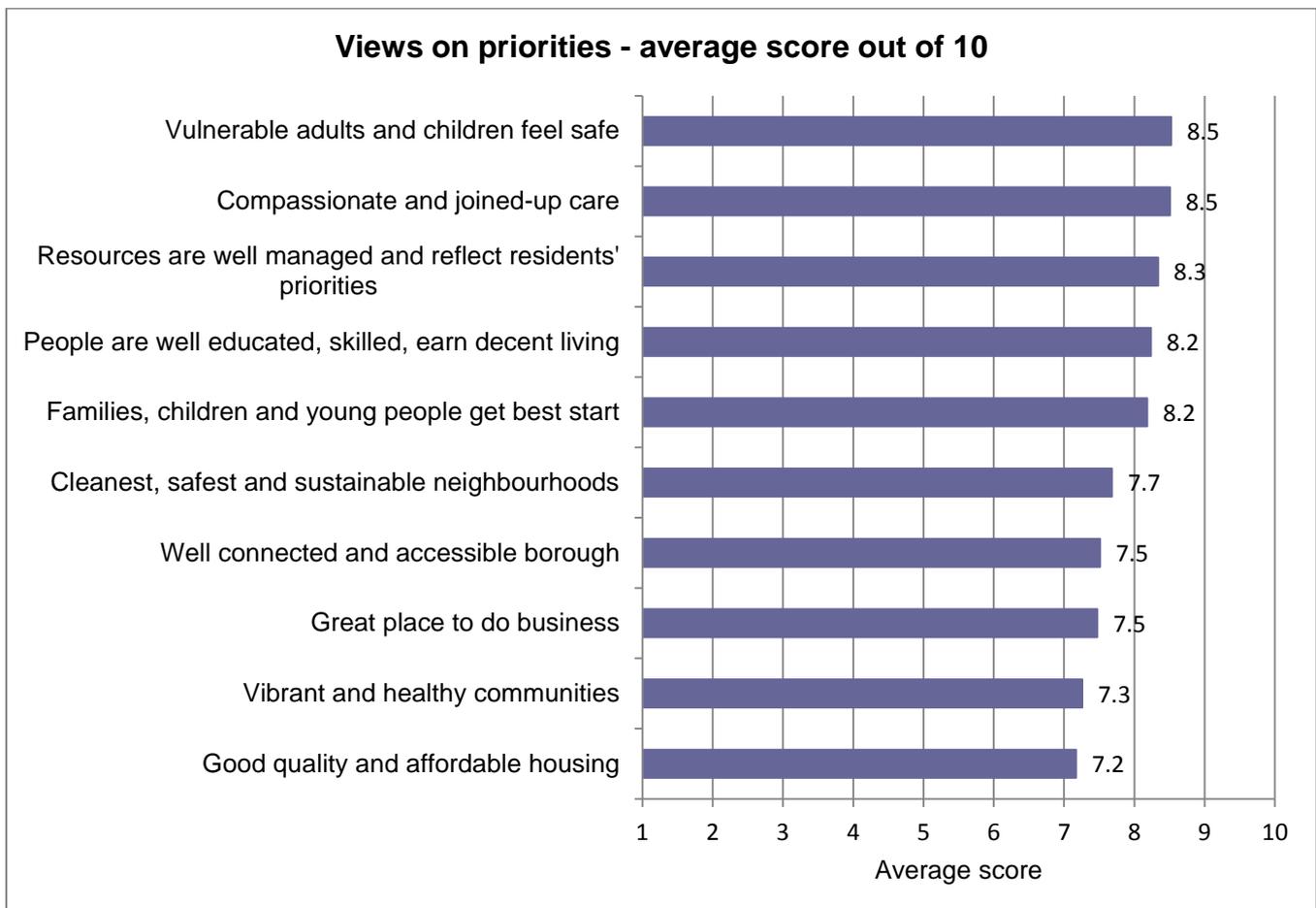
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Overall priorities

The Council has put forward a list of ten outcomes, or priorities, it proposes to focus on over the next four years. The questionnaires asked people to say how important or unimportant they felt these priorities were to them on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was 'not at all important' and 10 was 'extremely important'. Graph 1 below shows how people rated them.

Graph 1: The relative importance of proposed Council priorities



(Note that titles have been abbreviated to fit on the graph. Full titles of priorities are in the Let's Talk booklet and throughout this document). Base for graph: 1001 to 995.

Closer analysis shows that:

- All of the ten priorities are considered important; with all priorities having an average score of 7.2 or more out of 10. Many individuals actually gave very high scores (9 or 10) for all priorities.
- There is strong agreement that outcomes which support those most vulnerable should be the highest priority. The top two priorities on the graph are 'Vulnerable adults and children



feel safe' and 'Compassionate and joined-up care'. Analysis of the budget simulator also supports this view.

- There is general agreement that the top four priorities are most important to focus on, in that views on these are very consistent. Whereas responses about the remaining priorities are more varied (polarised).
- Where people disagree with the priorities, and have given low scores, it tends to be because they want to emphasise a particular issue (or issues) and have given one or two priorities a high score of 9 or 10 and all the rest 1 or 2. In some cases people have scored low for all issues, as they are keen to stress that Council Tax should not be increased.

Other areas of focus

- The consultation asked people whether there was anything missing from the Council's proposed priorities. Many people used this as an opportunity to emphasise elements of the proposals that were particularly important to them. For example, views on car parking (proposal J1 in the Let's Talk booklet), social isolation issues (CF in the booklet), care for the elderly (Compassionate care priority), housing (Affordable housing priority), culture and heritage (Vibrant and healthy priority), creating job opportunities and supporting businesses (Great place to do business priority) and providing more facilities for cyclists (JC). More detailed views on these issues are covered elsewhere in the report.

Other areas of focus participants mentioned include:

- Maintaining, improving and protecting the environment, as well as preserving green spaces and ensuring new buildings are constructed elsewhere.
- Improving transport links including rail and bus in both urban and rural areas.
- Reducing traffic congestion.
- Repairing and maintaining the road and pavement network.
- More emphasis on mental health provision.
- Greater focus on services in rural areas.

Views on the level of Council Tax

Aside from the budget simulator exercise, the consultation did not specifically ask for opinions on the level of Council Tax, though many people made comments.

The majority of those (about nine out of ten people who commented specifically on Council Tax) suggested that Council Tax should be increased because they were keen for services to be maintained and improved, and would rather pay more for better quality services. Many also suggested that the Council has reached a point where there is little option but to raise Council Tax and felt that some people can afford a small increase.



Of the 366 people who completed the budget simulator, 89% chose to raise Council Tax. The average increase was 2.4%. This is beyond the level that would trigger a local referendum on Council Tax (which is 2%). A further 8% kept Council Tax the same and 3% reduced Council Tax. Note that the consultation was running before the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spending Review where it was announced that local councils could increase Council Tax and precept 2% to support Adult Social Care services.

In terms of how much Council Tax should rise, there were various views. Some wanted it to be raised to the maximum level before triggering a referendum and some felt Council Tax should be increased each year to help meet the shortfall. Others suggested a 'small increase' and a few people felt increases could be only for higher Council Tax bands/larger properties.

If Council Tax was increased, many would like information about how the extra income would be used by the Council.

There were some calls not to increase Council Tax. In many cases, people did not give a reason, other than generally raising strong objections to paying more. Those that did give a view felt that the Council was too big or that it didn't need to provide the range of services it currently does.

Bridging the remaining budget gap

Overall, the Council's proposals generate £35 million of savings, which is £12 million short of the £47 million savings target.¹ Participants were asked for their views on how the Council could bridge the remaining budget gap. Almost 150 comments were received, which have been summarised into 'ways of generating income' and 'ways of reducing costs'.

Ways of generating income

Raise the level of Council Tax – This was the most common suggestion for bridging the gap for the reasons outlined above (about one in five people, of those who suggested ways of bridging the gap, mentioned this).

Support businesses – Many felt that supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones would improve the vibrancy of local areas, especially town centres, as well as increasing revenue from business rates (which local councils will soon be able to retain). Many were concerned about the potential for increasing or introducing car parking charges, as they felt this would negatively affect retail and town centres that are already struggling. Some suggested rents and rates should be reduced for empty shops to encourage businesses to take them on and to work with others, such as Chester BID, to reduce empty shops, which give a poor impression and do not generate any revenue. Similar comments were made about empty office and other commercial space in terms of reduced or introductory rates.

Attract tourists – Many suggested tapping into the spending power of tourists and visitors for local economic benefit, thereby supporting local businesses who in turn will pay



business rates. The Council could do more to promote the Borough and encourage more events and activities to take place.

Sell or rent Council assets – A number of ideas were about selling unused Council buildings, land and other assets to raise money. Some suggested selling Council land for housing development, especially brownfield sites. This would generate income for the Council and also help to regenerate areas. There were a few suggestions to examine the Council's estate and ensure office accommodation is cost effective, and to consider co-locating with partners to reduce accommodation requirements. Where buildings are underused, some felt the Council could rent space to generate income. If not being sold, any empty buildings should be rented out, not just for income purposes but also to prevent local areas looking run-down.

Ways of reducing costs

Sharing services – There was very strong support for sharing services with other councils and partners to reduce duplication and save money. In particular, services such as administration, back office functions and management teams were suggested, as well as joint purchasing with other organisations. Some recommended further integration of services with partners and closer collaboration with the community and voluntary sector, particularly around health and social care. There was support for co-locating and sharing accommodation. A few also suggested amalgamating neighbouring local councils together, particularly Cheshire West and Cheshire East, to generate efficiencies from economies of scale.

Management costs – There were a number of suggestions about reducing the number of senior managers and reducing the salaries of higher paid Council staff.

Risks of outsourcing – Many suggested that services provided in-house were better quality and more cost effective than outsourcing. Some felt that services that had previously been outsourced should be brought back into the Council. A number of people felt that councils in general were over-charged by private companies, who were making a profit at the expense of the public sector and were not providing value for money. Where profits can be made, these should be reinvested back into council services.

Externalising services – Conversely, some suggested that more services should be contracted out, as this would lead to cheaper and better services.

Contract management – The Council must ensure that contracts are properly managed, represent value for money and that contractors are properly fulfilling their duties.

Other ideas – There were many varied suggestions for saving money, including looking for smaller savings that add up (for example, turning the heating in offices down, turning PCs off when not in use, managing stationery), reducing unnecessary council literature, making more use of volunteers and so on. Many also re-iterated the proposed options, such as reviewing the number of councillors (proposal G8).



Views on individual priorities and specific proposals

The following sections summarise the views of those who took part in the consultation in relation to each of the ten priorities. The priorities are presented in the order of the 'Let's Talk' consultation booklet. Where there are reference letters/numbers, these refer back to information in the Let's Talk consultation booklet. Not everyone commented on each proposal and so where no information could be distilled, the proposal is not listed in the summaries below.

All of our families, children and young people are supported to get the best start in life

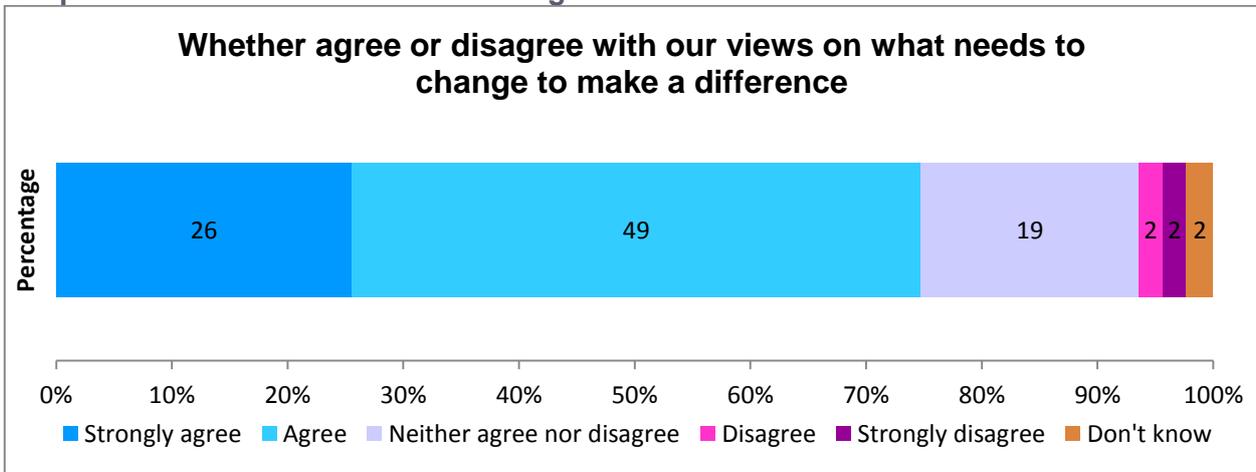
Why this priority is considered important

- Having the best start in life is fundamental and everyone should have this opportunity.
- Laying the foundations early in life will transform people's futures by improving aspirations, academic performance and helping people to be more independent.
- Good foundations in turn reap longer term benefits, both for the individual and for society as a whole, in terms of preventing issues that require intervention/support from occurring.
- The right support for young families can help parents feel included in society and prevent those at risk from becoming isolated.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on pages 8-9 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 75% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 2: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve the best start in life



Base for graph: 388 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Views on some of the Council's ideas on 'what needs to change'

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

AA: Tackle child poverty – whilst there was a desire to address child poverty, there was little support to establish a 'Commission of Enquiry' to investigate local and national evidence. This is because people felt it is not needed as the causes are already known - local practitioners such as NHS staff and schools understand the issues, or that this issue should be left to central government. Those who felt a 'Commission' was worthwhile stressed how important it was to understand the underlying causes and find ways to address them.

AB: Ensure high quality childcare and early years education - This was seen as very important as it not only provides for children (helping shape their future prospects), but also allows parents to get back into work. The Council should do more to encourage parents to access free childcare.

AC: Maintain an effective network of children's centres – Children's centres were viewed positively and some (including partners) mentioned the beneficial impact they have on children's lives. The support they provide to the wider family was also noted. Most of those who responded were keen to make sure that services were maintained and that children's centres were not closed. If some centres do close, the Council needs to be aware of transport and parking issues at alternative venues. There were a small number of comments that money should be spent on schools and not children's centres, and that children's centres should only be used in deprived areas.

AD: Work with complex families – This was generally supported as it was recognised that complex families need support and can draw heavily on public sector resources. The Council should develop a policy of prevention and raise awareness of support available for families and complex individuals, and work to reduce duplication between different organisations.

AF: Integrate early years' services – There was some support for this, and where children's centres are not present, other community facilities could be used. This would also increase the use and viability of such buildings. Working with faith groups could also be explored.

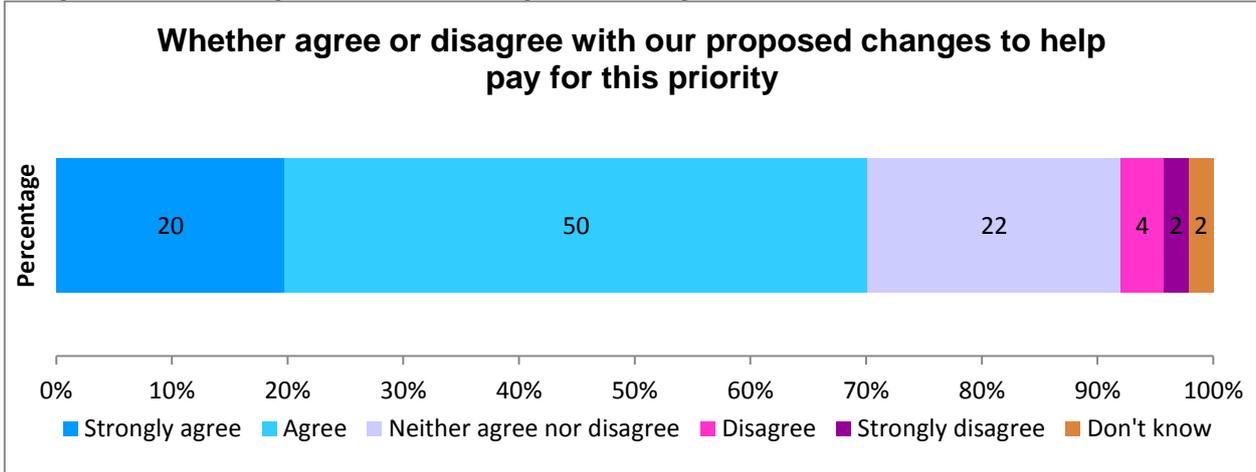
AH: Improve children and adolescent mental health services – There was agreement for improving children and adolescent mental health services and that significant work has already taken place between organisations. The service is very much needed though the waiting list is still too long.



Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on page 9 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 70% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 3: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve the best start in life



Base for graph: 375 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'A1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

A1: Introduce early help teams which combine children's centres and health visiting services - Many people supported this and thought it would be beneficial to have all services in the one setting, helping to create a sense of community. Parents of young children felt that having health visitors on hand at children's centres would mean that they could benefit from more informal, general advice in an open setting. Though some were keen to ensure they could still have a private room or book a slot with a health visitor if they had specific concerns. Children's centres are seen as a good resource, though some felt they needed to be better promoted. A few people stressed that, as the Health Visitor service is nurse-led and part of the NHS, it is important to continue to maintain strong links with GPs and hospitals, to provide the best service. Whilst some suggest that there is a need to reduce management, they are keen to ensure there are enough staff to deliver the service and that there is sufficient managerial support for professionals.

A2: Improve services for children with disabilities – Many felt it was very important that services for disabled and vulnerable people were not cut. The Council could save money by finding school places in the borough for children with special needs, saving on travel costs. Some suggested that any money saved in this area should be reinvested back into providing equipment for disabled people.

A3: Join up our contracted services for children – There was some support for this as combining contracts and having a more joined up approach can make savings. However,



there are some concerns that this might negatively affect smaller, localised providers who know the patch. Services need to remain accessible and relevant to families and contracted providers should be properly monitored to ensure services are being fully delivered. Some felt that weight management should be addressed via schools and through introducing compulsory sport and exercise. There were some concerns that this should not be targeted at primary schools though, as this could negatively impact on views of body image at a young age.

Vulnerable adults and children feel safe and are protected

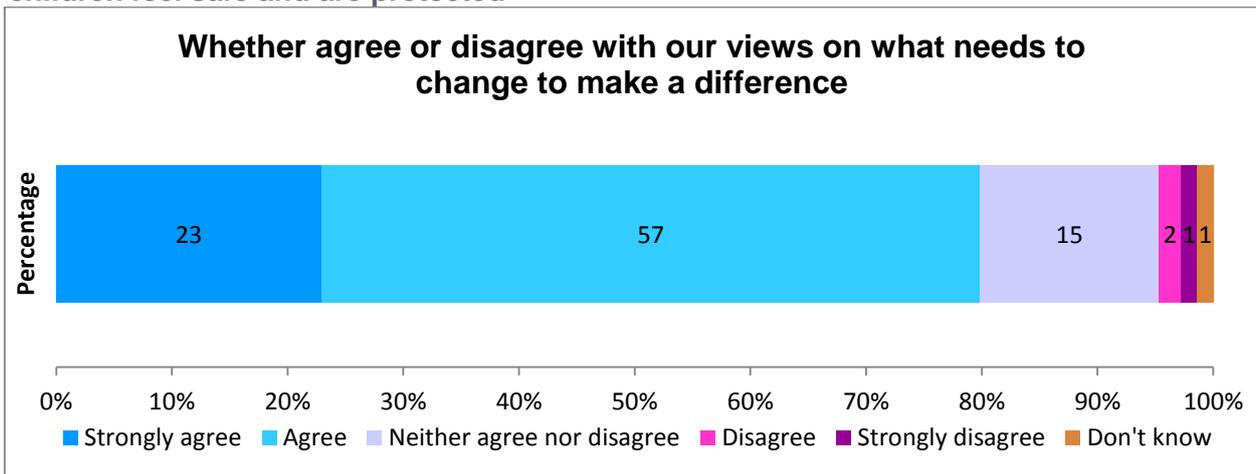
Why this priority is considered important

- Protecting vulnerable adults and children is the 'basis of a decent society'.
- Everyone needs to feel safe and no one should live in fear.
- Some people are unable to make decisions for themselves and it is critical they receive the right help.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on page 11 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 80% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 4: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to ensure vulnerable adults and children feel safe and are protected



Base for graph: 362 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Views on some of the Council's ideas on 'what needs to change'

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

BC: Improve our fostering and adoption services – Those who commented agreed that there is a need to recruit more foster carers and that working with neighbouring authorities would be a positive step. Some stressed the need for support for adopter families and that funding must be maintained. Information sharing between local authorities will help to find child placements quicker.

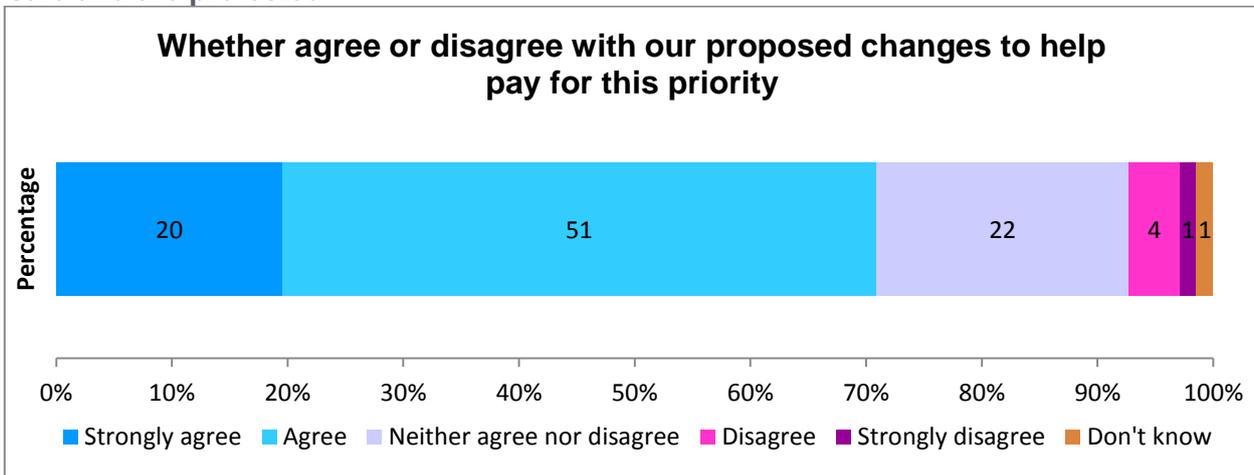
BD: Improve services that safeguard adults – This was supported as safeguarding is viewed as vitally important.

BE: Tackle domestic abuse - There was support for this; though some felt there needed to be a wider remit in terms of tackling the root cause of domestic abuse and more education about this in schools. Good models of partnership working with agencies and the Police are also key.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on pages 10-11 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 71% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 5: Views on plans to save or spend money to ensure vulnerable adults and children feel safe and are protected



Base for graph: 343 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'B2') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

B2: Extend support to prevent children entering into care – 'Edge of care' was seen as very important and a positive, preventative approach (linking with 'best start in life' priority).



Early intervention is important, wherever possible, as it is more efficient; however, some queried whether the level of savings suggested could be achieved. There were many comments about parental support and that the Council should work with families to improve parenting skills to reduce the amount of children being taken into care.

B3: Review children and family services – There were concerns about sharing the Emergency Duty Team with another council as there is risk that this will impact on the responsiveness of these services to patients. One partner felt a risk assessment should be carried out prior to any subsequent implementation.

B4: Share our fostering recruitment and adoption services with other councils – Many felt it was a good idea to open this up to more people as long as it remained local. Any efficiency savings should be recycled to increase the number of fostering opportunities. Some were concerned that sharing may not result in the level of savings suggested.

B5: Make smarter purchasing choices for private sector fostering – There was support for this as private fostering was viewed as expensive. However, there was some concern about bulk buying as it could lead to children not being placed in the best situation for them, which could lead to increased cost and placement breakdown.

B6: Review adult safeguarding services – Some support for more joint working with the Police and NHS and a suggestion that that the Safeguarding Board holds partners to account. Some concerns about how the Council monitors providers as there are so many of them.

B7: Conduct a full redesign of children's social care - There was some support for undertaking a review, though an acknowledgement that continual reorganisations are costly and can lower staff morale. Some felt there could be more efficiency through current providers and consideration of what other providers can offer that the Council can't. Having good social workers is seen as vital; they need to have manageable caseloads and proper support.

B8: Protect lower income households from any further changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. There were mixed views on this, with some agreeing that people should be supported and some feeling this could be quite costly for the Council.



Compassionate and joined up care that supports the independence of older people and vulnerable adults³

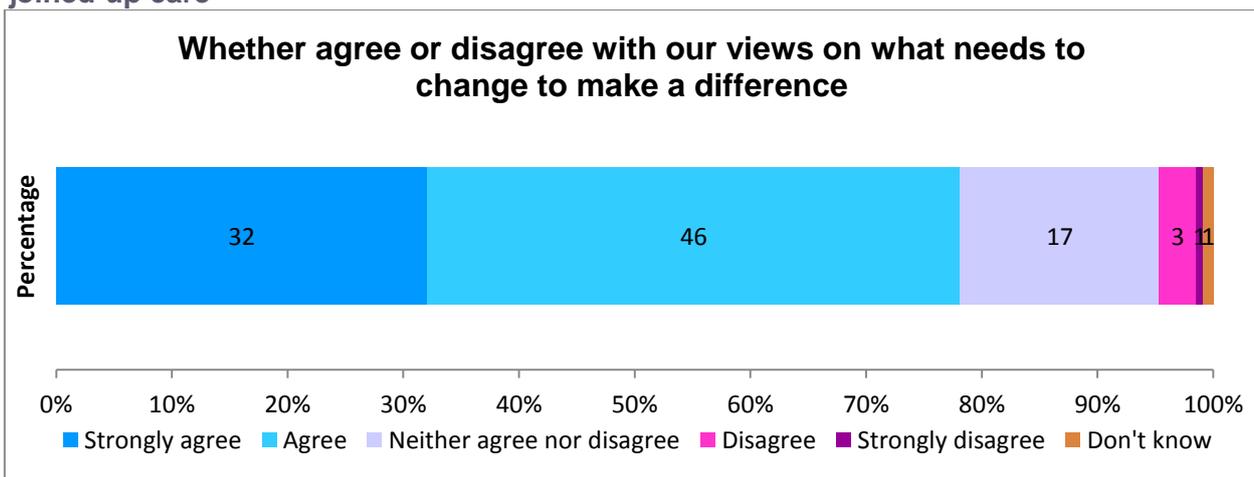
Why this priority is considered important

- We have an ageing population and it is imperative to put plans in place for the future, so that we can support the growing numbers of elderly people, including increasing numbers with Dementia.
- Work on integrated teams is key, and the Council, the NHS and other services (including the community and voluntary sector); need to collaborate to ensure efficient, effective and compassionate care is in place.
- Better information and a 'single front-door' are important for helping vulnerable people and their families access the services they need.
- Working effectively with the community and voluntary sector is vital for service development.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on pages 12-15 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 78% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 6: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve compassionate and joined-up care



Base for graph: 343 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

³ This priority has been re-titled to 'Older people and vulnerable adults are compassionately supported to lead fulfilled and independent lives'



Views on some of the Council's ideas on 'what needs to change'

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

CA: Promote prevention – There is strong support for prevention and early intervention - helping people before they reach crisis point. People should be supported to live at home for longer; however, some felt that this can sometimes be difficult and family members need advice about the best way forward. There were a few concerns regarding Extra Care Housing, as although this is seen as a good service, some mentioned issues with staff levels, staff training, access to transport and other facilities (including services like Tele-care) and the cost of living there.

CB: Fully integrate our services with the NHS – There is strong support for social care staff to work jointly with NHS teams, as this will provide a joined-up approach, help residents find the correct point of contact for their needs and create an effective 'front door' to all of the services they require. However, there is some concern that if all of these services are located in the same building, people may struggle to access it (due to location).

CC: Improved hospital discharge – This is viewed very positively and seen as a priority by many. Helping people leave hospital as soon as it is safe to do so is beneficial for the individual and saves resources.

CD: Implement an ethical care charter – There is support for this proposal especially in terms of ensuring care workers receive fair pay, payment for their travel and access to more specialist training. This in turn will attract better quality candidates (recruitment of good care staff is viewed as very important) and help with staff retention - essential for continuity of service and personalised care.

CE: Give residents more control of their services – There are mixed views on this. Some are very supportive, yet there are some concerns that direct payments are not suitable for everyone, especially where individuals are not capable of making a decision in their best interests.

CF: Tackle loneliness – There is widespread agreement that tackling social isolation is an important issue. Care visits are not enough to prevent feelings of loneliness for older people and more social activities are needed. This is also the case for disabled people who would benefit from more social spaces. Sometimes awareness is only raised that someone is isolated or lonely when something goes wrong, and efforts are needed to find those who require support. Some mentioned that the Brightlife programme would help.

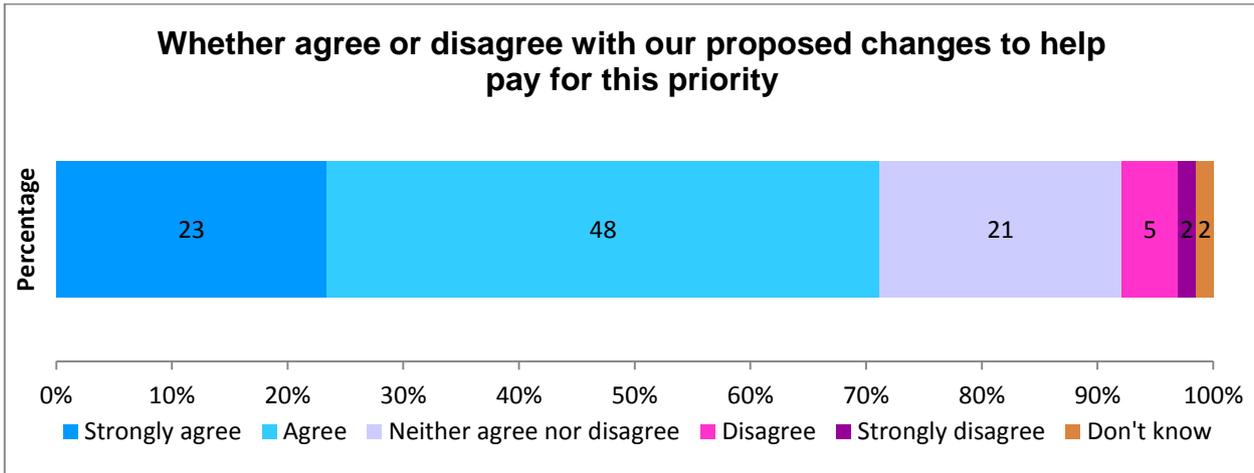
CG: Improve support for carers – There is strong agreement that given the importance of their role, provision of more support for carers is needed, especially in terms of access to information and advice, financial support and sustaining a job.



Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on pages 14-15 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 71% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 7: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve compassionate and joined-up care



Base for graph: 329 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'C1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

C1: Invest in further support for rising numbers of adults with learning disabilities – Comments were expressed regarding the level of investment proposed, in that £4 million seems disproportionate when compared to other proposals. Many asked for more explanation about how this would be spent. Queries were also raised as to why there are increasing numbers of adults with learning disabilities.

C2: Support people discharged from hospital to return home – Strong support for this priority and ensuring step-down care is of sufficient quality.

C3: Review in-house support services – There is concern that by making a 20% saving, this will be detrimental to the quality of service. Some did not want services to be outsourced as they felt this would not save money and the quality would be reduced.

C4: Social care staff review – There are mixed views on this, with some support, but also concerns that a reduction in staff will mean that service users will suffer. Some suggested that reducing senior management may be an option, rather than other staff, especially Social Workers, who do a good job considering their workload.



C5: Ensure that care packages are designed in the most cost effective way – Some support for this though some felt that this depends on how this is going to happen, particularly as £1.7m is a large amount to save. Some felt that direct payments are key.

C6: Review our services provided by voluntary and community sector organisations

– A number of issues were raised about this proposal, partly from people concerned about the over-reliance on volunteers, and partly from those who feel community and voluntary organisations play an essential role - and this proposal would place additional stress on them. This is particularly a concern if proposal C7 (direct more individuals to support and advice in the community) is pursued. The community and voluntary sector stressed how important the procurement process is, and requested that contracts should be awarded for longer periods of time, as organisations are unable to achieve what they need to when awarded a contract for short periods (two years or less). The contracting process can be quite complicated, with smaller organisations losing out to larger ones. The Council should also look at the quality of service, not just the cost, and contracts need to be awarded to organisations that can actually cope with the work, and not just say they can.

C10: Make efficiencies through our sexual health and substance misuse contracts –

Not many comments were received on this priority. There were mixed views with some feeling that it would be more efficient to have a single provider and others suggesting that it would be less efficient due to layers of management. One key partner raised a query about whether or not these services should be grouped together for commissioning.

C11: Transport efficiencies – There were concerns that this proposal may result in further reductions in transport services, consequently leading to more social isolation, adversely impacting on people's health and ability to access key services including medical treatment. This is especially a concern in rural areas where public transport is already problematic.

Cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods in the country

Why this priority is considered important

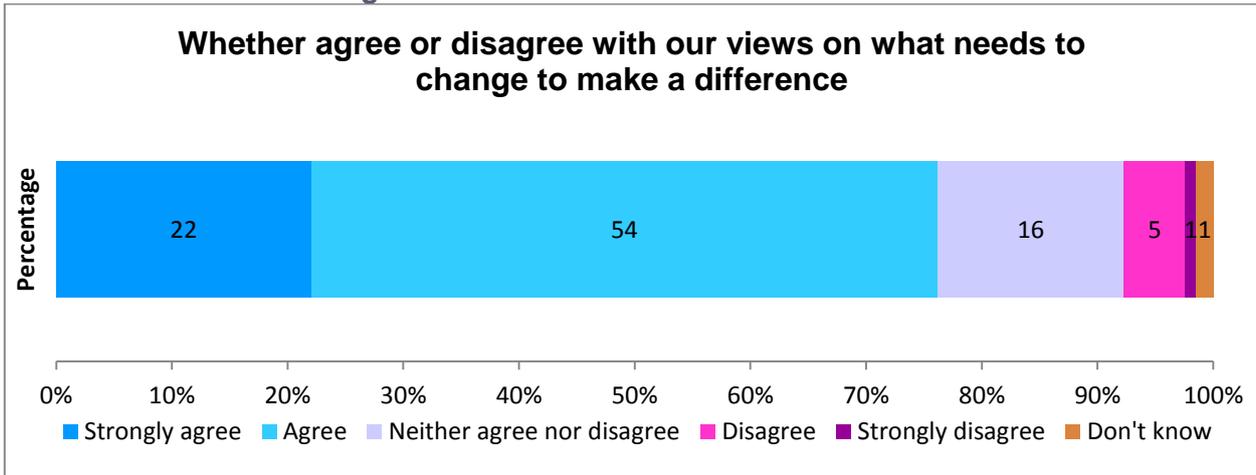
- Everyone needs to feel safe in their own neighbourhood. Issues such as 'problem neighbours', antisocial behaviour, drug abuse and not feeling safe out and about (especially at night) can have a significant impact on people's quality of life.
- Encouraging and supporting more local involvement and volunteering can empower communities, improve wellbeing and help to address social isolation.
- Having clean and attractive streets is important to local communities and shows their local area is cared for.
- Having a good, efficient waste collection service, which suits people's needs, affects everyone and is important to our residents.



Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on page 17 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 76% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 8: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve the cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods



Base for graph: 336 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council's ideas on 'what needs to change'

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

DA: Introduce a street care pledge – This is generally supported and some residents are keen to be involved. Many feel that more needs to be done in terms of changing people's attitudes and behaviours, and the Council should work with schools to educate pupils to not drop litter, as well as working with residents' groups and organisations like 'Keep Britain Tidy'. Social media campaigns should also be used and the Council should go further and fine people for dropping litter, dog fouling and fly tipping. Issues such as clearing fallen leaves also need to be built into this. A smaller number felt that a Street Care Pledge would have no impact.

DC: Take a targeted action to address anti-social behaviour - There is support for this proposal to be taken forward, however, there are some concerns that if proposal 'D8: conduct a community safety team review' is carried out, this will be detrimental to addressing anti-social behaviour issues.

DD: Reduce our carbon emissions – Many residents agree with this idea for efficiency and environmental reasons.

DE: Support communities to get more involved in the upkeep and future direction of their area – There is strong support for local communities and volunteers to have more involvement in taking on certain assets and service delivery in their area. This approach



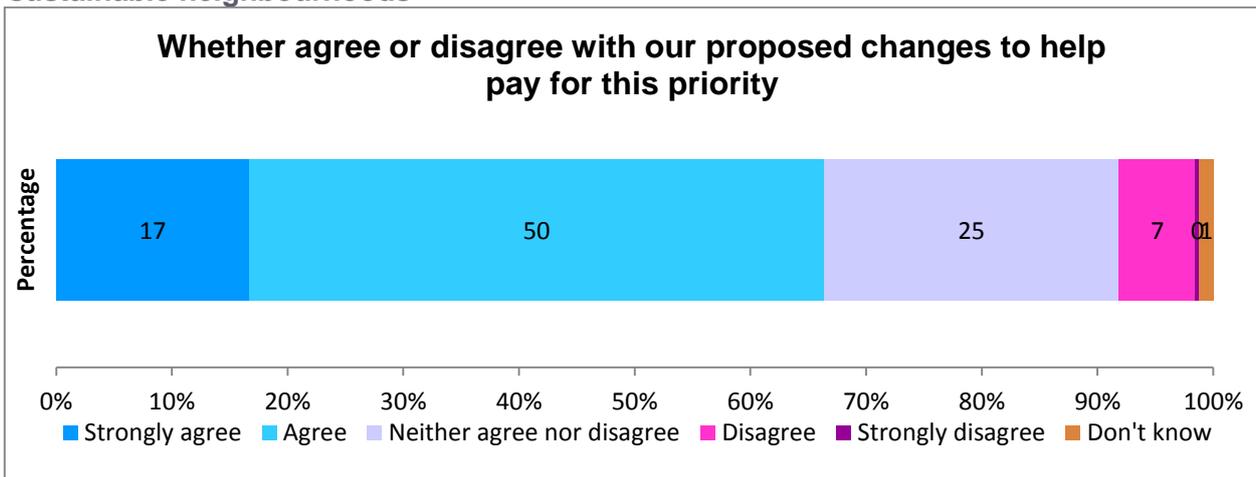
would enhance community pride, empowerment and engagement, along with improved individual wellbeing and less social isolation. However, the success of this depends on the amount of support, planning, incentives and funding provided by the Council, as well as the skills and resources held by each community. Concern was raised over the cost of this proposal, along with the difficulty in recruiting people to help due to a lack of interest.

DF: Improve our processes and tightly manage our contracts - there is support for this proposal to be taken forward to ensure we have efficient and effective services.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on pages 16-17 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 67% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 9: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve the cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods



Base for graph: 330 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'D1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

D1: Join up street cleaning, grounds maintenance and highways into one dedicated service – There is strong support for joining these teams together as it will generate savings, provided that a good standard of service is maintained. Some concerns were raised about any future outsourcing of this 'single service', which residents who commented did not support.

D2: Review the waste service – There is widespread support for a review, with many residents expressing both praise for, and issues with, the current system. Some felt that waste collection was a good, reliable service and that the streets were clean after collection. Others said that boxes and bins were too heavy for older people to lift/push, recycling boxes were not fit for purpose, especially in relation to their size and lids blowing



off, and that litter was left in their street following bin collections, with staff not picking this up. Other comments were received about the frequency of collections, with mixed views about household waste collections depending on family size, and that garden waste could be collected once a month or not at all during the winter months.

D3: Invest in energy efficient street lighting – There is positive support for this proposal, which is seen as environmentally friendly and efficient. Although not mentioned as an option in 'Let's Talk', many expressed views on street lighting being switched off overnight to make savings, with the majority very much against this.

D4: Develop a solar farm and other renewable energy projects – Very strong support for these proposals, as, although it may be expensive initially, it is an investment for the future. Many suggested further ideas including solar panels on Council buildings, schools and supermarkets, as well as electric car charging points at Park and Ride sites and so on. New housing developments should have environmental efficiency built into the design, including buildings being south-facing to make the most of solar panels. There were a few concerns around where solar farms might be located, (people are reluctant to have them located 'in their back yard'), how much these projects might cost and the extent of their benefits.

D6: Increase our fees for street naming, registration services and cremation – There was disagreement with this proposal in relation to increasing cremation fees. Whilst not many people commented, they all suggested that families may struggle to afford extra costs at a time that is already difficult.

D7: Sell specialist environmental support to other councils – Those who commented thought that other councils may be thinking of doing the same thing, and therefore they questioned the viability of this as an option (note that people didn't necessarily disagree with the proposal, just queried whether it was viable).

D8: Conduct a community safety team review – There were mixed views about this proposal with many people concerned about whether the service could be delivered effectively if staffing is reduced. Some felt that Community Safety Officers do a good job and are needed. A few people felt that community safety is a matter for the Police and so spending in this area can be reduced.

Good quality and affordable housing that meets the needs of our diverse communities

Why this priority is considered important

- There is an urgent need for more affordable housing, particularly for younger people trying to get onto the property ladder.

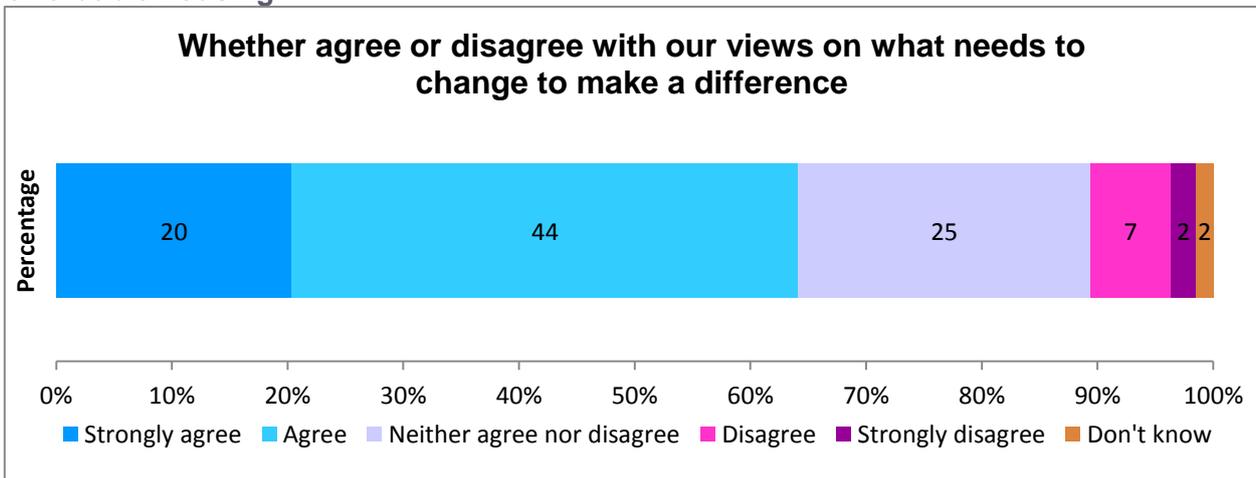


- We need to ensure we have the right mix of housing, in the right areas, to reflect the demand: providing for first time buyers, singles, families, older people and vulnerable people.
- Good quality housing will help attract people and businesses into the borough, boosting economic activity and growth. It will also help organisations retain their workforce as there is less of a need for residents to move elsewhere.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on pages 18-19 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 64% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 10: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve good quality affordable housing



Base for graph: 329 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council's specific ideas on what needs to change

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

EA: Work with our neighbouring authorities and central government – There is strong support for ensuring that brownfield sites are used for the provision of new housing and that sites/developments are brought forward as quickly as possible. Many urged the Council not to allow building on greenbelt or unsuitable land such as floodplains.

EB: Deliver and accelerate the affordable housing programme – This is viewed very positively, however, it is felt that 1,000 new affordable homes will not be enough for the level of need in the borough.

EC: Bring up to 900 empty homes back into use – There is strong support for this proposal as a way of making more homes available. Many would like to see more than the proposed 900 houses brought back into use, given that there may be as many as 4,000



empty homes across the borough. Some suggested that the Council could charge owners if houses remain unsold or empty for long periods.

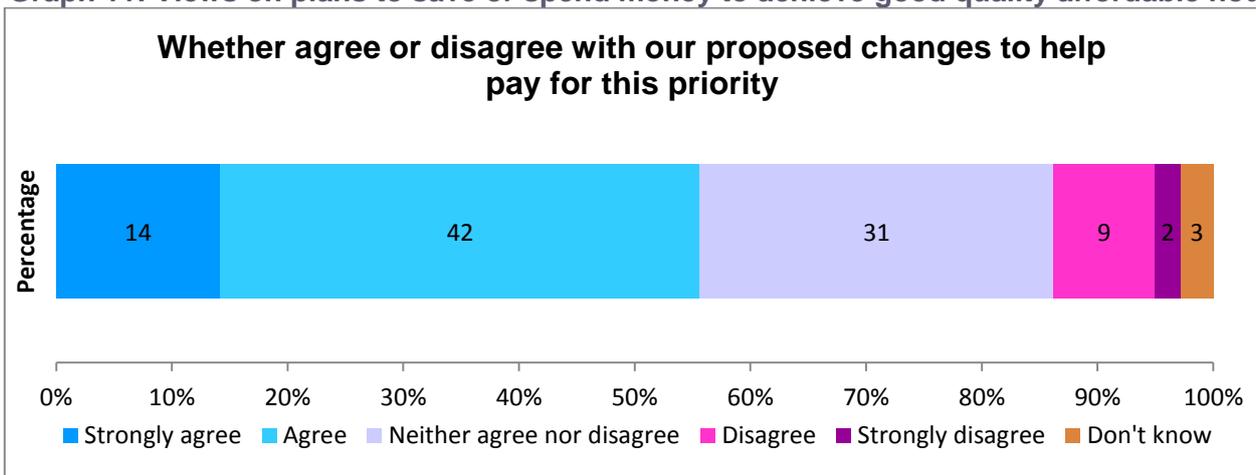
ED: Reduce the need for temporary accommodation – Many agree that a more preventative approach is necessary in terms of homelessness, and that temporary accommodation is not a suitable option. There is an acknowledgement from some that homelessness is an important issue which is rising, and that the Council is doing a good job in terms of support for homeless people.

EF: Take action to improve home energy efficiency and fuel poverty – Not many people commented on this proposal, but those that did were supportive.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on page 19 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 56% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 11: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve good quality affordable housing



Base for graph: 318 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'E1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

E1: Reshape our housing related support services – There was some concern that this proposal would be detrimental to services for vulnerable adults, particularly those with mental health issues. Some also felt that increasing demand for these services meant that savings would be difficult to achieve.

E2: Reshape housing services – Generally those who commented did not agree with placing more advice online. They felt that people in need of this type of support prefer to speak face-to-face or don't have the option to use online services.



Vibrant and healthy communities with inclusive leisure, heritage and culture

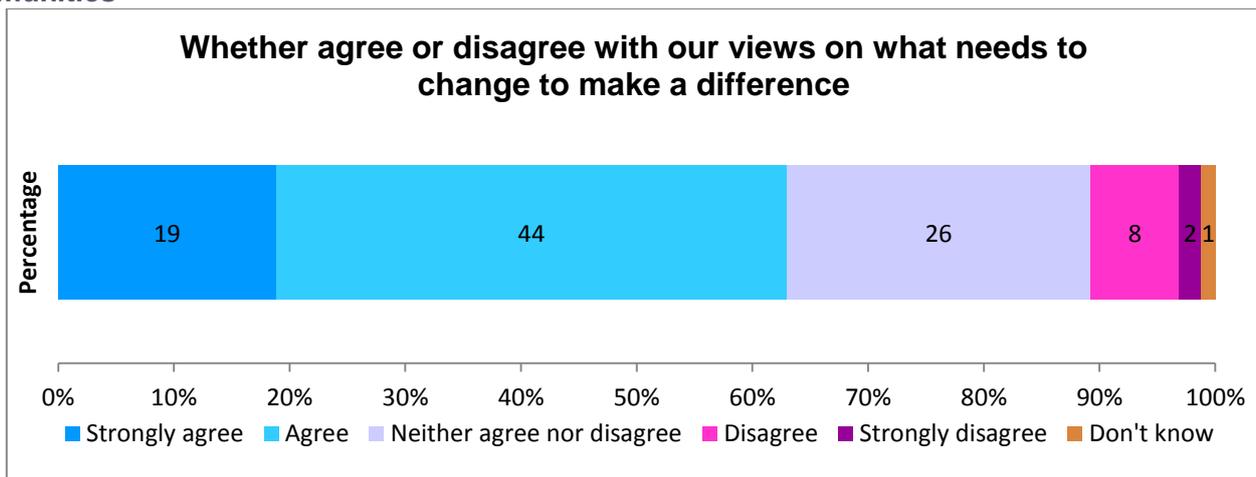
Why this priority is considered important

- Public health impacts on all elements of life and supports other priorities.
- Culture and leisure facilities make a significant contribution to people's health and wellbeing, and the benefits are often underestimated.
- Heritage is a key driver for tourism and needs to be exploited to boost the local economy.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on page 20 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 63% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 12: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve vibrant and healthy communities



Base for graph: 324 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council's specific ideas on what needs to change

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

FA: Use of the new Chester Theatre as a cultural hub for the city and the Borough – There was strong support for this proposal as many participants believe that Chester City Centre needs reviving, partly due to a lack of cinema and theatre. New facilities need to be supported by inexpensive parking and good public transport to help compete with cinemas at Broughton Park and Cheshire Oaks, where parking is free and there are places to eat. Some also suggested more advertising of activities, exhibitions and events via social media, Apps and posters in schools. Residents in other parts of the borough were keen to ensure culture and leisure opportunities were also improved in their locality.



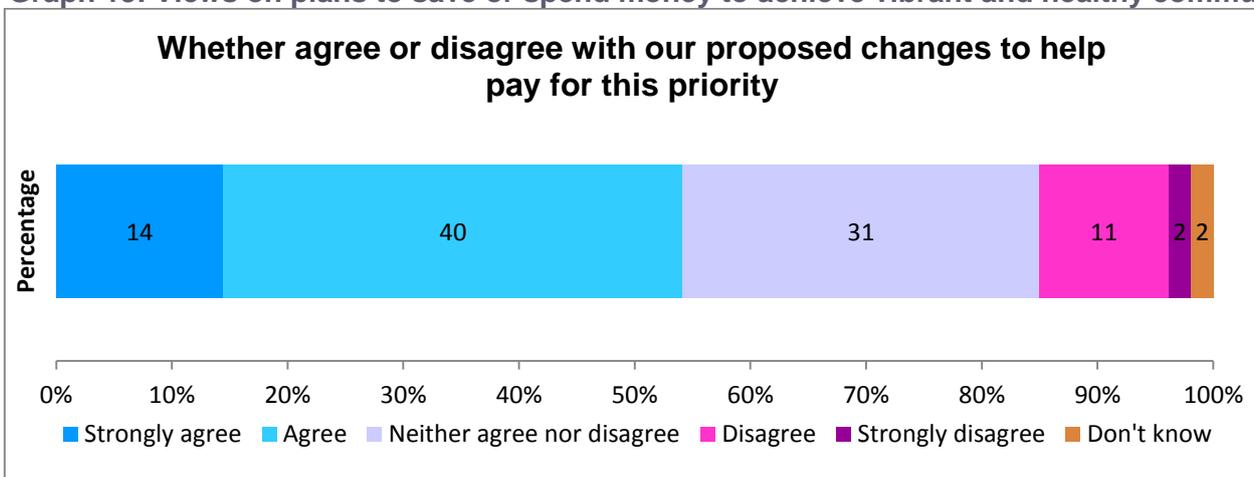
FB: Strengthen our continued partnership with BRIO Leisure – There are very positive views about the work BRIO has been doing in terms of the new Ellesmere Port Sports Village and its inclusive facilities. However, there was a negative view of the Northgate Arena in terms of its provision of activities for older people and the need for refurbishment. Concern was also expressed about the cost of BRIO facilities being too expensive for young people and families.

FC: Create an environment that promotes the public health of the Borough, encouraging healthy and active lifestyles – There is much support for this proposal, with health issues being seen as key. There is agreement that promoting healthy lifestyles is important, and investments should be made in campaigns related to obesity and being active. There is support for maintaining green spaces in the borough, including in areas of regeneration and development, to encourage people to be active outside, as well as promoting cycling. However, concern was expressed that some people don't listen, aren't interested and can't be bothered in having an active or healthy lifestyle.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on page 21 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 54% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 13: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve vibrant and healthy communities



Base for graph: 312 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'F1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

F1: A new approach for cultural services - There is very strong support for libraries to be kept open as a key local service and focal point for communities. There is support for reviewing the role of libraries, and widening their remit by possibly developing them into more of a cultural hub, and maybe taking advantage of new technologies. A few people asked for the mobile library service to continue. In terms of the delivery of cultural services,



there was a mix of opinions about whether they should remain Council-run or operated by a new organisation. However, it was felt that outsourcing services does not always guarantee success.

F2: Review of tourist information services – Whilst a few support the proposal to adopt a more digital approach to these services, the majority thought this would be inappropriate as tourists and residents prefer literature/leaflets and face-to-face contact, and use the Tourist Information Centre - for which there was support to keep open. There is also concern about the cost of the IT equipment required, along with the possibility of this resulting in redundancies.

F3: Efficiencies in the Public Health Team – Concern was raised about this proposal in relation to the impact on the quality of services, which were seen as very important for the health of the population. Many residents and partners felt that the size of the saving (27%) would be detrimental. Some suggested that this approach was short-sighted, and more consideration needed to be given to the long term benefits of the work and campaigns undertaken by Public Health.

F4: Better targeted lifestyle advice services – There was support for targeted campaigns aimed at tackling obesity, being active, smoking and mental health issues, but not necessarily for targeting deprived areas. Some suggested that everyone should have access to the same information and facilities, including rural communities. There were a handful of comments where people felt the Council did not need to offer lifestyle advice as this was a matter for individuals.

F5: A single provider for health checks - There was concern from a key health partner regarding this proposal in terms of ensuring the health needs of the population are adequately met. Concern was also expressed by some that by having only a single provider, removes the competition for this contract, and therefore the element of negotiation, thus making any savings in this area unlikely to materialise. There is also a view from residents that this should be undertaken by the NHS rather than the Council. (Note that the majority of residents who made this point seemed unaware that this responsibility lies with the Council).

F6: Review of health protection – Not many residents commented on this proposal, but those that did were concerned about any reductions in services. There were also concerns from a key health partner about making sure the health needs of local people are being adequately met. Many residents felt this issue should be dealt with by the NHS. (Note that the majority of residents who made this point seemed unaware that this responsibility lies with the Council).



Our resources are well managed and reflect the priorities of our residents

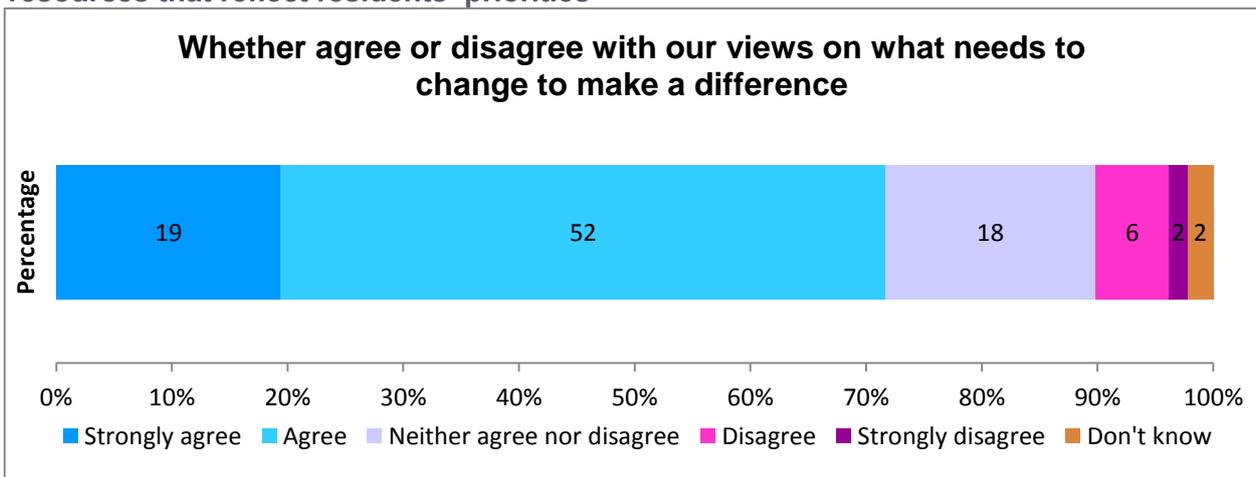
Why this priority is considered important

- Managing our resources underpins our ability to deliver everything else. It is essential to be efficient and to use our resources effectively.
- Genuine and inclusive consultation is vital to ensure the Council understands residents' views and reflects this in how resources are directed.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on pages 22-23 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 71% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 14: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve well managed resources that reflect residents' priorities



Base for graph: 314 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council's ideas on 'what needs to change'

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

GA: Review our approach of engagement, consultation and communications – There was strong support for this. Residents, in particular, want more consultation, which needs to be inclusive (covering broad sections of the community, not 'who shouts loudest') and to be kept informed about the outcomes.

GB: Introduce district committees – There were mixed views on this idea. Many residents and partner organisations felt district committees would be very positive, be a good way of bringing people together and provide a stronger voice for communities. Some were interested to know how these will be set up and would like more information. People felt the committees needed a clear remit, sufficient and diverse representation and some



wanted town and parish councils to be involved. In contrast, some were concerned that district committees would be costly and ineffective.

GC: Introduce a four year budget – Whilst not many comments were received on this issue, they were very supportive of this idea.

GD: Reduce our costs by collaborating with other councils – Both partner organisations and residents were very supportive of collaboration and felt that this should extend to other organisations (including police, fire and health) as well with other councils. Sharing resources will be more efficient and provide a more joined-up response. The Council needs to manage the risk of collaboration effectively. There were a small number of respondents who were sceptical as to whether this could work effectively.

GE: Share our assets with partner organisations to reduce costs – Some support for sharing assets as it will bring about efficiencies, though this can depend on the implications of sharing, such as whether buildings are closed as a result and how that might impact on people.

GF: Ensure that adequate back-office support is in place to keep the Council safe and well managed – Some support for this, though some felt that it was important to ensure that the impact of any staff cuts were minimised, and that being efficient is not necessarily about reducing the number of staff but about staff being effective. A few comments were also made about ensuring the right balance between the number of managers and number of front line staff.

GG: Introduce a more coordinated approach to measuring the needs of our residents

GH: Support the broad range of communities and groups in the borough

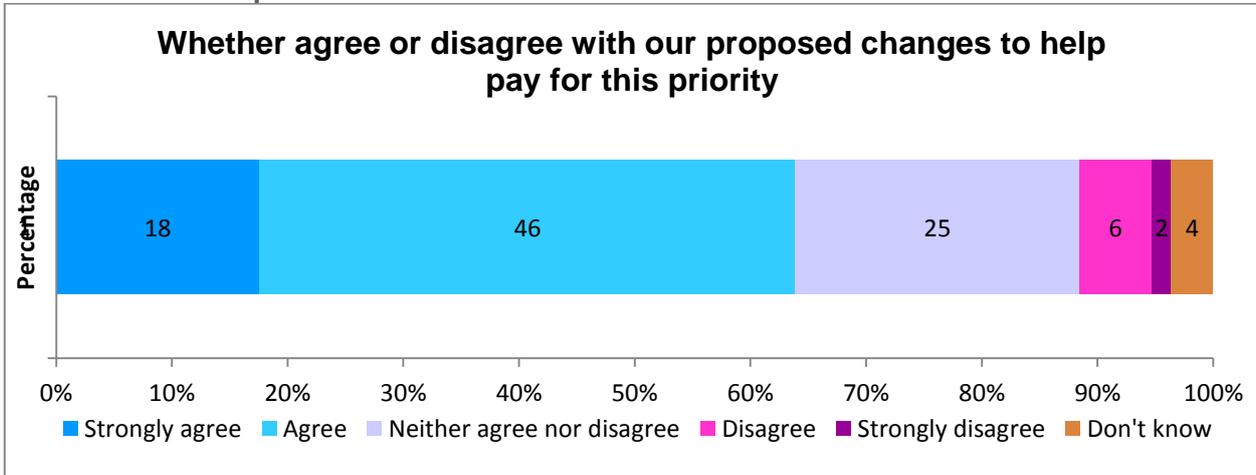
GI: Review all our policies – not many people chose to comment on these ideas. Generally speaking, where views were expressed they were supportive.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on pages 24-25 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 64% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.



Graph 15: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve well-managed resources that reflect residents' priorities



Base for graph: 302 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'G1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

G1: Reduce our council office buildings – There was widespread support for this priority as it has the potential to generate significant savings. Ensure that where buildings are sold, they do not become dilapidated. There was also support for co-locating with others and renting out space to generate income. There were a few comments that HQ offices are perceived to be expensive.

G8: Review our number of councillors – There was a lot of support for reducing the number of councillors as this would trim down the resources required to support them. However, there are some concerns that this runs counter to localism and can impact on representation.

G11: Reduce councillors' local budgets – Generally speaking, there is strong support for retaining local budgets. Councillors have good knowledge of their local area and some suggested that this is the only Council funding they see spent in their neighbourhood. Many communities said local budgets had been very effective in getting small amounts of funding quickly and have also been useful for match-funding projects. There was some support for prioritising how this funding should be spent, that there should be a reduction or that they should be cut altogether given the budget pressures, but these comments were in the minority.

G19: Improving our contract management approach – Residents, businesses and partners all commented on the importance of contract management and want the Council to make sure contracts are well managed and properly monitored. There is a need to focus on quality not just cost and to build innovation into contracts. The Council should ensure it has sufficient staff with the right skills – an acknowledgement that procurement and contract management requires a specific skill set. Partners and businesses in particular want to



ensure that large contracts can be sub-contracted or broken down in some way to allow smaller, local business or the local community and voluntary sector, to be able to bid for work, to maximise local benefit.

People are well educated, skilled and earn a decent living

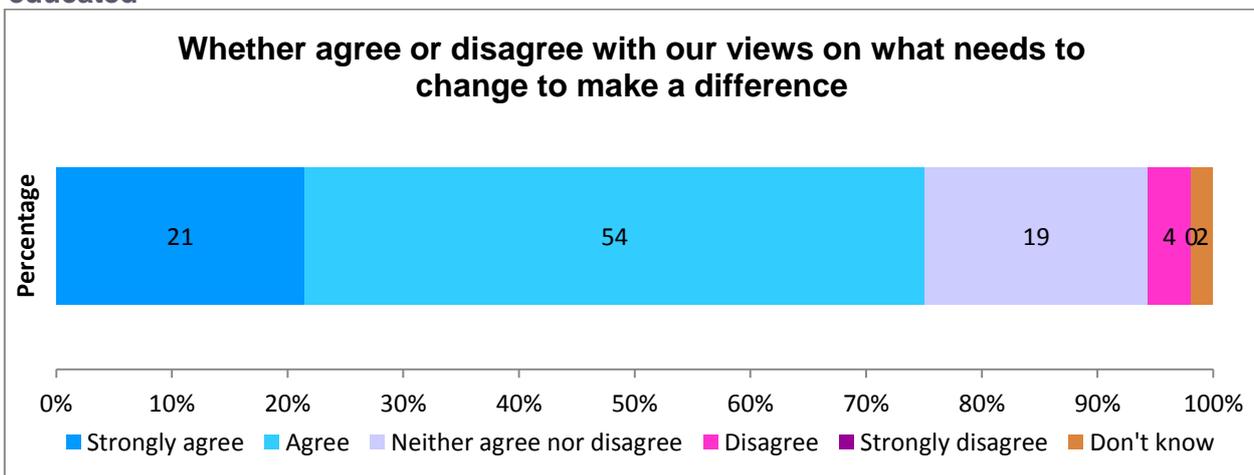
Why this priority is considered important

- Good education and investment in children and young people is essential as this provides the foundation for later life success.
- Earning a decent living is key for prosperity as it creates a 'virtuous circle' where people earn a decent living, spend more money in the local economy and pay taxes to support services.
- Attracting high quality jobs and linking this with the skills of the local workforce is key to success.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on page 27 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 75% of participants agreed with the Council's views.

Graph 16: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve people are well educated



Base for graph: 317 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council's ideas on 'what needs to change'

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

HA: Work with the Education Improvement Partnership –Although there were not many comments on the Education Improvement Partnership as an approach, there was strong



support for raising the standard of education and the business community in particular were keen to stress the importance of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, English and Maths). Many (particularly businesses) also felt life skills needed to be taught in schools, particularly those required to gain employment.

HB: Work with neighbouring authorities and central government – Strong support, especially from local businesses, about ensuring the local workforce has the skills required by local businesses and many (residents and businesses) agreed with the Council working with partners and other local authorities to achieve this aim.

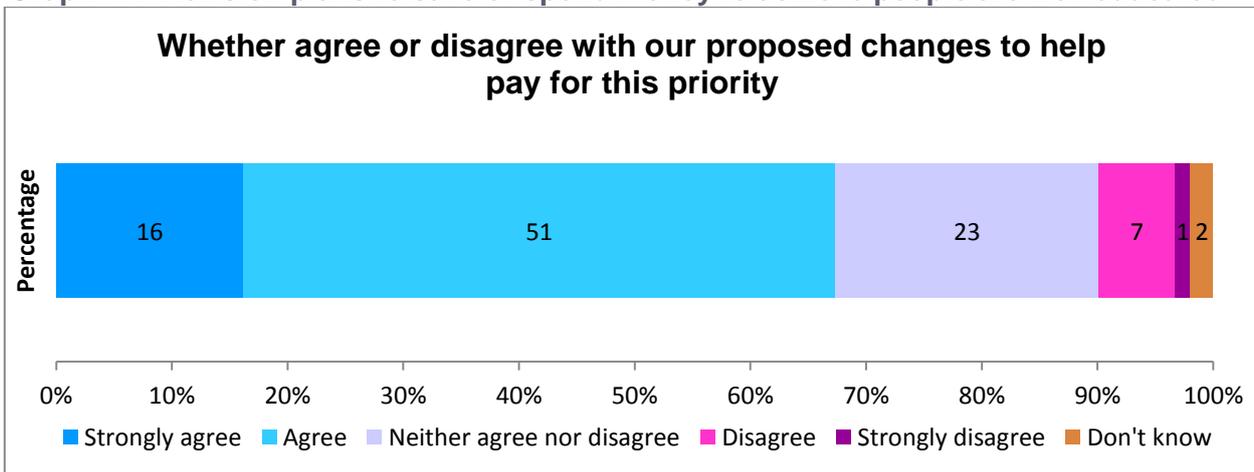
HC: Explore a fairer 'local living wage' – There were mixed views on this. Some strongly agreed that the Council should pay a living wage, but some felt that this should not just be for Council employees (as a special case) but apply across the country. There were some concerns that this might be too costly for some providers.

HD: Building on our Work Zones – There was support for Work Zones and also to ensure disabled people were included.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on pages 26-27 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 67% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 17: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve people are well educated



Base for graph: 303 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'H1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

H1: Oblige the companies we own and our suppliers to take on more apprentices and graduates – There were mixed views with this proposal, with strong support for increasing



opportunities for young people to help them gain employment, but equally strong views about the costs of this for smaller businesses and that this only supports young workers, without providing the same opportunity for older workers, especially if they wish to train/retrain.

H2: Provide additional funding to support people back into work – This proposal is strongly supported and it is considered very positive that it includes those with mental health issues. Some stressed that disabled people should also be included and that it was important to link in with other partners (especially in education). There were a few comments that those on this programme may have complex needs which must be carefully considered during the process (particularly with regards to placement).

H3: Changes to home to school transport – Whilst there is no change to policy proposed, there are some concerns about the costs of school buses (for users) being high and that local communities would suffer if transport were removed.

H4: Review staffing requirements for the education service – Generally, there were concerns with this proposal as many felt it would put additional pressures on teachers, who are already stretched, affecting the quality of education. Note that a few people agreed with this proposal, but did not give reasons.

H5: Pension liabilities – There were concerns that this might impact on people's pensions.

H6: Develop a company to support local schools – There was some support for this, as some felt it would work well. However, there were concerns that a new company might fail or be more costly than the current service.

A great place to do business

Why this priority is considered important

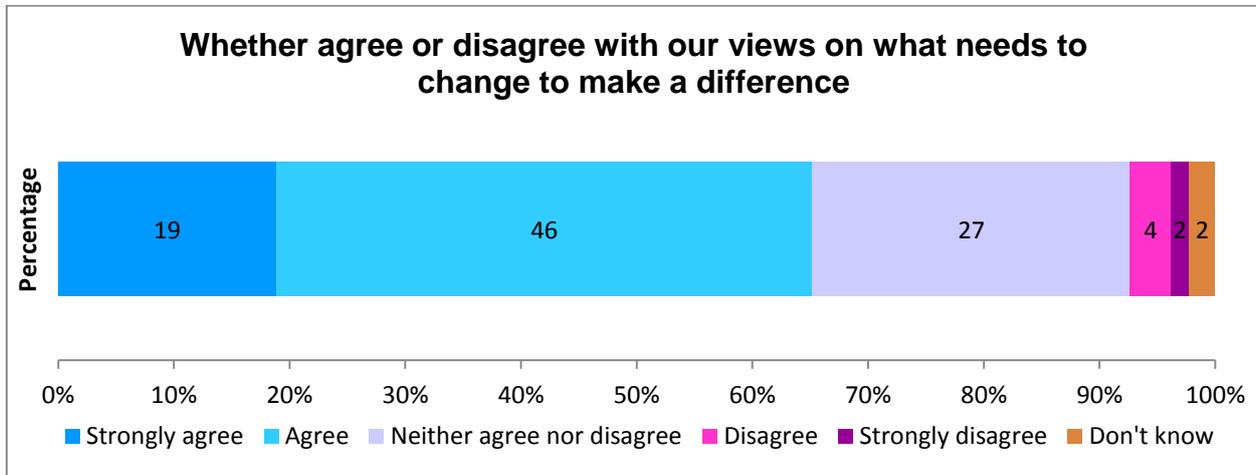
- Vital for prosperity of the Borough, generating jobs, opportunities and improving quality of life.
- More businesses in the area will generate income from business rates.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on page 28 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 65% of participants agreed with the Council's views.



Graph 18: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve a great place to do business



Base for graph: 313 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council’s ideas on ‘what needs to change’

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let’s Talk booklet)

IA: Improve the support and advice that we offer to local businesses – Generally supported as good quality business advice is essential for growth. Advice needs to be tailored to the size of businesses (small firms require very different support from big business) as well as specialist, sector-specific advice. Businesses participating in the consultation had a strong preference for face-to-face advice rather than online. Some businesses wanted named individuals to support them (a ‘go-to’ person). Many would welcome greater business-to-business networking opportunities. Whilst the majority of those who commented supported this proposal, there was a view that advice for business should be done by the private sector. In addition, both businesses and community and voluntary organisations suggested that the Council should help to bring businesses and voluntary organisations together. Voluntary organisations often need advice and practical support in terms of operating effectively (to free them up to provide services they are good at) and businesses have the skills to help with this.

IC: Explore issues of economic growth at a sub-regional level – There is overwhelming support for devolution and Northern Powerhouse initiatives from the local business community and partners. This will generate a wealth of opportunities and drive further investment in Cheshire West. The business community in particular, recognise the scale and significance of this for the borough. Some feel that the Council needs to better articulate the benefits of devolution to local business. Note that this overlaps with priorities, ‘A well connected and accessible borough’ and ‘People are well educated, skilled and earn a decent living’ in Cheshire West’s ability to reap the benefits from devolution, particularly in terms of improving transport with Manchester and filling local skills gaps. The Council also needs to attract inward investment and more businesses into Cheshire West (whilst supporting existing business), to increase economic benefits. The focus should be on good quality jobs.



ID: Invest in regeneration in Chester / IE: deliver the Barons Quay development / IF: continue the regeneration of Ellesmere Port – There was strong support for the Council's regeneration programmes, as business, partners and residents feel that town centres need to be revitalised and empty shops brought back into use. It is also important to create an attractive, vibrant place to live and shop, to further encourage investment. We should further promote our market towns and City to attract visitors. Many suggest that congestion and transport infrastructure also need to be improved. The Council needs to ensure local businesses are able to benefit from this investment via improved communications between Council and business, so that they know what opportunities exist, and through better local procurement. The Council should also ensure regeneration supports those most vulnerable back into employment. Whilst regeneration is supported, some have expressed concerns that there is an over-reliance, and too much focus in the proposals, on retail, and that we should work towards bringing in higher paid jobs. Some parts of the Borough, particularly market towns and rural areas, feel they are missing out on investment.

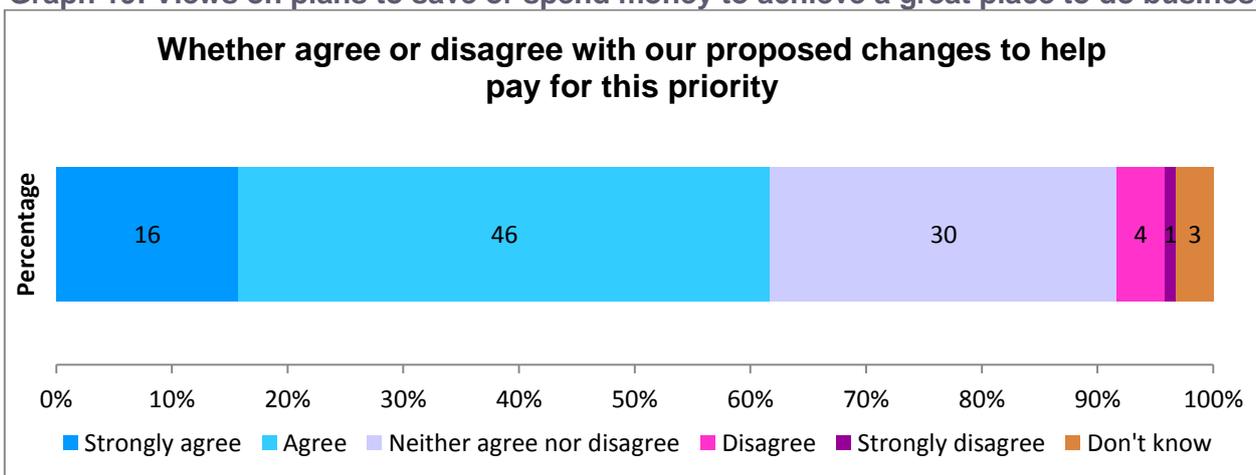
IG: use Council assets and properties to attract businesses and investment

IH: deliver the Winsford masterplan – There were not many comments on these proposals, but those that were received were supportive.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on page 29 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 62% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 19: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve a great place to do business



Base for graph: 311 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as '11') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

I1: Explore income opportunities for regulatory services – Not many views were received on this proposal. Those that did comment did not support charging as they felt it discourages businesses from seeking advice (and may even reduce compliance) as it adds to their costs.

I2: Attract more businesses to rent our commercial property - Generally supported as a way of bringing in income, supporting business and reducing vacant premises. Businesses were keen to ensure there is sufficient start-up/incubation space and residents suggested the Council should encourage smaller businesses and independent retailers. Some expressed concerns that rents might increase, putting pressure on businesses.

I3: Join up all our support to businesses - Support for joining-up Council advice and support for the business community, but with existing agencies (Growth Hub, for example), private sector (including Chamber of Commerce, Cheshire Professionals and so on) and universities, to provide an holistic service. Some concern that a single hub across authorities might not be accessible and increase travel time for businesses using it.

I4: Refocused regeneration team – Need to take care not to lose local knowledge (very few commented on this proposal).

A well connected and accessible Borough

Why this priority is considered important

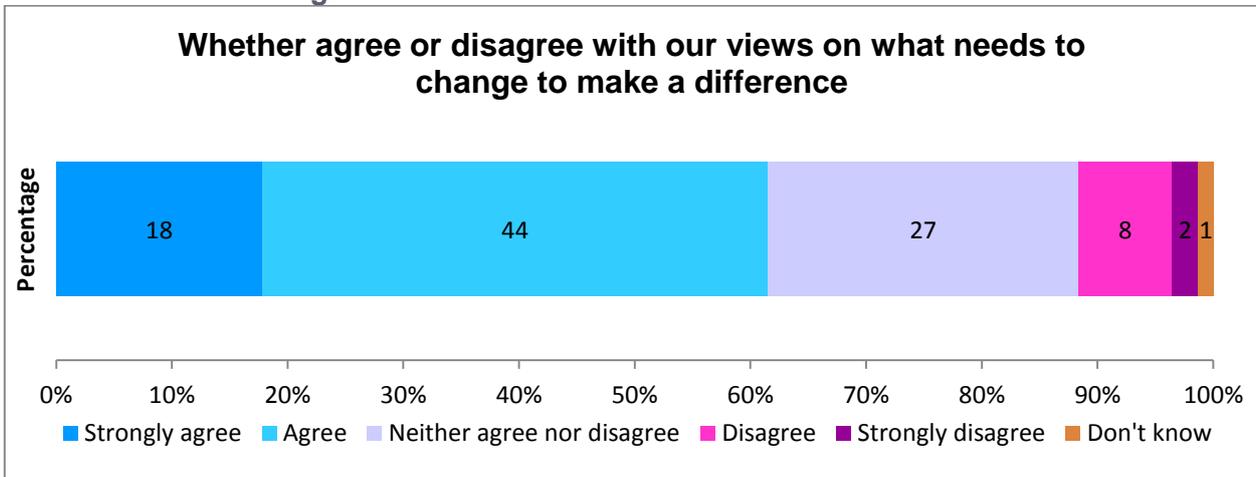
- Effective transport links are essential for economic growth in terms of attracting investment, supporting existing businesses and making the most of the opportunities that devolution offers.
- Good, reliable transport is key for addressing social isolation, especially in rural areas
- Younger and older people in particular, rely on public transport to be able to get to social activities, medical appointments and work.

Views on what needs to change to make a difference

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's view on what needs to change to make a difference (as presented on page 31 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 62% of participants agreed with the Council's views.



Graph 20: Views on what needs to change to make a difference to achieve a well connected and accessible borough



Base for graph: 309 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on some of the Council’s ideas on ‘what needs to change’

(Letters refer to paragraphs in the Let’s Talk booklet)

JA: Invest in key transport initiatives - There were mixed opinions about the new Bus Exchange in Chester. Some welcomed the initiative and felt it would improve safety after dark but some thought it was too far away from the town centre. Others questioned why a new Bus Exchange is being built when one already exists near the library and the new planned cinema/theatre.

JB: Introduce a 20 mile per hour speed limit - Generally, there was support for introducing a 20 mile per hour speed limit but only where appropriate (such as by schools and certain residential areas) and not a blanket approach. However, some felt it wouldn’t be enforced and others wanted to know about the justification for reducing speed limits.

JC: Promote cycling across the borough - There was support for continuing to develop and maintain the existing cycle routes and improving the connection of routes. People would welcome more cycle tracks and cycling lanes need to be properly separate from traffic and provide safe cycle paths that connect places of work, home and leisure. Cycling is seen as important for people’s health and wellbeing and should be promoted more in schools. Cycling on pavements was a concern for people as it is seen as dangerous for pedestrians.

JD: Introduce an active approach to promoting efficient ticketing technology - There was support for the use of ‘Oyster cards’, as they were seen as time saving and convenient, although there was concern that they would make it more difficult for tourists and older people.

JE: Continue our work with neighbouring authorities to introduce superfast broadband in the area. Strong support for this priority as it is seen as essential to have superfast broadband to keep the borough connected. It is particularly important for



businesses and people living in rural areas. There was concern that poor connectivity in rural areas could lead to social isolation, and if this was improved, it could benefit many people, especially older people who find it difficult to leave the house.

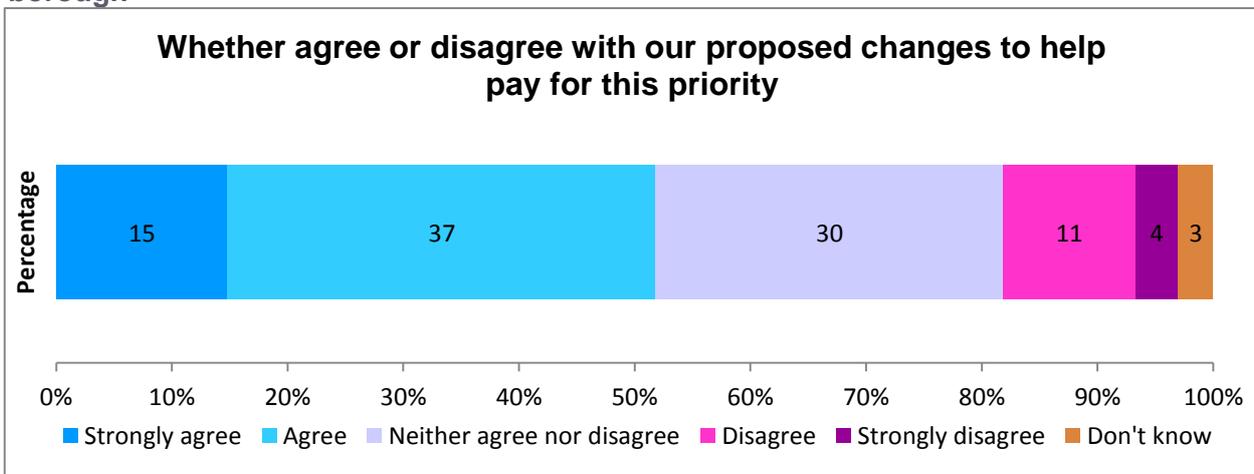
JF: Maintain the quality of our key road networks – there was general support for this priority from residents and businesses. Cyclists in particular are keen to ensure road surfaces are safe.

JG: Transform our local services by promoting online processes – There were mixed views on this as some see the financial benefits for the Council, yet others are concerned that not everyone has access to the internet, or wishes to use it. Online access in libraries is key for many, who would struggle if local libraries were to close.

Views on specific proposals

The full questionnaire asked people to say whether or not they agreed with the Council's proposed changes to pay for this priority (as presented on pages 30-31 of the Let's Talk booklet). The graph shows that 52% of participants generally agreed with the Council's proposals.

Graph 21: Views on plans to save or spend money to achieve a well connected and accessible borough



Base for graph: 297 responses. Numbers may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Views on specific proposals

(Referencing (such as 'J1') links to paragraphs in the Let's Talk booklet)

J1: Develop a new car parking strategy - There is some support for a new Parking Strategy and some partners, including disabled groups and town and parish councils would like to be involved in shaping this. However, there is overwhelming concern about the potential to introduce parking charges in areas that are currently free. The Strategy needs to support the vitality of town and village centres and there are strong views that if parking charges were introduced in some areas, it would have detrimental effect on businesses, (particular concerns in market towns, in villages and rural areas). Many felt that shoppers and other visitors would choose to drive to places that offer free parking, such as Cheshire



Oaks and Broughton Park. Many agree with the 'free after 3' initiative, which is in place in some areas that do charge. A lack of car parking was also noted; especially long stay parking for workers. A lack of suitable parking means that people park in residential streets, causing safety issues and impacting on people who live there.

J2: Review all our internal processes within highways service and ensure we are accessible – Not many people commented on this proposal, but those that did were generally supportive, though wary that services might all end up online (which was not supported).

J3: Focusing on areas of risk and J4: Secure savings from our highways contract – Though people did not comment directly on these proposals, many mentioned the quality of highway repairs, which was considered to be variable and done as responsive, rather than taking a preventative approach. Some of the minor roads in the borough need improvement and pot holes are considered hazardous for cycling. Maintenance to pavements also needs to be addressed.



Findings from the Online Budget Simulator

Introduction

As part of the Let's Talk Consultation an online budget simulator was created as a method of engagement with residents on the Council's priority outcomes and spending. This budget simulator was available at: [http: https://letstalk.budgetsimulator.com/](http://https://letstalk.budgetsimulator.com/) from 14 October 2015 to 6 January 2016.

This website was commissioned through the organisation 'Delib', a small company that specialises in online consultation and citizen engagement. This organisation has conducted over 80 online budget simulations worth a collective value of £60 billion.

The Let's Talk budget simulator presented Cheshire West and Chester's current budget of £278 million, and challenged participants to make reductions of £47 million. The existing budget was split across several service areas with accompanying descriptions, and participants were faced with the option of increasing, maintaining, or reducing levels of spending. The changes made to the budget prompted consequences that were illustrated to participants, both as they completed the tool, and before final submission.

Alongside the changes to the budget through the 'sliders', participants were also able to make comments to explain or support their changes.

Commissioning Delib

The provision of the budget simulator was commissioned at a cost of £5,000 to the Local Authority. There were a number of factors which underpinned this decision:

- The Delib tool was fully compliant with the Equality Act, providing information in an appropriate format to a range of audiences.
- The tool allows participants to complete the simulator on a mobile phone or tablet device.
- The budget simulator was linked to social media allowing it to be promoted amongst participants and their online networks.
- The simulator was maintained by dedicated staff who provided technical support to address any issues that may have arose.
- Finally, we received first-hand testimonies from other local authorities that had used the tool praising its structure, and the format for analysing results in a timely and accurate manner.

Simulator structure - expenditure

Prior to developing the online simulator, officers made contact with local authorities in Edinburgh and Derby that had used the budget tool in previous years. These conversations helped to inform the structure of information that was presented in the simulator, as officers were informed that



having more 'sliders' in the tool, led to an increase in the number of people who would not complete the exercise.

Therefore, the Let's Talk simulator was designed to contain 26 sliders, 22 of these would relate to the expenditure of the Council, with four sliders relating to generating income.

Completions

During the 12 week consultation period the following number of people accessed, completed and commented on the Let's Talk budget simulator:

Total Accesses:	4325 (accessing the welcome page)
Total Unique Users:	3682
Total Completions :	366
Completion Rate:	8.21% of those accessing the website
Average Completion Time:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop: 9 minutes 47 seconds, • Tablet: 9 minutes 16 seconds • Mobile phone: 7 minutes 27 seconds
Total Comments:	85 respondents left comments

Profile of Participants

In total, 318 of the 366 participants that completed the budget simulator, provided information regarding their demographics. From this group we are able to build the following profile of those that completed the online simulator.

Gender:	
Female	• 34% completions
Male	• 66% completions
Age:	
16-24	11%
25-34	17%
35-44	26%
45-54	26%
55-64	13%
65 plus:	7%
Responding as (primary identifier):	
A local resident	261
A Council employee	16
A local business	9
An elected member	5
Town or Parish Councillor	3



Other	7
Blank / did not provide information	65

Completion Methods

The table below provides further information on the methods that participants used when completing the simulator.

Desktop computer / Laptop:	41%
Mobile Phone:	37%
Tablet:	22%

Headline Findings

The table on the next page presents the average changes that were submitted to each of the services that were presented within the budget simulator. The second column in this table presents the average change in the budget that was made within each 'sub-heading', whilst the fourth column presents the individual averages for each or the service sliders.



Average changes to each service

Sub heading title	Total sub heading reduction	Service / Slider Title	Slider change
Adult Social Care and Health	-11.97%	Supporting people to live at home	-11.65%
		Residential and nursing care	-9.62%
		Supporting healthy lifestyles	-18.77%
		Assessing adult care needs and arranging provision	-9.52%
Children and Families	-6.18%	Protecting vulnerable children	-4.66%
		Supporting our schools	-8.14%
		Supporting our families	-11.93%
Places Services	-14.19%	Roads and transport	-11.27%
		Managing our waste	-13.77%
		Making our environment cleaner and greener	-16.26%
		Culture, libraries and leisure services	-15.29%
		Community safety and consumer protection	-14.88%
		Supporting business and regeneration	-14.92%
		Serving our customers and engaging with communities	-19.55%
		Housing and planning services	-15.31%
Corporate Services	-17.69%	Ensuring the Council is well governed and accountable	-16.33%
		Managing the Council's technology and equipment	-16.46%
		Managing the Council's buildings	-20.85%
		Managing payments to and from our residents	-14.55%
		Human Resources and training	-20.44%
		Improving the Council's performance	-15.61%
		Supporting our Councillors	-21.64%

Most Protected Services

Due to the necessity of reducing the online budget by £47 million to make a submission, there was little opportunity for increasing budgets to address this challenge. Therefore all of the services present as a reduction on average, and analysis explores the areas that have the lowest reductions.

The table above illustrates that participants have primarily protected services associated with Children and Young People, and secondly protected Adult Social Care and Health Services. The five individual services with the smallest reductions are:

- Protecting vulnerable children: - 4.66%
- Supporting our schools: - 8.14%
- Assessing adult care needs and arranging provision: - 9.52%
- Residential and nursing care: - 9.62%
- Roads and transport: - 11.27%



Least Protected Services

This table also illustrates that residents have made bigger reductions to back office services rather than those which interact with residents on the frontline.

- Supporting our Councillors: - 21.64%
- Managing the Council's buildings: - 20.85%
- Human resources and training: - 20.44%
- Serving our customers and engaging with communities: - 19.55%
- Supporting healthy lifestyles: - 18.77%

Adult Social Care and Health: In total 30 respondents made specific comments regarding their proposed reductions to adult social care and health services. The most prominent and regular themes to emerge within these comments included:

- **Importance of these services** - Many stressed the importance of these services, which they felt should not be reduced and should be protected as much as possible.
- **Delivering value for money** – A number of people suggested that savings should be made in this area without impacting upon the quality of service. This included suggestions to use new technologies to support older residents, making reductions in management costs, and reviewing and revising contracts to ensure that they are delivering value for money.
- **Opportunities for integration** - There were a number of comments which called for the Council to explore the integration of these services with NHS partners or neighbouring Local Authorities.
- **Interdependence of budget pressures** – Some suggested that services that support people to live at home should be protected to reduce the costs on long term care placements. These comments stressed that, by reducing these services, there would be an increased cost pressure on residential and nursing care.
- **Challenges of healthy lifestyles** - There were a few respondents who called for reductions to services that support healthy lifestyles, claiming that it is the responsibility for individuals to manage their lifestyles, or that these services would be better delivered elsewhere.

Children and families: In total 27 people made comments on their changes in funding for children and family services. The most prominent and regular themes to emerge within these comments included:

- **Long-term importance of services** - Many respondents that commented felt that these services should be protected due to the long term impact that they have on people's lives. These comments stated that reducing these services would incur increased costs in the long-run.
- **Reduce bureaucracy** - There were a few comments which stated that savings should be made by reducing the bureaucracy that supports these services, or that these services already stretched too far into people's lives.



- **Reduce transport costs** - There were a few calls on the Council to reduce funding to transport subsidies to encourage school children to walk to school.
- **Family responsibility** - A couple of people felt that the onus should be placed on family members to support children and young people rather than the public sector.

Places services - In total 22 people made comments on their proposed amendments to the budgets for Place based services. The most regular themes to emerge from within these comments include:

- **Wider contribution of services** - A few respondents suggested these services should be protected due to their wider importance to the Borough. These comments highlighted the role that these services had in attracting business to the area, contributing to the economy and environment of Cheshire West and Chester. One of these comments also cited the contribution that these services made to the public health of residents.
- **No changes to waste services** - Some participants showed support for the current waste services in Cheshire West and Chester and did not want to see any reductions in this area.
- **Support for LED Lighting** - A few comments included support for the installation of LED lighting as highlighted as one of the consequences within the budget simulator.
- **Use of volunteers** - Some called for the greater use of volunteers in leisure, heritage and library services. However, this was countered by others who felt that it would not be appropriate to introduce more.
- **Roads and repairs** - There were some comments that included personal case studies of road repairs and maintenance where they thought that improvements could be made.

Corporate Services: In total, 30 respondents left comments regarding corporate services. These included the following key themes and issues:

- **Prioritise reductions to protect the frontline** - One of the most prominent themes within these comments was that reductions should be prioritised in this area to protect frontline services. This included recommendations to limit the amount of expenses that can be claimed by either Councillors or staff.
- **Focus on staff efficiencies** - There were also a small number of comments that believed significant savings could be made in this area through staff restructures. These comments suggested that there were inefficiencies in the current structures in place, and that savings could be made by reducing layers of management and levels of bureaucracy. These comments were also supported by others which stated that Council staff were overpaid.
- **Staff Training and ICT** - There were a few comments which stressed the importance of maintaining ICT systems to ensure that the Council was efficiently managed. There were also



a small number of comments about reducing staff training, by focusing this to the most relevant roles and services.

- **Support to Councillors** - A few people suggested that the Council should reduce support to Councillors by promoting innovation by Councillors directly. However, this view was countered by views about the important role they play in the community.

Income

Within the simulator there were four options that participants could address financial pressures by raising income and fees. These included; Parking, Commercial Rent, Fees for Crematoriums and Cemeteries and Council Tax. The average increases that were put forward for these issues are presented in the table below.

Sub heading title	Total sub heading reduction	Service / Slider Title	Slider change
Income: Charges and Fees	+5.61%	Car parking	+5.67%
		Cemeteries, crematoria & registration	+5.72%
		Commercial rent	+5.55%
Income: Council Tax	+2.40%	Council Tax	+2.40%

This table shows that residents made an average change of over 5% for issues of Car Parking, Commercial Rent, and fees for cemeteries, crematoria and registration. The average change presented on Council Tax was a 2.4% increase.

Comments on Charges and Fees: There were 17 comments that were made about the increase in charges and fees, including the following common themes:

- **Car Parking** - Most of these comments called for increases in car parking to be mitigated as much as possible. There were a few comments which stated that current car parking charges are too high, and therefore should not increase any further.
- **Supporting Town Centres** - There were a further comments which called on limits to increases on car parking due to the negative impact this may have on town and city centres. Respondents highlighted the importance that parking plays in supporting sustainable trade and footfall in these areas.
- **Supporting local businesses** - Finally, a few respondents called for modest increases on commercial rents to generate income, but were cautious on penalising businesses, which support employment in the Borough.

Comments on Council Tax: There were a total of 27 comments relating to Council Tax. These comments included the following themes and issues:



- **Offset service reductions** - A number of participants called for increases in Council Tax to offset reductions in services, and to protect current standards and quality. Whilst these comments supported an increase, many qualified this position as a 'necessity' or a 'last resort'.
- **Modest increases** - There were a few comments which suggested modest increases in Council Tax that are linked to inflation. These comments also stated that an increase could be implemented following freezes which have taken place in recent years.
- **Opposition to referendum costs** - There were a few participants who stated their opposition to the presented cost of a referendum, should Council Tax be increased by more than 2%. However, there were also a few comments which called for this referendum to take place, to encourage a local debate and dialogue on these issues.

Statistics on Council Tax Increases

The table below shows the number of respondents alongside the potential increases and decreases that could be submitted for Council Tax through the budget simulator.

Change in Council Tax Option:	Number of Submissions:
4% decrease	2
3% decrease	2
2% decrease	2
1% decrease	4
Stay the same	30
1% increase	67
2% increase	73
3% increase	58
4% increase	128
Total:	366

This table shows that the vast majority of participants included an increase in Council Tax, a total of 326 out of 366, with 30 respondents maintaining Council Tax levels, and ten people reducing Council Tax spending.

Please note that this consultation was launched prior to national announcements regarding the potential additional 2% precept as contained in the Spending Review, and therefore information was not contained in the budget simulator regarding this issue.



Next steps

This report is being shared widely with elected Members, senior managers and partners to help the Council shape its plans and budget over the next four years. It will also be used to support ongoing service planning, help inform future policy development and partnership working.

The report is being formally presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January, followed by Cabinet on 3 February and Council on 25 February. The report is publically available on the Council's website and a communications plan is currently being developed to ensure these findings are widely shared.

Further work will take place to analyse information from this consultation about what people would like to see improved in their local area. This will be reported separately and be used to inform area-based plans and priorities. It will also help inform a future survey with residents to understand more about their views on local issues and quality of life.

Consultation methods and responses

The consultation followed a multi-method approach to follow best practice and enable as many people as possible to take part. All the consultation, design work and communications were undertaken in-house (apart from the Delib tool, which the Council paid a subscription to use). A budget of £20,000 was set aside for the work.

This was a large and comprehensive programme of consultation as it was to inform a four-year plan. Consequently, subsequent consultations on the Council's priorities and budget are expected to be 'top-up' exercises.

The main consultation approaches are outlined below.

Consultation methods

Consultation method	Description	Participation
Consultation booklet and questionnaire – full version	A consultation document with accompanying questionnaire, setting out the Council's vision and priorities and how this is proposed to be financed. The document and questionnaire were available online and in printed format. Printed copies were distributed widely to key locations, including libraries, leisure centres, children's centres, key Council buildings and via partners. Electronic copies were emailed via various distribution lists held by the Council and by partners.	625



<p>Consultation booklet and questionnaire – summary version</p>	<p>As above but a much shorter version of the consultation booklet and questionnaire, with the aim of providing a quick way for people to respond with views on overall priorities.</p>	<p>390</p>
<p>Interactive budget simulator (Delib®)</p>	<p>An online tool that simulates the Council's budget and the savings that need to be made. The tool allows participants to increase or decrease spending on services by moving 'sliders'. The consequences of their actions are revealed for them to see how changing spending affects service provision. Once participants have made their choices, they can 'submit' their budget with an explanation of their views.</p>	<p>366</p>
<p>Social media and email</p>	<p>Twitter and Facebook was used, not only to raise awareness of the consultation, but as a way for people to feedback views. A dedicated hashtag was set up as well as a specific email address for people to use.</p>	<p>98 people gave comments via Twitter and Facebook. Reach for Facebook /online ads was 71,542, with 37 'likes'. CWAC sent out 76 tweets and there were 166 re-tweets</p>
<p>Partner event</p>	<p>A half day interactive, consultation event with partners and the community and voluntary sector to explain first hand about the Council's vision and proposed priorities, and to seek views.</p>	<p>73 people attended (excluding CWAC representatives)</p>
<p>Webchat with the Leader</p>	<p>An hour-long webchat providing an opportunity for the public and partners to put questions directly to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Legal and Finance. The webchat was subsequently available to view on the Council's website throughout the remainder of the consultation.</p>	<p>93 live views and 461 replays</p>
<p>Consultation through existing networks</p>	<p>A wide programme of activities where a number of Council teams and Members engaged with as many of local networks, groups and residents as possible. This included tagging the consultation onto existing meetings, activities and events as well as arranging special meetings with local organisations, particularly where people may have had difficulty in taking part through other mechanisms.</p>	<p>130 groups</p>
<p>Discussion groups on priorities</p>	<p>Ten separate discussion groups were run in locations across the Borough, one on each of the proposed priorities. Participants were recruited to reflect the theme being discussed. For example, the discussion on 'A great place to do business' was run with local businesses.</p>	<p>106 individuals or businesses took part in focus groups</p>

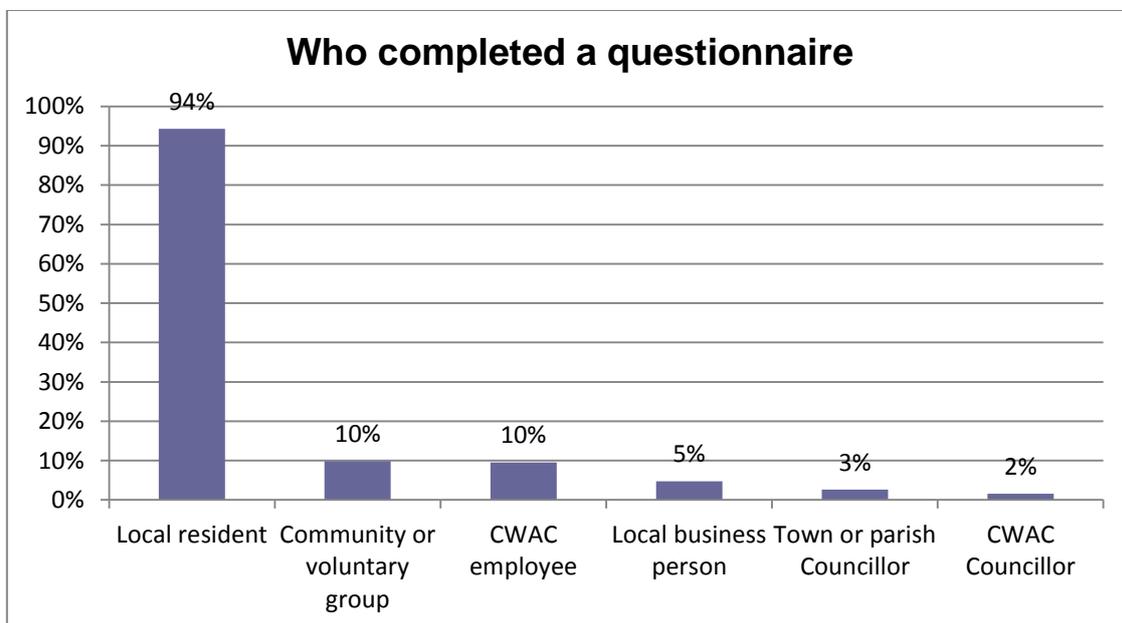


<p>Business breakfast</p>	<p>Local businesses were invited to attend a presentation and take part in an interactive discussion about the Council's proposed priorities</p>	<p>21 attended the business breakfast and other businesses completed the questionnaire, emailed views or attended a focus group</p>
<p>Council staff/unions</p>	<p>Meetings with Trade Unions and ensuring key staff groups, such as the 'People Panel' were aware of the consultation and encouraged to give their views.</p>	<p>Attendance at meetings and via email</p>

Who took part?

Responses were received from a broad range of individuals and groups from across the Borough. Information about who completed the budget simulator is provided on page 41. The graph below shows who completed a questionnaire.

Graph 22: Profile of those completing a questionnaire



Note that totals sum to more than 100 as people could choose more than one option. Base for graph: 622.

Responses from partners

As well as participating in the partner event, many public sector partners, town and parish councils, local groups, and community and voluntary organisations took part. The table below



shows who responses were received from. Copies of written responses are available for Cheshire West and Chester Members to view on request from the Strategic Intelligence team.

Partner responses

Chester Action Access Group
Comberbach Parish Council
Community Pharmacy Cheshire and Wirral (CPCW)
Community Steering group, mentor of Neston
Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust
Delamere and Oakmere Parish Council
DIAL West Cheshire
Doddleston Village Foundation
Handbridge Residents Council
Healthwatch
Horn's Mill Pre-school
Irish Community Travellers Services Via a meeting
Link Up Faith Sector
Malpas Parish Council
Mickle Trafford and District PC
NHS West Cheshire CCG
Northwich Town Council (plus
Partner - Chester Locality
People's Choice Steering Group
Pharmacy Local Professional Network, NHS England
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire
Streetworx and Hoole Baptist Church
Tarporley Parish Council
Tarvin Parish Council
The Sandstone Ridge Trust
Unite
Vale Royal CCG
Weaverham Parish Council

Northwich Town Council arranged for postcards to be made about proposal J1 – develop a new car parking strategy. Over 200 postcards were sent to the Council (218), before the closing date (35 received after the closing date), the vast majority of which (211) disagreed with the proposal.

Communicating Let's Talk

Over the 12 week consultation period, the Council raised as much awareness as possible about Let's Talk, resulting in widespread distribution and engagement with a range of individuals and groups across Cheshire West and Chester.



Distributing printed copies of consultation materials

- Booklets, questionnaires and fliers were made available at numerous locations across the borough, including all libraries, BRIO Leisure venues, Customer Service points and Children's centres, with more delivered to 'top-up' the supply where necessary.
- Materials were also distributed to key local groups by the Equality and Diversity and Locality teams via a range of channels, including at community meetings/forums, disability panels, meetings with older people, Faith communities and a Gypsy and Traveller event.
- Council staff and Members took information to scheduled meetings to distribute to partners and groups. At these meetings, Let's Talk was either included as a specific agenda item or a general discussion under 'any other business'. Examples include meetings with town and parish councillors, trade unions, ChALC (Cheshire Association of Local Councils), Children in Care Council and the Older People's Network.

Electronic distribution

The consultation was featured on the Council's website throughout the consultation. Other partners also supported the Council's awareness raising:

- The consultation was promoted by various partners on their website including Healthwatch, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Council for Voluntary Services.
- The Council and partners sent links to the consultation via various distribution lists, which reached thousands of individuals, including care homes, schools, businesses community and voluntary groups.

Dedicated marketing campaign

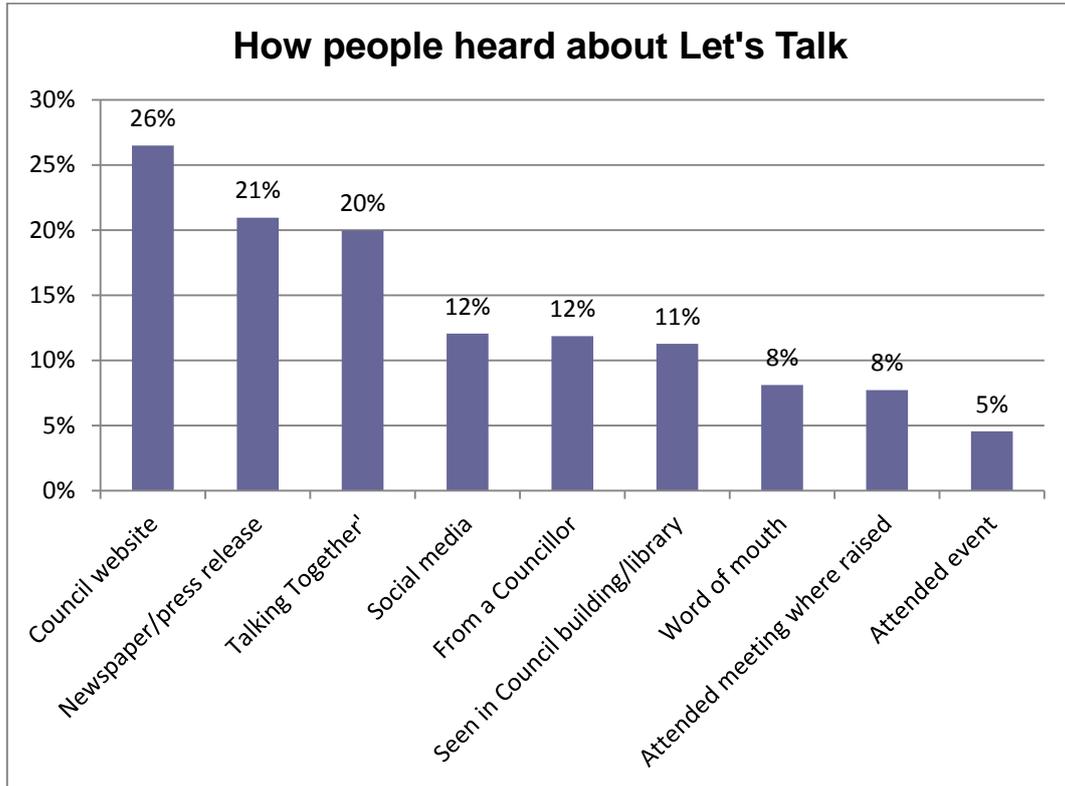
The Council's Communications and Digital Marketing team undertook an extensive and far-reaching campaign for Let's Talk. This involved:

- A lead article in the Council's Talking Together publication which reached 147,000 homes across the borough along with 3,000 other locations including libraries and customer service points.
- Press releases throughout the 12 week period.
- A widespread social media campaign was also promoted over the consultation period, including frequent tweets, Facebook posts including targeted advertising, a dedicated Let's Talk web page and a live webchat event featuring the Leader of the Council.
- Internal messaging to staff and Councillors, including a Members Briefing note, team briefings and the front page of the Intranet.



The graph below shows how people heard about the consultation, based on the views of people filling in the full questionnaire (either online or hardcopy).

Graph 23: How people heard about the consultation – full questionnaire



Note that totals sum to more than 100 as people could choose more than one option.
Base for graph: 796

Further analysis shows that:

- Of those who heard about the consultation via the website, not surprisingly, 90% filled in the questionnaire online, 10% filled in a hardcopy, the same for hearing about the consultation via social media.
- Of those who heard about Let's Talk via Talking Together, 58% filled in a hardcopy and 42% filled in an online questionnaire.
- For those who chose to fill in a hardcopy, they were more likely to have heard about it via Talking Together than any other method (26%), or pick it up in a Council building (19%), followed by a press release (15%).



Let's talk

Help shape the future of your neighbourhood and your borough

Produced by Cheshire West and Chester Council
Strategic Intelligence Team and Public Sector Reform Team (budget simulator analysis)
Email: research@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at

equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

إذا أردت المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، نرجو أن تطلب ذلك منا.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Pokud byste požadovali informace v jiném jazyce nebo formátu, kontaktujte nás

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਵੋ।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Türkçe bilgi almak istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Tel: 0300 123 8 123 **Textphone:** 18001 01606 867 670

email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk