

# Budget Consultation Feedback Report

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Following a series of various levels of consultation on the Corporate Plan in the latter half of 2006; Charnwood Borough Council invited residents, councillors, staff and partners to engage on how the Council will spend its resources during 2007-08 and beyond.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1. A total of six focus groups were organised and 43 individuals were present:
  - 2.1.1. 2 with partners
  - 2.1.2. 2 with the Citizens Panel and general public
  - 2.1.3. 1 with university staff
  - 2.1.4. 1 with businesses
- 2.2. The focus groups with the Citizens Panel, general public and the session organised for staff at the university were offered a £20 incentive to encourage motivation to take part.
- 2.3. The sessions were planned to take place across various days and times to encourage more varied sampling, although no details were recorded of the participants' demographics.
- 2.4. The focus groups were complemented by submissions to an online questionnaire with 21 participants, this did include demographic monitoring.
- 2.5. Two formal meetings were also undertaken with Trade Unions and Industrial and Commercial Rate Payers. These were statutory meetings and the results are not included in this report.
- 2.6. Promotion of the consultation was in the local and regional media, online, through leaflets in the Customer Service Centre and through direct invitations to the whole Citizens Panel. Internal publications Staff Matters and Democracy Matters were also used to promote and raise awareness of the sessions.
- 2.7. The questions asked were based on key themes and the heaviest use of resources in the proposed budget. This included:
  - 2.7.1. Expansion of the Street Warden Scheme
  - 2.7.2. Initiatives to minimize the tonnage of waste collected and increased recycling
  - 2.7.3. Concessionary Travel Scheme
  - 2.7.4. Expanded CCTV coverage
  - 2.7.5. Extra Investment in Facilities for Children

- 2.7.6. Investment in New Technology
- 2.7.7. Creation of Loughborough Sports Park
- 2.7.8. Updating Festive Illuminations (for safety reasons)
- 2.7.9. Putting Resources into the Redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway area
- 2.7.10. Putting Resources into Assisting Regeneration Projects in Towns and Villages
- 2.7.11. Funding for Area Forums to spend in local areas.
- 2.7.12. Projects to support improvements in Loughborough Town (e.g. shop front improvements, new street furniture).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Expansion of the Street Warden Scheme

3.1.1. All participants viewed this area as being positive and in need of investment. Key comments included:

- 3.1.1.1. The wardens need to work with the police and be seen to work more in the villages.
- 3.1.1.2. It's a really good thing, especially if they enforce parking.
- 3.1.1.3. The coverage needs to be expanded, so this is very positive.
- 3.1.1.4. Education is needed on what happens for disputes over FPN – what if somebody gives a wrong name and address?
- 3.1.1.5. Communication needs to be upped on the scheme and what it is achieving.
- 3.1.1.6. Illegal parking will be tackled will enforce the reputation of the wardens.
- 3.1.1.7. Perhaps, it's too early to fully assess their effectiveness?
- 3.1.1.8. On principle the feedback is very supportive and the scheme is viewed as key to creating a cleaner and greener borough.

3.1.2. Statistics:

- 3.1.2.1. Fully agree – 21.1%
- 3.1.2.2. **Agree** – 31.6%
- 3.1.2.3. Not sure – 10.5%
- 3.1.2.4. Disagree – 21.1%
- 3.1.2.5. Completely disagree – 15.8%

3.2. Initiatives to minimize the tonnage of waste collected and increased recycling.

3.2.1. This was again viewed as a top priority and very positive. Key comments included:

- 3.2.1.1. We need to spread awareness across the Council of the education programme and use the education post to build on knowledge.
- 3.2.1.2. We should have 'chip in bins' and the more people waste, the more they should pay!
- 3.2.1.3. We should push more money into improving the current scheme and raising awareness of that.
- 3.2.1.4. There is a real need for education on the green and red bags and this role should assist in that.
- 3.2.1.5. Charnwood should have an incinerator – it would stop landfill!

- 3.2.1.6. More information is needed.
- 3.2.1.7. Supplies of bags seem to be random and needs to be more standardised. Perhaps, the bags could be made bigger?
- 3.2.1.8. Students need to be educated each year.
- 3.2.1.9. Perhaps you could leave the bags at local shops, students union...
- 3.2.1.10. Education is a key factor and especially with kids and young people. Hugely supported!!
- 3.2.1.11. Brown bins paid for, why? Pick ups need to be more 'seasonal'.
- 3.2.1.12. Work with smaller households to reduce waste – education needs to be a key. The impact will be had on the raising awareness of why we need to recycle.
- 3.2.1.13. More pressure on supermarkets to reduce packaging.
- 3.2.2. Statistics:
  - 3.2.2.1. **Fully agree** – 42.1%
  - 3.2.2.2. Agree – 21.1%
  - 3.2.2.3. Not sure – 15.8%
  - 3.2.2.4. Disagree – 15.8%
  - 3.2.2.5. Completely disagree – 15.3%

### 3.3. Concessionary Travel Scheme

#### 3.3.1. Key comments included:

- 3.3.1.1. This is a good idea and links to the environmentally friendly messages.
- 3.3.1.2. We shouldn't be encouraging older people to 'clog up' buses before 9.30am.
- 3.3.1.3. The scheme should be promoted and linked at ShopMobility.
- 3.3.1.4. The scheme has been pushed from one side to another politically!
- 3.3.1.5. Really pleased, great news story.
- 3.3.1.6. Public transport and environmental effects, so fully supportive.
- 3.3.1.7. Communication needs to improve to increase awareness of what is available.

#### 3.3.2. Statistics:

- 3.3.2.1. Fully agree – 21.1%
- 3.3.2.2. **Agree** – 26.3%
- 3.3.2.3. Not sure – 21.1%
- 3.3.2.4. Disagree – 15.8%
- 3.3.2.5. Completely disagree – 15.8%

### 3.4. Expanded CCTV coverage

3.4.1. This did receive positive comments but more than a third of participants commented that the scheme was a waste of time and money. Key comments included:

- 3.4.1.1. We need to publicise the coverage the CCTV has and let people know its there and will be monitored 24 hours a day to deter crime.
- 3.4.1.2. There are concerns over the protection of individuals – data protection and privacy.
- 3.4.1.3. Report on the Council website.

3.4.1.4. Perhaps publicise stats on offences and crimes and the effects of CCTV.

3.4.1.5. The coverage needs to go into villages and not just in Loughborough.

3.4.2. Online statistics:

3.4.2.1. Fully agree – 10.5%

3.4.2.2. Agree – 21.1%

3.4.2.3. Not sure – 15.8%

3.4.2.4. **Disagree** – 36.8%

3.4.2.5. Completely disagree – 15.8%

3.5. Extra Investment in Facilities for Children

3.5.1. This cause more of a split across many of the discussion groups, but the majority did want resources spending in the area – although questions were asked on the amount of money to be spent.

3.5.1.1. Older children need provision, too.

3.5.1.2. The new parks have reduced appeal to mid-age children.

3.5.1.3. There definitely needs to be more variety in the parks.

3.5.1.4. The play areas need to have more lighting, CCTV and be made safer areas.

3.5.2. Online statistics:

3.5.2.1. Fully agree – 15.8%

3.5.2.2. **Agree** – 63.2%

3.5.2.3. Not sure – 0%

3.5.2.4. Disagree – 10.5%

3.5.2.5. Completely disagree – 10.5%

3.6. Investment in New Technology

3.6.1. This was viewed as a positive area, in need of investment.

3.6.1.1. Priority needs to be assigned on a need basis, internally.

3.6.1.2. The effects should be monitored and made publically available.

3.6.1.3. The CRM will be a great asset – if it works well.

3.6.1.4. There is a benefit to sharing this information with partners but a key issue maybe on data protection and the data refreshment rates.

3.6.2. Online statistics:

3.6.2.1. Fully agree – 15.3%

3.6.2.2. **Agree** – 31.6%

3.6.2.3. Not sure – 26.3%

3.6.2.4. Disagree – 26.3%

3.6.2.5. Completely disagree – 10.5%

3.7. Creation of Loughborough Sports Park

3.7.1. Viewed as being good for the Borough as a whole but still Loughborough/University focused. A more significant split and voted in the bottom three in the rankings in 70% of participants eyes. Key comments included:

3.7.1.1. Investment costs far less than return – good idea.

3.7.1.2. Partnership – needs more of it.

3.7.1.3. Investment, yes – sports, no.

- 3.7.1.4. Consideration of traffic and infrastructure.
- 3.7.1.5. We need to do more for sports across the Borough at a grass routes level.

3.7.2. Online statistics:

- 3.7.2.1. Fully agree – 0%
- 3.7.2.2. **Agree** – 36.8%
- 3.7.2.3. Not sure – 21.1%
- 3.7.2.4. Disagree – 10.5%
- 3.7.2.5. Completely disagree – 31.6%

3.8. Updating Festive Illuminations (for safety reasons)

3.8.1. This again caused a split across many of the discussion groups.

- 3.8.1.1. It's good because it pulls people into Loughborough.
- 3.8.1.2. I'm not overly bothered by the lights – people will come shopping at that time of year anyway.
- 3.8.1.3. Loughborough is prioritised and rightly so.
- 3.8.1.4. You need to use energy saving bulbs.
- 3.8.1.5. Keep it simple with a really big nice tree.
- 3.8.1.6. There are more important things!

3.8.2. Online statistics:

- 3.8.2.1. Fully agree – 10.5%
- 3.8.2.2. **Agree** – 31.6%
- 3.8.2.3. **Not sure** – 31.6%
- 3.8.2.4. Disagree – 15.8%
- 3.8.2.5. Completely disagree – 10.5%

3.9. Putting Resources into the Redevelopment of the Eastern Gateway area

3.9.1. This was included on all the discussions groups top ranking schemes.

The feedback included:

- 3.9.1.1. Yes! Push it through!
- 3.9.1.2. Car park!
- 3.9.1.3. It can't come quick enough.
- 3.9.1.4. Suggest even more money than that!

3.9.2. Online statistics:

- 3.9.2.1. Fully agree – 21.1%
- 3.9.2.2. **Agree** – 31.6%
- 3.9.2.3. Not sure – 21.1%
- 3.9.2.4. Disagree – 15.8%
- 3.9.2.5. Completely disagree – 10.5%

3.10. Putting Resources into Assisting Regeneration Projects in Towns and Villages

3.10.1. Generally, people did want the regeneration but concern was raised as to what the money would equate to and how it would be spent.

- 3.10.1.1. Needs more money than this.
- 3.10.1.2. Use the expertise within the Council.
- 3.10.1.3. Come to the villages and work with them to spend the money.

3.10.2. Online statistics:

- 3.10.2.1. Fully agree – 21.1%
- 3.10.2.2. **Agree** – 47.4%

- 3.10.2.3. Not sure – 15.8%
- 3.10.2.4. Disagree – 15.8%
- 3.10.2.5. Completely disagree – 0%

4. Funding for Area Forums to spend in local areas.

- 4.1.1. There needs to be more communication about what this means for residents to respond.
- 4.1.2. On the whole the concept is well received by all. Comments included:
  - 4.1.2.1. Good idea!!
  - 4.1.2.2. Generation of ideas from local to local people!
- 4.1.3. Online statistics:
  - 4.1.3.1. Fully agree – 0%
  - 4.1.3.2. **Agree** – 42.1%
  - 4.1.3.3. Not sure – 21.1%
  - 4.1.3.4. Disagree – 15.8%
  - 4.1.3.5. Completely disagree – 21.1%

4.2. Projects to support improvements in Loughborough Town (e.g. shop front improvements, new street furniture).

- 4.2.1.1. Purple furniture hasn't been done long.
- 4.2.1.2. Loughborough has to be Charnwood's focus – although a minority did comment they felt geographically separated from the centre and had little or no connection.
- 4.2.1.3. The Town Centre Partnership is a great idea and needs to be encouraged.
- 4.2.1.4. The Rushes needs more support to fill the units.
- 4.2.1.5. We need to push on with the Ring Road development if the town isn't going to die.
- 4.2.2. Online statistics:
  - 4.2.2.1. Fully agree – 10.5%
  - 4.2.2.2. **Agree** – 47.4%
  - 4.2.2.3. Not sure – 21.1%
  - 4.2.2.4. Disagree – 15.8%
  - 4.2.2.5. Completely disagree – 15.3%

## 5. Conclusions

5.1. The rankings reveal the top three areas with the most support as:

- 5.1.1. Expansion of the Street Warden Scheme.
- 5.1.2. Initiatives to minimize the tonnage of waste collected and increased recycling.
- 5.1.3. Extra investment in facilities for children.

5.2. The bottom three:

- 5.2.1. Expansion of the Street Warden Scheme – showing a considered split in opinion.
- 5.2.2. Creation of Loughborough Sports Park.
- 5.2.3. Festive illuminations.

