



REVENUE BUDGET 2017-18 to 2019-20

CONSULTATION REPORT

Carmarthenshire County Council

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CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

BUDGET 2017-20 CONSULTATION

INTRODUCTION

A mixed-methods approach to ascertaining views on the 2017-20 budget took place during the period from 21 November 2016 to 8 January 2017.

In making savings, the Council is concerned to minimise the impact upon service delivery. In meeting the challenge of saving a total of £25 million, many savings are being made through internal efficiencies. It is however recognised that some savings proposals will potentially have an impact on service delivery. These are known as 'policy' proposals and **15** (with a total value of £12.9 million) are being considered by the Council in making its budget for 2017-20.

There are a variety of legal and policy reasons why the Council must undertake full and meaningful consultation, where service changes are under consideration.¹ Ultimately, a flawed approach can be a means whereby decisions can be challenged through the courts, through a process of Judicial Review. A decision against the Council would damage the reputation of Council, at a time when it needs to focus on responding to its challenging financial position.

This report:

- 1) Outlines the **consultation approach** and the different consultation methods deployed;
- 2) Describes the **demographic characteristics** of those who took part
- 3) Summarises the **key findings**;
- 4) Details the **specific consultation findings** in relation to each of the 15 proposals;
- 5) Considers **tolerances to council tax increases**
- 6) Lists some ideas from the consultation for **making savings or generating income**

1) OUTLINE OF APPROACH AND CONSULTATION METHODS

Whilst the 'cash neutral' settlement provided by Welsh Government was more favourable than in years past, inflation, rising costs, demographic pressures and increased statutory obligations have challenged the Council to make significant cost reductions. In response, Council departments identified proposals for making savings and a consultation exercise was undertaken to elicit views on levels of agreement, possible impacts and ways the impacts could be minimised (mitigation).

Councillor involvement

¹ The 2010 Equality Act and the Council's Strategic Equality Plan require that 'due regard' be given to the views of designated groups in making decisions. In terms of consultation, a body of case law points to the need for public authorities to properly gather and consider the views of the public in reaching decisions.

A series of departmental seminars for all county councillors took place during the period November to December.² Proposals were considered in detail and feedback sought. Moreover, the efficiency proposals were tabled for discussion at a meeting of the Town & Community Council Liaison Forum (TCCLF).

Alongside councillor engagement, public consultation took place in the following ways:

Survey

The survey provided financial and service information on each of the 15 policy proposals and asked respondents to express a view on the degree to which they supported the proposal.³ Views were also sought regarding the potential impact of implementing the proposal on people and communities.⁴

The survey was administered in three principal ways:

- 1) Electronically via the Council's online consultation portal (iLocal)
- 2) Sampling – Copies of the budget consultation survey were distributed to 2000 households across Carmarthenshire, using a stratified random sample. The electoral roll was deployed as a sampling frame and a proportionate number of households selected within each electoral ward so as to ensure fair geographical coverage. The random sample permitted the Council to reach out to new consultees, including those who may not ordinarily engage with the council through conventional means; thus bringing a 'fresh perspective'.
- 3) Hard copies were promoted through customer service centres, libraries and other high footfall areas in order to maximise the response rate.

A total of 670 survey responses were received from various sections of the community, including from groups and organisations. A demographic breakdown is provided in section 2.

Stakeholder event

A stakeholder event was held December 6th at Y Ffwrnes theatre, Llanelli, in order that organisations, representatives and residents could offer comment and ask questions on each of the 15 proposals direct to council officers in a facilitated session.

Insight

The Insight session took place 8th December at QE High and involved year 12 and 13 students from Ysgol Dyfryn Amman, Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn, Ysgol Bro Dinefwr, QE High, Maes y Gwendraeth and Ysgol Gyfun y Strade.

Each school had around 10 attendees, and Executive Board roles were allocated. In all, around 70 young people participated in the budget consultation exercise. Following briefings on portfolios and proposals for making savings, students undertook a discussion and decision making exercise to decide which proposals they would support. Members of the Council's Executive Board were in the audience as each group presented its views on the proposals. Comments from the session are noted against relevant proposals.

² As democratically elected representatives, councillor views are of central importance. This is of course in addition to their decision making role, as Council, in deciding the budget.

³ The format of the survey was identical to the previous budget survey, to ensure comparability of results for all 15 proposals.

⁴ The responses are important in establishing the impact of Council proposals on people – a key consideration in undertaking good decision making based on evidence, and a requirement of the 2010 Equality Act.

Other

4 responses were made by email, letter or in person, namely responses from Hywel Dda University Health Board, Carmarthen Town Council, St Clears Town Council and a Carmarthenshire resident.

The consultation also included a Schools Strategy and Budget Forum meeting on the 23rd November and a Trade Union Consultation Session, 3rd January 2017.

Publicity

Information about the budget consultation, and ways to become involved, was disseminated widely. The issue was highlighted in Carms News, and relevant information was provided for dissemination through a wide range of local media, during the consultation period. Businesses were approached for comment, through a direct mailing.

In addition, the consultation was publicised through relevant equality groups, including Equality Carmarthenshire and the Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition for Action. Community council involvement was encouraged through a presentation and discussion at the liaison panel meeting held on the 7th December

The public consultation phase ran from 21st November 2016 to 8th January 2017.

About Average Index Score (AIS). Sometimes known as a 'weighted average', the AIS is a way of distilling the 'balance and strength of opinion' down into one number. Useful for questions with options to 'strongly agree', 'disagree', etc., the technique is used throughout the report. Values range from 2 (*everyone* strongly agrees) to minus 2 (*everyone* strongly disagrees).

Example

10 people are asked whether they 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'have no opinion', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that Wales will win the six nations.

Results...

3 strongly agree (each response worth 2, so=**6**)

3 agree (each response worth 1, so=**3**)

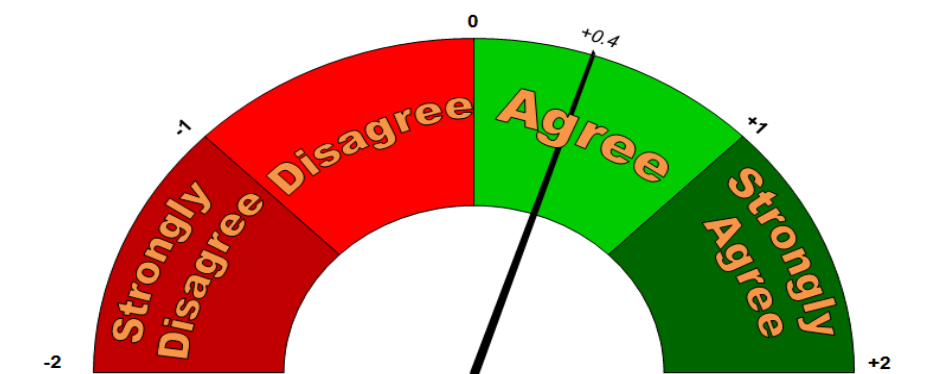
1 no opinion (each response worth 0, so=**0**)

1 disagree (each response worth -1, so= **-1**)

2 strongly disagree (each response worth -2, so=**-4**)

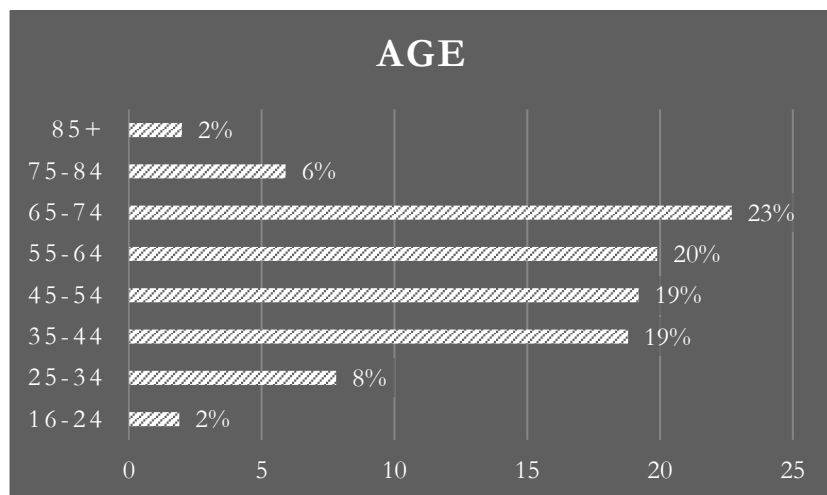
The AIS is calculated by adding all the numbers in bold: so, $6+3+0-1-4=4$;

Then dividing by the number of responses (10 in this case). The average index score is: $4\div 10=$ **0.4** (shown graphically below)



2) RESPONDENT PROFILE

Of the 670 respondents who gave completed answers to demographic questions: 98% were from individuals and 2% from Town and Community Councils, organisations or businesses.⁵ 568 respondents specified the first few digits of their postcode. Of these, 37% resided in Community Area 1; 11% in CA2; 32% in CA3; 11% in CA4; 15% in CA5 and 15% in CA6.



Demographic Characteristic	Overall %
Transgender	0.7%
PNTS	2.3%
Relationship status	
Single	11%
Married	65%
Separated	1%
Divorced	5%
Widowed	7%
Civil partnership	1%
Co-habiting	8%
Other	0%
PNTS	4%
Sexual orientation	
Straight	88%
LGB	3%
PNTS	10%
Religion	
Yes	50%
PNTS	9%
Caring responsibilities	
Yes	16%
PNTS	3%

Demographic Characteristic	Overall %
Ethnicity	
White	97%
BME	1%
Other	1%
PNTS	2%
Disability	
Yes	12%
No	85%
PNTS	4%
Preferred language	
Welsh	22%
English	75%
Other	4%
Income	
<£10,000	10%
£10,000 – £19,999	18%
£20,000 – £29,999	14%
£30,000 – £39,999	14%
£40,000 – £49,999	9%
£50,000 – £59,999	8%
> £60,000	10%
PNTS	18%

⁵ Richmond Park Primary School; Emerald Vets Ltd; St Clears Football Club; Whitland RFC; Cylch Meithrin/Ti a Fi Sancler; Kidwelly Industrial Museum; Rhuddin Housing Co-op; GSN Ltd

Carmarthenshire Upper Output Areas (UOAs)

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Upper Output Areas	Population
UOA 0001	31,180
UOA 0002	33,517
UOA 0003	29,204
UOA 0004	31,522
UOA 0005	30,424
UOA 0006	29,051

3) SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Headline results – all 15 proposals

The table below shows the results from the budget consultation survey. It shows details of the proposal, then gives results for the question: *'how strongly do you agree, or disagree, with this proposal'*.⁶ The table is ranked in order by AIS score. Those proposals with higher levels of support, reflected in higher AIS scores, appear first.⁷

Proposal	3 Year Saving (£'000)	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Average Index Score
1. Youth Services	20	23	34	27	9	7	0.58
2. Out of County Placements	148	23	37	22	10	9	0.54
3. School Improvement (ERW)	150	19	38	22	9	12	0.43
4. Libraries	105	19	40	17	12	12	0.41
5. Catering Services - School Meals	170	17	38	21	13	11	0.36
6. Older People and Physical Disabilities Day Services	200	16	41	16	14	12	0.35
7. Parking Services	120	14	37	27	12	11	0.32
8. Educational Psychology	60	16	34	27	13	10	0.32
9. Sport and Leisure - Community Leisure Centres	118	18	34	15	12	21	0.15
10. Cleansing	164	11	36	21	18	14	0.12
11. School Transport Policy Review	65	14	27	23	19	17	0.04
12. Music Service	130	17	26	20	19	19	0.01
13. Housing and Public Protection - Grants to the Voluntary Sector	170	10	27	23	21	20	-0.15
14. Special Education Needs	70	8	17	17	26	33	-0.28
15. Delegated School Budget	11,251	11	21	20	19	30	-0.37

⁶ The survey itself gave summary information about each proposal to inform the decisions of respondents.

⁷ Values near to zero may indicate no clear consensus, or may reflect apathy in relation to the proposal.

4) CONSULTATION FINDINGS – ALL PROPOSALS

Below, all 15 proposals are considered individually, in turn, in order to lay out a *comprehensive summary* of relevant consultation information.

Each summary begins by detailing relevant facts and figures, including the value of the proposal, its average index score (AIS), and its AIS rank against other proposals. It also gives an AIS for selected categories of respondent, for comparative purposes, and also to help meet our Equality Duty of demonstrating ‘due regard’ to equality. It is important to recognise that some proposals will be of specific relevance to people in certain categories. This must be taken in account in reaching decisions.

Views expressed through the public consultation - whether through surveys, letters and emails - have been considered together and themes identified.

The ‘other relevant information’ section includes information from *specific* sources, such as representations and organisational responses.

The views of councillors, (as expressed through budget seminars or scrutiny committees) are included under the ‘councillor engagement’ heading.

In the AIS charts that follow for each proposal, negative values are highlighted to show where results are, on balance, in opposition.

In order to strengthen the decision making process, where a proposal has formed part of a previous budget consultation, these results are also included, for comparative purposes.

1. Youth Services

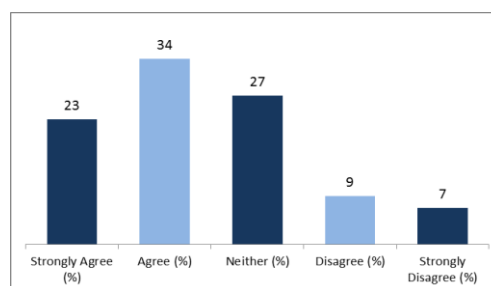
Total Budget: £855,000
3 Year Savings: £20,000

2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
20	0	0

Description: The Quay Centre in Carmarthen will cease to be used by the Youth Support Service (on or before 31st March 2017) and handed over to the Corporate Property Service for alternative use. This may produce income for the County Council. Redistributing activities from The Quay Centre will require some planning and require agreements with other locations and providers and is not guaranteed to be fully cost neutral at this stage.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.03%

Average Index Score: 0.58
Overall Rank (of 15): 1
Sample Size: 583



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.40	0.00	0.18	0.60	0.55	0.55	0.62	0.55	0.58	0.27	0.61
Sample	125	3	11	371	177	271	284	67	284	15	93

	Income <£20k	Income £20k-£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.45	0.54	0.78	0.44	0.69	0.63	0.7	0.8	0.66
Sample	151	153	160	173	59	170	56	79	77

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 76 comments

- A majority view that any impacts would be negligible on the proviso an alternative venue is secured
- It was suggested that the Quay Centre would be better served furthering Carmarthenshire's tourism offer (e.g., water sports, cycling, café/restaurant)
- Proposal is reasonable given centre is under-utilised
- General point made on the importance of providing activities and meeting points for young people. Failure to do so risks ASB and delinquency

Mitigation – 61 comments

- Alternative venue within reach
- Develop Quay Centre as a multi-purpose building which can continue to house the youth service amongst other functions/services

Welsh Language – 21 comments

- Some impact if youth groups conversing in Welsh do not have a place to meet. Welsh groups important in encouraging use of language outside school
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – against proposal given the importance of providing a place for young people to socialise.
- Could increase anti-social behaviour which could result in an increase costs of managing the impact. (Kidwelly Industrial Museum, Church Minister/School Governor, GSN Ltd.)
- Make better use of school/church facilities. (Richmond Park School, Church Minister/School Governor).
- Better integration between police services and school, and link the service with leisure centres. (GDN Ltd., Church Minister/School Governor).
- Such low numbers attending should have no impact, (Plaid Llanelli)

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – in favour of proposal. Importance of ensuring equal access across Carmarthenshire stressed

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
Alternative facilities for delivering the service within Carmarthen are being pursued, should the facility be closed
Affected groups:
Young people
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transition plan will be formulated to ensure vulnerable young people are not adversely affected during the move to the new location
Assessment undertaken: December 2015 (revised December 2016)

2. Out of County Placements

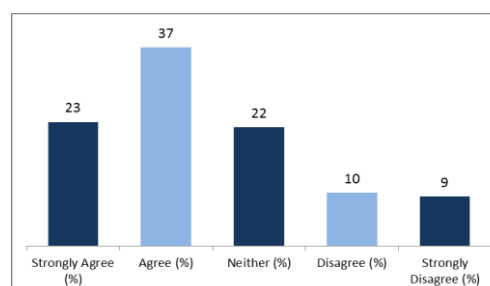
Total Budget: £669,000
3 Year Savings: £148,000

2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
0	0	148

Description: Seek to reduce the number of children or young people placed in specialist provision out of county by developing local services, including highly skilled foster placements.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.19%

Average Index Score: 0.54
Overall Rank (of 15): 2
Sample Size: 592



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.57	0.00	0.00	0.49	0.67	0.54	0.55	0.65	0.58	0.00	0.43
Sample	134	3	12	375	181	281	283	68	290	16	93

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.53	0.65	0.53	0.33	0.36	0.59	0.77	0.74	0.7
Sample	156	158	156	177	61	174	57	82	77

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 99 comments

- Comments reflecting the importance of providing support to the young people and their families
- Widespread support for the principle of providing care ‘in-county’. Some concerns expressed concerning the availability of facilities and specialist carers
- Some comments suggest that the cost per head is an essential consideration and that providing care in-county for some specialist needs could be more expensive
- A small number of comments were against the proposal

Mitigation – 59 comments

- Work collaboratively with other counties to achieve savings
- Develop a supply of suitably trained specialist workers and foster carers
- Develop data systems to ensure demand is fully understood and catered for

Welsh Language – 29 comments

- The development of local provision can help ensure Welsh language provision is in place for the users of the service
 - A number thought the proposal would have no effect on Welsh, or would equally affect Welsh and English speakers
-

Other relevant information:

- In favour of proposal since this would help with the local employment of relevant staff, be better for the young people concerned and would represent an ‘invest to save’ scheme (Insight session and Stakeholder session)
- This service needs to be supported as a matter of principal, re-check the figures. (GSN Ltd.)
- Parents should contribute to the service as most of them receive benefits to assist them with this. (Plaid Llanelli).
- Whilst the budget has to be reduced it is a complex and difficult area. (Richmond Park School).
- Adequate in-county provision, train people to meet local needs otherwise vulnerable persons will be affected. (Kidwelly Industrial Museum, Church Minister/School Governor, Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd.).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – widespread support. Members also felt that that expanded provision could allow the County to provide for other areas on a regional basis.

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
Less out of county placements through developing specialist provision and highly skilled foster placements
Affected groups:
Disabled young people. The AIS result shows strong support from disabled respondents
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measures to develop and support specialist foster carers• Ensure future trends and demands are well understood
Assessment undertaken: December 2016

3. School Improvement (ERW)

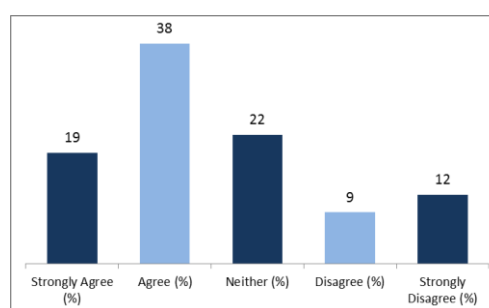
Total Budget: £1,089,000
3 Year Savings: £150,000

2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
0	0	150

Description: Review annual financial contribution to ERW on the assumption that school standards remain high and continue to improve through enhanced school to school support and collaboration, reducing the need for external intervention.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.19%

Average Index Score: 0.43
Overall Rank (of 15): 3
Sample Size: 586



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.34	1.33	0.08	0.40	0.56	0.39	0.52	0.55	0.45	-0.25	0.45
Sample	129	3	12	371	177	272	284	66	287	16	92

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.38	0.47	0.50	0.36	0.39	0.47	0.36	0.57	0.51
Sample	152	154	160	173	59	170	55	79	78

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 111 comments

- Many commented that ERW should continue to be supported as an investment in the education of future generations
- Some questioned the value of ERW, with particular reference to a perception of too many highly paid staff
- A number thought responsibility for standards should rest with schools
- Some agreed that it was acceptable to reduce funding in line with evidence of improved standards

Mitigation – 48 comments

- Schools to collaborate: peer review and sharing practice
- Some of the saving could be passed to schools for them to use to support standards

- School governors could support healthy challenge
- The LEA could provide support with standards instead of ERW

Welsh Language – 43 comments

- A range of views were expressed, but these related to Welsh medium education rather than this ERW proposal specifically. Those comments that were relevant suggest either no effect, or an equal effect on Welsh and English
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – against proposal in light of its track record and need to maintain education standards.
- This would be detrimental, standard of education of apprentices is low as it is. Paramount that teaching standards are maintained, schools and pupils would suffer without this service. (GSN Ltd., Plaid Llanelli, Church Minister/School Governor).
- Reduce budget, good service but schools need to work closely and help each other within their local communities. (Richmond Park School).
- Look at education pay scales, raised out of proportion for head teachers. (GSN Ltd.)
- Resources put into promoting the Welsh language could be used, and the same support given to all schools as is given to the Welsh medium schools. (Church Minister/School Governor).

Councillor engagement:

- N/A

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>
Possible impact on standards
<i>Affected groups:</i>
Young people
<i>Mitigation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between schools on standards • A greater role for governing bodies in challenging performance
<i>Assessment undertaken:</i> December 2016

4. Libraries

Total Budget: £2,367,000
3 Year Savings: £105,000

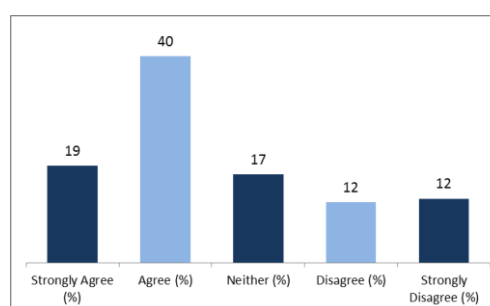
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
29	36	40

Description: To ensure a library service continues to be available in Carmarthenshire, the proposal is to close or co-locate the least cost effective branch libraries and provide the service through an enhanced mobile library service if they were to close. A desktop review of branch libraries has been carried out to determine usage, costs, staffing, opening hours, and to consider other community provision, however a detailed review would be required with full consultation if the proposal was taken forward.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.13%

Average Index Score: 0.41
Overall Rank (of 15): 4
Sample Size: 613

Previous AIS: 0.42 (2014)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.16	0.00	0.75	0.41	0.39	0.35	0.50	0.48	0.51	0.00	0.51
Sample	138	3	12	387	187	289	292	71	294	16	95

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.24	0.36	0.66	0.22	0.26	0.38	0.48	0.45	0.74
Sample	162	166	160	187	61	174	58	82	80

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 159 comments

- Many comments stated that closing branch libraries would affect the most deprived in communities, not all households have computers and families use the libraries to assist with children's homework etc.
- Concerns that rural communities would be affected, increasing isolation and loneliness and affecting people's overall well-being.
- Many raised concerns about the mobile service being available outside the normal working hours and providing as robust a service as the library.

- Some said that the proposal would have a minimal or no affect if the mobile service provision was of the same standard offered in the branch libraries.
- This will have a greater impact on the older generation.

Mitigation – 118 comments

- Many comments suggested that a review should be undertaken of least cost effective libraries so that an action plan can be produced to make them more cost effective.
- Many suggested there was a need to encourage more community support, use the buildings for other community functions as well as the library service.
- Combine services, use local school libraries for public use.
- Engage with communities and service users to ascertain what would work best in their areas.
- Regular book refreshment to encourage users.

Welsh Language – 74 comments

- Some concern that this might offer less opportunity for social interaction through the medium of Welsh and reduced access to Welsh literature.
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – in favour of reducing number of branch libraries given change in habits (proliferation of e-books / kindles). The Group suggested that books be deposited within care homes and consideration given to library ‘cafes’ to generate income and improve viability of the service.
- As long as an adequate/good mobile service is provided this will compensate for the loss of closures of branch libraries. (Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd., Plaid Llanelli, stakeholder session)
- Use of community buildings such as cafes or churches could provide opportunities for people to meet, read and research, although it would be a lesser service. (Church Minister/School Governor).
- Libraries provide a beneficial service which is a key resource in developing Welsh language skills. Important for the mobile service to have Welsh language provision. (Richmond Park School, Plaid Llanelli).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – positive, although additional information was requested

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
Closure of the least cost-effective libraries
Affected groups:
The results for all groups shows support for the proposal (except LGB)
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-location of libraries with other facilities • Community ownership of those libraries that are used least • Mobile library provision would help mitigate possible closures
Assessment undertaken: January 2017

5. Catering Services – School Meals

Total Budget: £168,000
3 Year Savings: £170,000

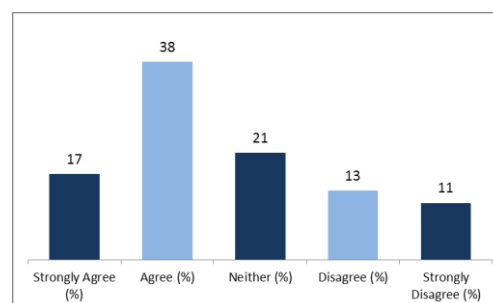
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
100	70	0

Description: Increase the cost of a primary school meal price to £2.50 in April 2017 and £2.60 in April 2018. There will be similar increases in charges for food in secondary schools. The price was increased by 10p per meal this financial year 2016-17.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.21%

Average Index Score: 0.36
Overall Rank (of 15): 5
Sample Size: 584

Previous AIS: 0.31 (2016); 0.37 (2015); -0.05 (2014)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.13	-0.67	0.36	0.27	0.57	0.28	0.48	0.48	0.38	0.20	0.47
Sample	129	3	11	372	178	274	282	67	280	15	92

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.39	0.26	0.41	0.2	0.42	0.48	0.55	0.49	0.51
Sample	154	156	155	172	59	169	56	80	77

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 114 comments

- A common view that the increase will render school meals unaffordable for some low to medium income families not on benefits (JAMs – Just About Managing).
- Mention was made of the childhood ‘obesity crisis’ and importance of eating a cooked, nutritious meal at school
- Doesn’t present a good alternative to local takeaways and sweet shops, preferred by many secondary school pupils
- Disproportionate impact on larger families
- Increased costs threaten viability of service as overall demand will reduce

- An opposing view that the current cost of a school meal represents good value for money, and the proposed increase is reasonable provided entitlement to free school meals remains as is
- Small incremental increases will help keep impacts to a minimum

Mitigation – 71 comments

- Improvements to school menu will increase take-up and willingness to pay additional costs
- Economies of scale – better take-up will reduce cost. Pilot cheaper meals at a few schools to ascertain impact on take-up
- Discounts for parents who have multiple children within same school
- Nominal charge for breakfast clubs
- Integrate the school meal and meals on wheels services

Welsh Language – 10 comments

- May reduce opportunities to socialise in Welsh during lunch break. Otherwise, respondents noted that impacts would be minimal
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – rejected proposal due to the financial impacts on families. It was suggested that primary schools could consider having the private sector provide meals, if this reduces costs.
- Should not affect anyone, cost should be the basis of the increase, (Plaid Llanelli, Kidwelly Industrial Museum).
- Some pupils rely on this meal as their main source of nutrition. (Church Minister/School Governor, Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd.).
- This will reduce uptake as many families believe schools meals are not value for money. (Richmond Park School).
- Schools work with local businesses i.e. cafes, pub etc and have food brought into the schools. (Church Minister/School Governor).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar and Scrutiny – concerns about the negative impact on take up and the risk of a ‘tipping point’ given charges are currently the joint highest in Wales. Some comment that separate charges could be in place for primary and secondary schools

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>
The price rise could impact upon take up of school meals
<i>Affected groups:</i>
Children who use the school meal service; those with parental responsibility, particularly those in ‘working poverty’
<i>Mitigation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the facility of free school meals to help make sure those eligible take it up • Raise awareness of the benefits of school meals (health, nutrition) to help support take up • Seek economies by providing meals to others (e.g., care homes, meals on wheels)

Assessment undertaken: November 2014, (revised December 2015, December 2016)

6. Older People and Physical Disabilities Day Services

Total Budget: £997,000
3 Year Savings: £200,000

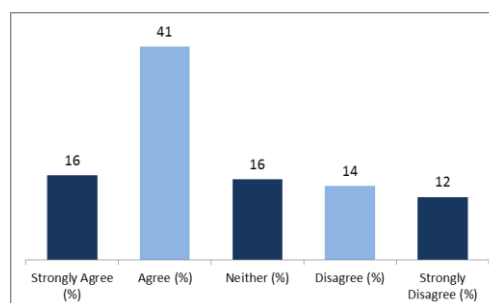
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
50	150	0

Description: Review and redevelop day services in order to meet demand in areas of high need and address falling demand in others. Focus on the three day centres to develop services around them and target areas of need.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.25%

Average Index Score: 0.35
Rank (of 15): 6
Sample Size: 621

Previous AIS: -1.08 (2015);
 0.1 (2014)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.28	-0.33	0.58	0.34	0.48	0.47	0.31	0.39	0.48	0.13	0.35
Sample	141	3	12	393	187	294	294	72	298	16	97

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.43	0.38	0.42	0.15	0.35	0.39	0.64	0.44	0.46
Sample	166	164	161	191	60	175	59	82	81

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 141 comments

- Many comments on the county's ageing population and that this will increase demand for services
- Concerns that this will put more pressure on carers and their families as this is the only respite that some carers will get.
- Some responses reference equitable access for all.
- If these services are cut then more community support would be required which could result in additional costs.

- Many were concerned that this would have a detrimental impact on the most vulnerable and isolated in our communities. This service plays a vital role for companionship for many clients
- Agreement that a service review is necessary, and all stakeholders (carers, service users) should be involved in a full and proper consultation

Mitigation – 122 comments

- Involvement of the voluntary sector, and provision of activities in community/village facilities
- Introduce a charge that is means tested
- A review that offers a ‘deep dive’ of the service and consults all stakeholders, i.e. clients, guardians, carers and advocates
- Comments that better transport would be essential if the authority was to focus on the 3 day centres and target delivery around them.

Welsh Language – 87 comments

- A recurring theme was that bilingualism is essential for this service as a large proportion of the older generation speak Welsh.
-

Other relevant information:

- Agreement with proposal on the basis that it will improve efficiency and quality, re-focus service where it is most needed and facilitate opportunities to involve the voluntary sector (stakeholder session; Insight session).
- HDUHB – Day centres are important in addressing loneliness and isolation
- These people need extra care and their carers also need more support. (Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd.)
- Risk that the proposal will increase pressure on other social care and public services, such as NHS. Voluntary groups may lack the resources and expertise to step in (Church Minister/School Governor).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – some support, though not unanimous. Clarification was sought over how the projected savings would be made, with some holding the view that savings targets were over-ambitious. Flexible use of existing facilities may help generate income (e.g., intergenerational activity, evening and weekend use).

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact:
Possible changes to provision, reflecting a greater person-centred approach and responding to areas of highest demand
Affected groups:
Older people, those with dementia, and carers
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting a co-production approach, making maximum use of the assets of users, their families and carers, can lead to better outcomes for people • Considering the supportive role the voluntary and community sectors could play in providing opportunities • Matching provision to an enhanced understanding of current needs and future trends • Ensuring transport of users is fully considered within the review
Assessment undertaken: January 2017

7. Parking Services

Total Budget: -£1,520,000 (net income)
3 Year Savings: £120,000

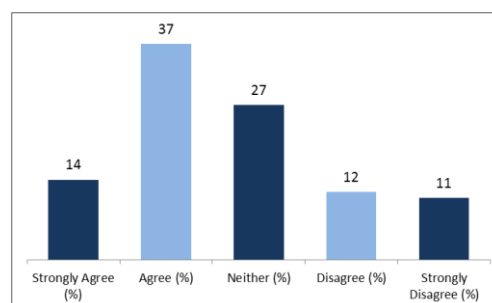
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
0	0	120

Description: Review of revenue options to support transportation and highway related services.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.15%

Average Index Score: 0.32
Overall Rank (of 15): 7
Sample Size: 600

Previous AIS: -0.09 (2016);
-0.11 (2014)



	Staff	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.19	0.00	-0.36	0.32	0.44	0.32	0.37	0.60	0.30	0.38	0.41
Sample	132	3	11	379	183	280	288	70	289	16	93

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.27	0.42	0.42	0.19	0.22	0.45	0.35	0.59	0.63
Sample	158	159	159	180	59	172	57	82	78

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 159 comments

- Many comments suggested that inconsistent parking costs across all of the county's car parks has an effect on shoppers. There were also a large number of comments relating to parking costs in town centres resulting in people shopping at out of town centres where parking is free.
- Local businesses located in the towns are suffering due to the lack of people shopping in the towns and insufficient parking spaces in some areas of the towns especially for disabled and parent and child. Likelihood of avoidance through on street parking etc.
- A view that public transport is not a suitable alternative as it is unreliable

- It was suggested that increasing the council tax (as an alternative to raising parking charges) would be unfair on the families that do not own vehicles.
- A view that there was insufficient information to make any comments.

Mitigation – 91 comments

- A number of comments noting that public transport needs to be more reliable, reasonably priced and available at key times for the working public in order to alleviate the problem with parking in towns.
 - Parking charges: some suggested keeping the costs as they are. Others favoured reducing the costs or providing free parking on certain days in towns as well as having more options for shorter stays i.e. 30 minutes for 50p.
 - Having a universal parking ticket, acceptable for use in all car parks
 - Information boards within car parks should inform users how money is spent
 - Consultation with businesses regarding any review is suggested.
-

Welsh Language – 37 comments

- No impact, though some stressed importance of bilingual signage
-

Other relevant information:

- Against the proposal on grounds that it will increase illegal parking and deplete health of town centres (stakeholder session; Insight session).
- Parking charges are too high and affecting the number of visitors to towns. (Plaid Llanelli).
- Will affect people attending church (Church Minster/School Governor).
- Free parking for elderly/disabled and employees working in the town. (GSN Ltd.)

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – a mix of views on the issue. Some argued that the introduction of further increases was too soon

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>
Increasing charges for using car parks
<i>Affected groups:</i>
Users of car parks, particularly those on lower incomes; retailers
<i>Mitigation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking steps to increase the appeal of public transport, reducing the need for parking • Cheaper tickets for very short stays • Ensuring tickets are transferrable • Promoting the positive contribution parking charges make to the work of the Council • Enforcement of illegal parking activity
<i>Assessment undertaken:</i> (revised January 2017)

8. Educational Psychology

Total Budget: £906,000
3 Year Savings: £60,000

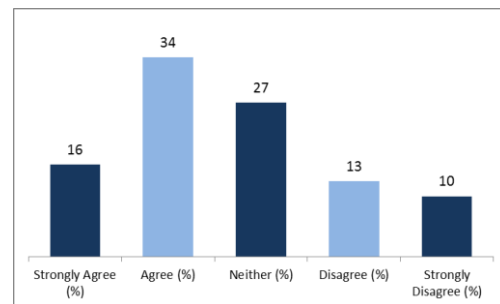
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
60	0	0

Description: Reduction of one post through review of existing structure; following the departure of one member of staff who has moved out of the county.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.08%

Average Index Score: 0.32
Overall Rank (of 15): 8
Sample Size: 577

Previous AIS: -0.33 (2016)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.20	0.33	0.09	0.29	0.38	0.17	0.46	0.17	0.31	0.27	0.37
Sample	122	3	11	367	175	269	279	65	277	15	91

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.34	0.22	0.36	0.13	0.32	0.33	0.6	0.42	0.49
Sample	148	153	157	168	60	168	55	78	77

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 73 comments

- Competing views in relation to tolerance. In the main it was felt the impacts would be manageable; others noted the service should operate at full capacity
- A reduced service risks the emotional and social wellbeing of young people
- Issues may extend and worsen into adulthood if not adequately addressed at an early age. Importance of developing resilience emphasised
- A concern that the service will be ill-prepared to manage future demands placed upon it. Research suggests rates of mental illnesses (such as depression and anxiety) have increased exponentially in recent years.

Mitigation – 51 comments

- A consensus that the impacts cannot be mitigated, given the disparity between projected demand and resource/supply
- Upskilling of school support staff
- Tackle number of missed appointments

Welsh Language – 21 comments

- No impact providing service can still be accessed in Welsh
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – it was proposed that the service combine with Pembrokeshire and that a slower service could be acceptable, particularly if school staff trained to be better able to identify pupils at an early stage.
- Need better logistics with other services i.e. Youth Services, integrate the two. (GSN Ltd.).
- Could result in reduction of access to service for schools, need to ensure no loss of service. Will affect all involved, service may have a longer waiting time. (Richmond Park School, Kidwelly Industrial Museum, Church Minster/School Governor).
- Look at the suicide statistics for Wales. (Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd.).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – pursuing a regional approach (perhaps via ERW) was suggested as a possible way forward.

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>
Possible later identification of special educational needs
<i>Affected groups:</i>
Young people who may have special needs; those with parental responsibility
<i>Mitigation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activity will need to focus on the most significant need• Upskilling of school staff• Work with other counties to provide the service
<i>Assessment undertaken:</i> January 2016 (revised December 2016)

9. Sport and Leisure – Community Leisure Centres

Total Budget: £119,000
3 Year Savings: £118,000

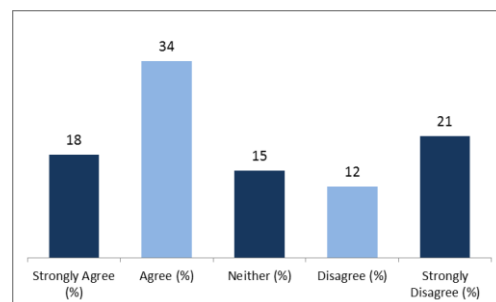
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
27	31	60

Description:

- Closure of the Gwendraeth (Canolfan Carwyn) facility with transfer of provision to new Maes Y Gwendraeth community school nearby. The new facility caters for demand, with squash users potentially re-located to under-utilised facilities at Carmarthen or Llanelli Leisure Centres.
- Proposal also includes the asset transfer (or possible closure) of St Clears Leisure centre, which is one of the smaller facilities within the portfolio, where demand could be met through Carmarthen Leisure Centre and / or Dyffryn Taf School facilities.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.15%

Average Index Score: 0.15
Overall Rank (of 15): 9
Sample Size: 625



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.00	-0.33	-0.67	0.11	0.43	0.20	2.00	0.54	0.29	0.13	0.32
Sample	138	3	12	403	175	290	297	67	291	16	93

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.20	0.04	0.27	-0.49	0.47	0.52	0.46	0.64	0.62
Sample	163	166	162	199	60	172	57	80	79

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 195 comments

- A widely shared view that the proposal would be detrimental to the St. Clears area, with a lesser impact on those residing within Gwendraeth

- Squash was flagged as an at risk activity. Some contested the feasibility of travelling to alternative sites
- Local sports clubs would take a hit, particularly in St. Clears where there is a lack of alternative provision closer than Carmarthen.
- Cost implications of travelling to the alternative sites would impact on low income families (JAMs), resulting in them taking less care of their health
- In St. Clears they would be impacted by the closure of the Ysgol Feithrin, which would cause child care issues for families.
- A large number of respondents raised concerns that this would impact on personal well-being, and counter to recent health (obesity) campaigns.
- Use of Dyffryn Taf School will present barriers to access

Mitigation – 161 comments

- Many comments stipulated that better management and marketing of facilities would increase footfall. Also more flexible opening times, to include weekends
- Transfer assets to community/voluntary organisations or a business.
- Increase charges instead of subsidising users.
- Improve transport links and timetabling so that it better aligns with leisure centre activities (free swims, classes etc.).
- Provide more low cost fitness activities in local parks.

Welsh Language – 64 comments

- Use of alternative facilities where a Welsh service is not offered may discourage use of the language
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – closure of Gwendraeth is justifiable given the close proximity of alternative facilities at the school. It was suggested that the squash club should take on the squash courts should they wish to continue usage. The Group wanted the St Clears venue to continue in operation.
- HDUHB – Service warrants an increase in funding given the growth in childhood obesity, diabetes and a perceived reduction in physical activity uptake (also Badminton Club, GSN Ltd, and stakeholder session)
- St Clears T&CC – against proposal as demographic trends and housing developments in the area suggest an increase in potential users. The Centre could offer a wider range of activities, with adequate investment
- Detrimental effect on the local football team with a risk of the team folding. Travelling to Carmarthen for use of a leisure centre would result in loss of players as it is too far (St. Clears Football Club, Whitland RFC).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – generally against asset transfer of St Clears centre. More support for Gwendraeth, but some questions about utilisation of the site following closure

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>
Closure of Gwendraeth and St Clears leisure facilities
<i>Affected groups:</i>

Users of both centres, including those less able to access alternative facilities (older people, disabled people), and welsh speakers. School and community groups use the St Clears centre.

Mitigation

- Developing a transition plan for Gwendraeth users to new Cefneithin site
- Consider the options for squash users of Gwendraeth site
- Transfer of assets to community or voluntary organisations
- Develop alternative low cost fitness opportunities, for example, in parks

Assessment undertaken: January 2017 (St Clears), May 2016 (Gwendraeth)

10. Cleansing

Total Budget: £1,834,000

3 Year Savings: £164,000

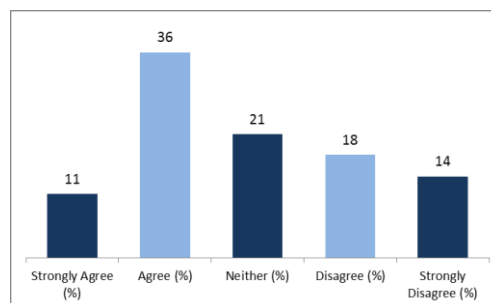
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
0	0	164

Description: Review and reconfigure the routine scheduled mechanical sweeping of residential areas with a view to undertaking sweeping/cleansing work on a reactive basis in the future, potentially adopting a zoned approach. In order to achieve the savings identified, the number of mechanical sweepers will need to be reduced, together with a number of drivers through voluntary severance.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.21%

Average Index Score: 0.12
Overall Rank (of 15): 10
Sample Size: 594

Previous AIS: -0.32 (2016);



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.06	0.33	0.20	0.06	0.25	0.08	0.17	0.09	0.13	-0.38	0.21
Sample	132	3	10	375	183	277	287	69	289	16	90

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.11	0.31	0.03	0.15	0.37	0.12	0.12	0.05	-0.11
Sample	158	159	156	177	59	171	57	81	79

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 151 comments

- Some comments indicated support for the proposal, as a ‘necessary evil’.

- Others supported the proposal on the basis they don't believe they currently receive a service.
- There was some support for adopting a reactive 'demand-led' approach, though some concern about the level of threshold before action is taken.
- Comments suggesting the service should be maintained (or enhanced) formed the biggest response category. Civic pride, tourism and retail impact, and impacts on investment decisions were given as reasons. Health considerations were also prominent, signalling some concern with vermin.
- Particular concerns were raised about dog fouling.
- Some suggested that the service was currently under-performing and that further cuts would aggravate the position.
- A number warned about the need to be seasonally responsive. Leaves in autumn can block drains and lead to flooding.

Mitigation – 97 comments

- A greater degree of community ownership – including locally-organised litter picks, and 'best kept community' awards. Also consider volunteering and use of offenders
- Increased provision of public bins and recycling facilities.
- Notify residents to move cars from the street, so cleansing is more effective
- Recover costs from farmers and others where action necessitates road cleaning.
- Use reduced fleet, and change working practices, to achieve saving.
- Greater enforcement activity could help reduce litter. Moves to increase public awareness of the impact of littering was advocated by some.
- Effective synchronisation with domestic waste collection. It was suggested cleansing should take place directly following, to clear away waste from bag breakages etc. The lack of supplied bins (to protect waste from vermin) was cited as a contributory factor.

Welsh Language – 28 comments

- No positive or negative impact on the Welsh language
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – against proposal as it will harm the appeal of the county and therefore its potential for tourism, and concern that blocked drains will pose a flooding risk.
- Important service in helping to keep our county tidy, rubbish in town centres is high and this would have a detrimental effect. (Plaid Llanelli, GSN Ltd.).
- Use rehabilitation groups i.e. probation groups to undertake some of this work (stakeholder event). So many parked cars on streets that road sweeping is a waste of time. (Church Minister/School Governor).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – some advocated an increase in expenditure due to consequences for flooding, tourism and service performance. A view that fines should be more severe and enforcement given a greater role
- TCCLF – members felt this may result in a threadbare service in rural areas

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>

Less frequent sweeping and cleansing work
Affected groups:
Residents and visitors
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further enforcement activity • Do more to achieve streets free of parked cars on sweeping days, leading to more effective cleaning • greater involvement of community and volunteers in litter picks and similar activities
Assessment undertaken: (revised January 2017)

11. School Transport Policy Review

Total Budget: £624,000
3 Year Savings: £65,000

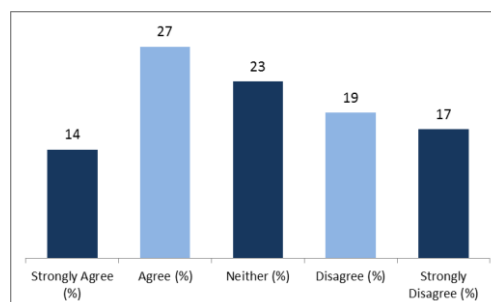
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
0	0	65

Description:
 Review of non-statutory provision.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.08%

Average Index Score: 0.04
Overall Rank (of 15): 11
Sample Size: 594

Previous AIS: 0.28 (2015);
 -0.67 (2014)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.02	0.00	0.08	0.04	0.04	-0.13	0.21	0.06	-0.01	-0.63	0.13
Sample	132	3	12	376	181	275	290	69	288	16	90

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.06	0.09	-0.01	-0.08	0	-0.04	0.19	-0.21	0.18
Sample	154	161	156	177	59	170	57	80	79

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 123 comments

- Concern about the impact of the proposal on disadvantaged students, including special educational needs, those not in education training or employment and other vulnerable groups
- Those from poorer backgrounds, and working families, likely to be most affected
- Comment against the proposal due to the adverse impacts outweighing the forecast savings. Many pointed to the need to encourage young people to stay in education and thus avoid barriers to access
- A number pointed to the unjust impact of school closure, which has necessitated post 16 school transport requirement
- Proposal may lead to greater congestion and a number thought the proposal will disproportionately affect rural areas
- Others agreed that there was a need to review the service and consider the introduction of charges

Mitigation – 80 comments

- Encourage transport alternatives such as walking, cycling, car sharing, and concessionary passes on public transport
- Establishing a reasonable charge would limit the impact, as would phasing the introduction over a few years
- Reduce the impact through means testing
- Reconfigure routes and integrate with public transport services. Consider charging the public to use surplus seats on college bus transport
- Reduce the need for travel by keeping educational provision locally

Welsh Language – 35 comments

- Concern that this may affect the ability of young people to attend learning in language of their choice, where Welsh provision not available locally
 - Some comments expressed the view that the proposal would have no effect on Welsh, or would equally effect both languages
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – in favour given the relatively small number of students affected, that some are able to drive and the fact that the Educational Maintenance Grant could be used to support the costs of transport.
- Minimal saving for such a big effect on pupils. (Plaid Llanelli).
- The most vulnerable will suffer and may affect their access to education; greater effects on families with more than one child in school. (Church Minister/School Governor, GSN Ltd.).
- More efficient transport, better logistics in the communities. Taxi service for special units need to be streamlined and shared when possible. (GSN Ltd., Richmond Park School).
- Possible health and safety issues, especially in rural areas. (Kidwelly Industrial Museum).

Councillor engagement:

- N/A

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<i>Description of impact</i>
Introduce a charge for discretionary post-16 transport to school or college
<i>Affected groups:</i>

Relevant pupils and their families (particularly low income and those distant from educational centres)

Mitigation

- introduce means testing
- encourage other forms of travel – walking, cycling and car share
- integrate journeys with public transport services

Assessment undertaken: November 2013 (revised May 2015, June 2015)

12. Music Service

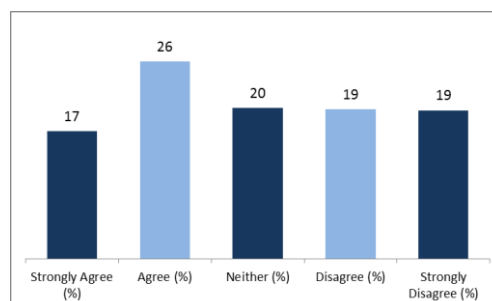
Total budget: £143,000
3 Year Savings: £130,000

2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
30	0	100

Description: Decrease core funding of the service over a three year period. This will be compensated for by increasing the charge to schools by £3per hour, from £56 to £59. This may mean schools will pass the extra charge on to parents by changing their Parental Charging policy. The service is also proposing to generate further income by charging parents £10 per term for the junior county ensembles.

Increase in Council tax if not adopted: 0.16%

Average index score: 0.01
Overall Rank (of 15): 12
Sample Size: 595



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.06	0.00	0.18	-0.04	0.12	-0.04	0.08	0.12	-0.04	0.06	0.04
Sample	132	3	11	377	182	278	288	69	290	16	93

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	0.05	0.15	-0.12	0.04	-0.15	0.14	0.24	0.23	0.11
Sample	155	158	159	172	60	174	59	82	79

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 125 comments

- Widespread comment that parents should pay, given wider financial climate

- Some concern that the proposal will affect low income families
- The impact on take up and the viability of the service was noted
- Music considered a key element within the overall development of young people
- The need to support music because of its cultural significance to Wales was noted

Mitigation – 70 comments

- Means testing to ensure the charge isn't a barrier for those from low income backgrounds
- A number of other suggestions, including: local fund raising and sponsorship; money making concerts; and making use of teachers who can play instruments or musical volunteers

Welsh Language – 35 comments

- A number noted the importance of music to Welsh culture and possible impacts on contributions to the Eisteddfod and other Urdd activity
 - Others considered there to be no effect on Welsh, or an equal effect on English and Welsh speakers
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – adverse impacts on creative development and staffing emphasised. Runs the risk of privileging access. Questioned why music service has been singled out, compared to sports and drama clubs (also stakeholder session).
- Not a basic life skill, ask parents/individuals to contribute towards the costs. (Church Minister/School Governor, Plaid Llanelli, GSN Ltd.).
- Use the Peripatetic Music Service to offer PPA Assistance to schools, bringing music to the whole class rather than to individuals. (Richmond Park School).

Councillor engagement:

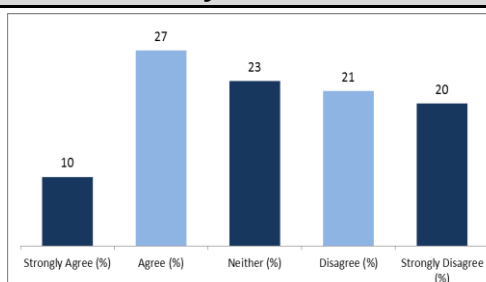
- Budget seminar – noted that the charges compare very favourably with the private sector. Mitigation: a phased increase and collaboration with other counties (to maximise use of specialist teachers and instruments)
- TCCLF – shield pupils on FSM from any increased costs

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
A possible reduction in take up by school and parents which could affect Welsh cultural participation
Affected groups:
Young people from low income backgrounds. Girls are more likely to use the service than boys
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising, including that undertaken by the Music Service Parents and Friends group • Encouraging curriculum tuition for all pupils, through schools
Assessment undertaken: December 2016

13. Housing and Public Protection – Grants to the Voluntary Sector

Total Budget: £170,000
3 Year Savings: £170,000



2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
170	0	0

Description: Cessation of voluntary sector funding for Citizens Advice Bureau.

Increase in Council Tax if not adopted: 0.21%

Average index score: -0.15
Overall Rank (of 15): 13
Sample Size: 621

Previous AIS 0.15 (2014)

	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.29	1.00	0.25	-0.16	-0.05	-0.16	-0.08	-0.32	-0.01	-0.13	-0.07
Sample	136	2	12	395	184	290	298	72	299	15	94

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	-0.16	-0.22	0.13	-0.25	-0.36	-0.06	0.02	0.05	-0.07
Sample	164	165	162	190	61	175	60	82	82

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 165 comments

- Acknowledgement that many vulnerable families/individuals would be affected by this proposal.
- Many commended the work of this organisation stating that it provided an essential service giving free, independent advice whereas some solicitors/organisations may have conflicts of interests with some issues.
- Proposal will impact on the overall well-being of the most deprived and vulnerable in the county
- Some support for cutting the funding for this organisation as there are other organisations providing a similar service without receiving any funding.
- As this service assists people to access the correct welfare benefits which would not be claimed otherwise, this will impact on the economy of the county.

Mitigation – 145 comments

- There were many suggestions to retain the funding as it was whilst others suggested reducing the funding instead of cutting it completely.
- Many comments suggested enlisting more volunteers and a reduction in salary for the paid staff at the organisation.
- Many commented that it would be essential for an alternative service to be provided for those who require it. Suggestions for council staff to be trained to provide this alternative service at the contact centres.
- Some thought that relocating the organisation to a council building would help to reduce costs and assist to maintain the services i.e. the 'Hub' in Llanelli.
- Charging a small fee (means tested), ask for contributions from service users, or obtain sponsorship from local companies.
- There were also suggestions that those in need of the service could be signposted to other organisations that may be able to help them.
- Many stated that there was lots of help available on-line.

Welsh Language – 85 comments

- Many comments reflected the view that this had no impact on the Welsh language. The importance of a bilingual service was emphasised
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – contribution should be reviewed, not abolished to allow time for contingency planning. It was felt that the service would remain available to the public after funding ends,
- HDUHB – Key client groups access and depend on service, such as patients with long-term chronic conditions and those in receipt of palliative care
- Carmarthen TC – local charities and organisations are turning to T&CCs to bridge the funding gap, but should be better supported by the county council
- This service provides support for many families, provision for alternative free support within communities will need to be in place (Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd.).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – some members expressed opposition given the UK welfare reform programme, though some may accept a reduction in funding. Some concerns expressed about CABs not sharing information. Potential for joining-up with other advice agencies should be explored
- TCCLF – other voluntary agencies should be able to step into the breach

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
The reduction may affect the availability of general and welfare advice; however, there may be duplication of provision
Affected groups:
Those in or facing poverty
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing rather than entirely cutting the funding • Training Council staff who could then provide the required advice • Housing the CAB in Council offices • Promotion of the variety of information sources available
Assessment undertaken: December 2015 (revised December 2016)

14. Special Education Needs

Total Budget: £1,679,000
3 Year Savings: £70,000

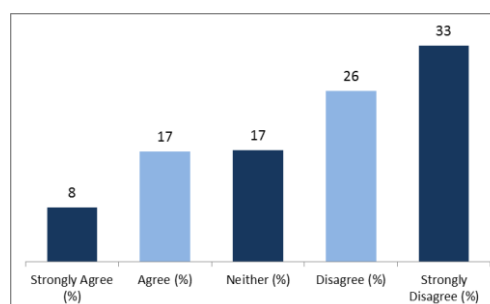
2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
70	0	0

Description: Reduce the core budget to schools. This would be distributed between 82 schools (all those with more than 100 pupils). Each school affected would need to reassess their provision, or realign budgets in order to make up for the shortfall. This could result in less 1:1 support sessions, reduced teaching assistant support or reduced hours for additional learning needs co-ordinators to support learners.

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 0.09%

Average index score: -0.28
Overall Rank (of 15): 14
Sample Size: 584

Previous AIS: -0.41 (2015)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.40	0.33	-0.50	-0.69	-0.34	-0.77	-0.39	-0.32	-0.65	-1.00	-0.45
Sample	129	3	12	371	176	271	284	66	281	16	92

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6

AIS	-0.29	-0.62	-0.88	-0.68	-0.27	-0.56	-0.46	-0.63	-0.73
Sample	153	152	158	170	59	169	57	79	77

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 139 comments

- Proposal departs from what is morally right and fair, disadvantaging those in most need of support
- Integration of SEN children within mainstream education without an effective support network will inhibit learning, disrupt classes and increase exclusions
- Widens attainment gap between SEN pupils and their peers, and does not ensure the best start in life
- Specialist teaching and support improves well-being of SEN pupils at school
- A feeling that additional cuts to an underfunded service is unjust
- Importance of preserving right of all children to a fit and proper education emphasised
- A counter-view that overreliance on 1:1 support can be detrimental to SEN pupils' academic and social development

Mitigation – 76 comments

- 3 year saving is minimal and does not warrant probable impacts
- Increase in Council Tax is justifiable to safeguard provision of a necessary service
- Upskill and redeploy central support staff
- Proposal should form part of a wider SEN review that addresses delays in issuing a Statement of SEN, value for money and service monitoring
- A view that individual schools should fund the service as they are best placed to determine whether to maintain, reduce or cease provision
- Bringing retired teachers / TAs back into schools on a voluntary basis
- Involving service users in service redesign (stakeholder session)

Welsh Language – 32 comments

- No discernible impacts on Welsh language
-

Other relevant information:

- Insight session – against proposal as it represents an inequality. It was also posited that investment in young people at this stage would help them play a fuller role in the society and economy of the County longer term.
- Grouping children with needs more effectively across the school, a better assessment on the needs of the individual. (Richmond Primary School, GSN Ltd.).
- Look at how it affects smaller schools - increase number of schools affected by reducing the small school roll from 100 pupils to 60 pupils. (Richmond Park School).

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – some expressed disagreement owing to the need to adequately care for this disadvantaged group

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
Schools will need to develop ways of supporting pupils within the available budget
Affected groups:
Young people with additional learning needs
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussions with schools to make sure curricular and access adaptations are made in a timely manner
Assessment undertaken: November 2014 (revised December 2015)

15. Delegated school budget

Total Budget: £109,247,000
3 Year Savings: £11,251,000

2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20
3,779	3,485	3,987

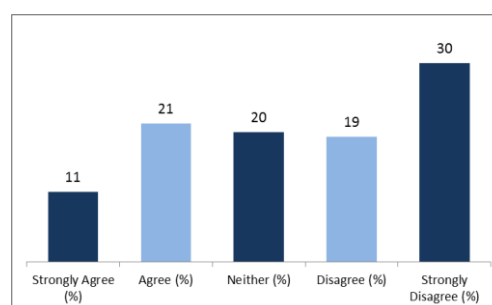
Description: Rationalise primary schools that are disproportionately expensive to operate and unable to sustain educationally effective teaching and learning structures due to financial constraints, through carefully selected decommissioning and strategically driven expanded school federation.

- Reduced school budgets will lead to schools having to review their spending and to consider staffing levels, class sizes and provision.
- To manage this level of reduction there will be an impact on staffing as a high percentage of a school's budget is used to employ staff. A reduction of £3.7m in the first year could possibly result in 60 teachers or 135 support staff (or a combination) being made redundant.
- Schools have been encouraged to work in partnership and collaborate with other schools in matters of resourcing and employment, however the scale of the budget reduction will result in redundancies

Increase in Council Tax if proposal not adopted: 14.15%

Average index score: -0.37
Overall Rank (of 15): 15
Sample Size: 583

Previous AIS: -0.11 (2016);
0.39 (2015)



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.23	1.00	0.08	-0.52	-0.07	-0.59	-0.14	-0.08	-0.48	-0.50	-0.29
Sample	126	3	12	371	175	269	285	66	282	16	93

	Income <£20k	Income £20–£39k	Income >£40k	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	-0.30	-0.42	-0.52	-0.51	-0.25	-0.53	0.05	-0.55	-0.3
Sample	149	153	161	171	60	167	56	78	77

Key themes from the public consultation:

Impact – 155 comments

- Prevailing view that proposal is short sighted – larger class sizes are probable and may become unmanageable, increasing likelihood of disruption, pressure on teachers and turnover of staff
- A concern that fewer teachers and teaching assistants will worsen educational attainment, impeding children’s life chances / career development
- Proposal is penny wise and pound foolish: lower levels of educational attainment will lead to long term social and economic costs
- Proposal will compound ‘achievement gaps’ between schools and pupils of different backgrounds, giving rise to social immobility.
- Endangers important support services such as Team Around The Family
- An ill-advised proposal on grounds that schools are at a ‘tipping point’, with resources stretched and schools underfunded
- Schools are the nucleus of small (rural) communities. Closure will have wider impacts on local amenities and infrastructure
- Some comments in favour: ring-fencing school budgets limits opportunities to become more resourceful and streamlined (primary schools with excess places cited as an example). Another view of rationalising as a ‘necessary evil’ if the alternative is to increase council tax by 14%

Mitigation – 101 comments

- A view that the retention of teachers should be prioritised at all costs
- Comments around the impossibility of mitigating against lower teacher numbers, necessitating a rebuttal of the proposal
- Recognition that shared admin functions and greater collaboration between schools is a justifiable action to reduce costs. Shared senior posts (e.g. head teacher) via school federation also mooted
- Decrease investment in ICT (computers, iPads) and school trips
- Rural schools should be treated differently from urban schools given specific challenges around transport/mobility and remoteness
- Reduce the costs of SLAs with the County (stakeholder event)

Welsh Language – 50 comments

- Overall sense that the Welsh language will not be adversely impacted, though some cautioned it might constrain first and second language Welsh speakers

Other relevant information:

- Schools Strategy and Budget Forum – concern about SEN provision in the context of the SEN proposal and declining schools budgets
- Insight session – strongly against on the grounds that Wales is performing poorly by international standards, and proposal will weaken pupil–teacher relationships. However, it was felt that opportunities to make better use of teachers should be pursued (e.g. sharing between schools).
- Detrimental impact on standards at schools as resources are already stretched. (GSN Ltd., Richmond Park School).
- Schools are a focal point of communities; local schools in the same areas should share facilities. (Rhudding Housing Co-op Ltd., Plaid Llanelli).
- A worry that school staffing will be adversely affected (Trade Union)

Councillor engagement:

- Budget seminar – agreement that much could be achieved through collaboration and sharing of staff resources. It was suggested that (i) reduced fees for the delivery of services by the County (via SLA) could assist, and (ii) council/schools take steps to address sickness absence (reducing the need for supply teaching staff)
- Scrutiny – concern that school reserves are being used as a short term fix, and that their depletion weakens the resilience of schools

Equality Impact Assessment summary:

Description of impact
Schools would be required to run on a reduced budget, while maintaining standards
Affected groups:
Younger people of school age; possibly SEN pupils; reductions could affect provision for Gypsy Travellers and EAL students. School staff are predominantly female; non-Welsh speaking staff may be disadvantaged as services are remodelled. The AIS shows women are against the proposal, with men in favour; the age group most likely to consist of relevant parents (15-64) are against the proposal.
Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools Finance Group established to pursue savings whilst limiting the impact on learners • The Council to continue holding schools to account for standards • Ensure the Education Improvement Grant funding continues to support EAL and Gypsy Travellers • Appropriate arrangements to be in place for any arising staffing issues
Assessment undertaken: November 2015 (revised December 2016)

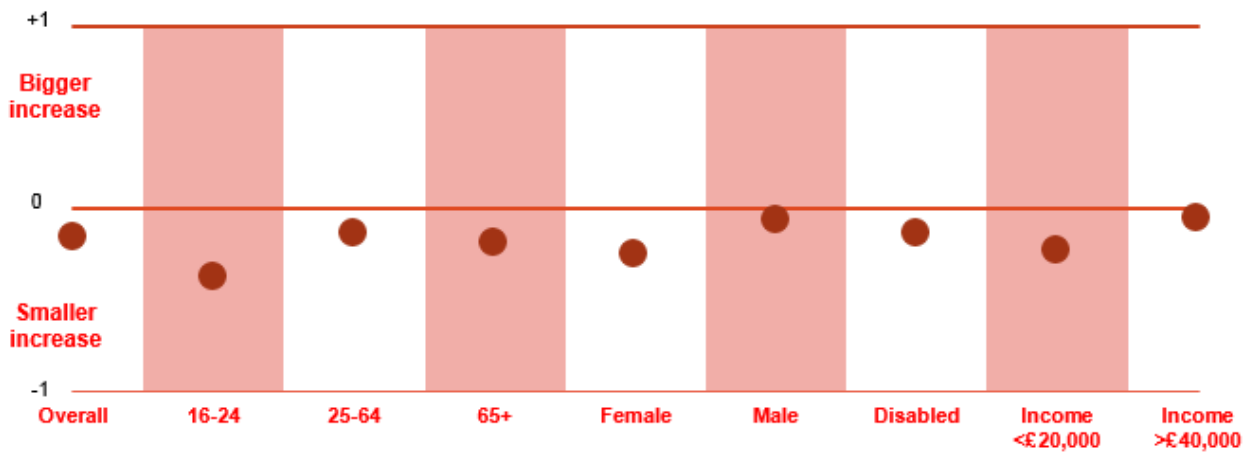
5) COUNCIL TAX

The survey explored public perception and tolerances in relation to council tax increases. It explained that the council is considering an increase to council tax of 2.5% for 2017–18. Respondents were asked if 2.5% represents an acceptable level or whether smaller or larger increases were preferable.

The results indicate support for all three options, to varying degrees. Over half (54%) of respondents felt an increase of 2.5% was just about right, 31% indicated a preference for a smaller increase and 15% desired a greater council tax increase in order to support council services.

An AIS result of -0.16 confirms a relatively neutral position denoting, overall, a preference to increase council tax at the proposed level of 2.5%.

However, an important observation to note is that the balance of opinion diverges for different categories of respondent. The AIS for selected groups is plotted below and shows variance by age, gender and other demographic characteristic.



In particular, respondents under the age of 45 were more sensitive to a council tax increase. AISs of -0.38 for 16–24, -0.27 for 25–34 and -0.22 for respondents aged 35–44 suggest these cohorts were more likely to demand a smaller increase than that proposed. With an AIS closer to zero, respondents aged 45–54 (-0.11) and 55–64 (-0.07) were more amenable to an increase of 2.5% or higher.

Similarly, differences by gender are evident. The AIS for females (-0.25) is lower than that of males (-0.07), signifying that females are less tolerating of a 2.5% increase.

This trend is most pronounced when looking at income. Interestingly, the AIS increases in line with income, suggesting that the lower one’s income, the less likely they are to support a council tax increase of 2.5% or higher.

	< £20,000	£20,000 – £39,999	> £40,000
AIS	-0.23	-0.17	-0.06

Finally, geography can influence feelings toward council tax given residential property values vary across different areas of the county. This is borne out in the AISs for each Community Area, tabulated below. The AISs for CA2, CA3 and CA5 are lower than the overall average and implies that residents in these areas are more likely to prefer a smaller increase in council tax than the 2.5% proposed. Contrastingly, with an AIS of -0.03, respondents living in CA6 were more accepting of a 2.5% increase.

	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	CA6
AIS	-0.16	-0.2	-0.17	-0.15	-0.24	-0.03

6) SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SAVINGS OR RAISING INCOME

As in previous years, this budget consultation survey asked whether people had comments or suggestions about how the Council could save money or generate income. Given the commonality of issues raised, the approach to this section has been to combine the results from the previous budget consultation exercise with comments from this exercise.

In total, over 1204 comments were made through the public consultations.⁸ This section reflects the key themes.

The consultation demonstrates widespread **public understanding** of the financial constraints facing the Council. This is reflected in the many very realistic comments and suggestions made. However, where a view is expressed on the subject, the Council is encouraged to exercise restraint in respect of any rises to Council Tax.⁹

A substantial number of comments were made concerning the **staffing structure** of the organisation. This is unsurprising given workforce cost is a major component of Council service delivery. It is typically felt that the need for management roles in general should be critically examined, and that the number, and salary, of senior management ought to be reviewed.

Furthermore, comments suggest the view that effective public service delivery depends to a great extent on staff at the '**front line**'. There is support for the view that maintaining high quality services relies on the 'front line' taking precedence over support and 'back office' functions. Councillors involved in budget consultation discussions have likewise generally supported the view that processes need to be as efficient as possible, in order services deliver the maximum value to the public.

A commonly held view related to reducing the costs associated with the **democratic process**, namely expenses, allowances and number of members. A number believed there was further scope for savings in this area.

A group of responses related to the **approach** the Council ought to take in considering the budget. There was support for the idea that there should be priority to statutory services, reductions should be fair and equitable, and that there should be no areas of protection. An alternative view with support was the idea that certain services need protecting – in particular, public transport, services for vulnerable people, and public toilets. This distinction was also in evidence in relation to each of the 15 proposals discussed earlier.

Another common view was that the Council should seek **different ways of doing things**. There was widespread support for further 3rd sector (charities and non-profit making organisations) involvement in service delivery, though much less support for private sector involvement, especially in areas such as social care. Some stressed the greater role that town and community councils, and volunteers, could play in service delivery.

The matter of maximising the opportunities presented by the **relocation of S4C** was raised through the consultation (Insight session with younger people).

Specific ideas for **saving money** included:

- Consider alternative service delivery methods (to include trading company, third or private sector options)
- Reducing the number of Council buildings and offices and considering the use of alternative premises, where this is more cost effective

⁸ The breakdown of comments is 970 (2014), 135 (2015), and 99 (2016).

⁹ This should not be interpreted as indicating general opposition to Council Tax rises, rather that some respondents identified it as being an issue.

- Outsource maintenance work to private contractors
- Reducing the frequency of domestic waste and recycling collection; consider privatising the service; make more effective use of waste collection vehicles
- Reducing cutting schedules for highway verges, or just maintaining areas such as junctions
- Consider more effective deployment of highways staff and fleet
- Use of libraries as mini Customer Service Centres
- Reducing street lighting
- Reducing publicity and marketing
- Printing documents in either Welsh or English, according to language choice
- Not allowing fleet vehicles to be taken home; and replace less frequently
- Flagship projects are not a priority and can be a drain on resources (sports and entertainment specifically referenced)
- Reducing expenditure on traffic calming measures and unnecessary signage
- Suggestions in relation to council housing. These included reducing voids, undertaking only necessary upgrades, and transferring upkeep to tenants

A number of suggestions for savings were made specifically in relation to the **internal arrangements** of the Authority:

- Share more functions with neighbouring authorities and other public sector organisations
- Cut all forms of waste
- Challenge every budget to ensure value for money
- Undertake a 'zero-based' budget review every five years
- Cut 'back office' provision within the Council and its departments
- Regularly process map procedures to ensure they work in most efficient way possible
- Ensure that procurement achieves best value for money
- Review Council structure and merge departments where this represents an efficiency
- Reduce the 'generous' staff sickness policy, to fall in line with statutory requirements
- Addressing energy use in Council buildings (heating and lighting)
- Delivering more through competitive tenders
- Prohibit use of consultants

Furthermore, a number of ideas were put forward concerning **maximising income**.

- Improving the tourism offer, including running cycle centres and expanding provision for water sports in Pembrey and on the river Towy
- Greater use of school premises to generate income
- Increasing Council Tax on second homes and charge business rates on holiday and 'buy to let' homes
- Charging for the issue of concessionary bus passes
- Linking all charges to the CPI (consumer price index)
- Selling surplus Council assets (land and buildings, etc.)
- Investment in renewable energy, (including on Council premises) and energy efficiency schemes

- Investment in a waste-to-heat plant, producing energy from non-recyclable waste incineration
- Consideration of roundabout sponsorship, and sponsorship of appropriate services (e.g., waste collection sponsorship by fast food companies)
- More effective enforcement of parking charges
- Increasing debt collection rates
- Open residential homes up to the wider community, for example, making cooked food available to local residents

Councillor engagement

The involvement of councillors is critical to effective engagement in respect of the budget consultation. The following issues were highlighted through the councillor budget seminars, or through scrutiny committee budget discussions.

Support for the voluntary sector – some comment as to whether our current support represents value for money.

Housing Revenue Account funding – the Council must make sure this ‘ring fenced’ budget is used to maximum effect in supporting housing-related functions.

Maximising housing occupancy rates – the discussion is relevant across the housing stock, including sheltered housing provision.

Understanding externalities – the ‘knock on’ effects of reductions in a particular service area.

Severance – this can be effective in reducing costs, but care needs to be taken to ensure that the Council retains the skills and knowledge necessary in delivering effective services.

Back office – councillors were keen to ensure functions such as administration are delivered in the most efficient way possible.

Collaboration - which results in cost savings - should be exhaustively pursued. For instance, it is sensible to link with Public Service Board organisations when considering requirements for office space. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the most efficient configuration of highway depots. Can we share facilities with other organisations to achieve savings?

Further issues included:

- Strong support for reducing the use of **external consultants**
- Make further use of public toilets, bus shelter and roundabouts for raising income through **advertising**
- **Back office functions** across the Council. Examine, with a view to achieving reductions.
- **Third sector¹⁰ grants** - review corporate impact to ensure value for money.

¹⁰ The term third sector refers to organisations includes charities and other not for profit organisations.

- **Asset transfer** – (including sports facilities and grounds) discussions need to be concluded with greater urgency, where there is agreement. Disposal of assets should be undertaken as soon as under-utilisation is identified.

SCHOOLS STRATEGY AND BUDGET FORUM MEETING 23RD NOVEMBER 2016

Present:

Gareth Morgans (GM) (Chair); Andi Morgan (AM); Susannah Nolan (SN); Dylan Jones (DJ); Ashley Howells (AH); Tania Morgan (TM); Julie Stuart (JS); Julie Griffiths (JG); Hugh Thomas (HT); S Mason-Evans (SME); Gareth Owen (GO); Kimberley Perry (KP); Ceri Morris (CM); Charlie Meredydd (CM); Julie Price (Minute Taker); Chris Moore (CM), Aeron Rees (AE)

County Council Budget Consultation

Chris Moore (CM), the Authority's Director of Corporate Services addressed the Forum and shared a presentation regarding the Forward Financial Plan for 2017-20

Current Medium Term Financial Plan

2017-18 Efficiencies required (schools) = £6.0m
 2018-19 Efficiencies required (schools) = £6.0m
 2017-18 Welsh Government Funding = £246.65m
 2018-19 Welsh Government Funding = £241.72m

Provisional Statement 2017-18

- The provisional settlement is significantly better than this Council and Local Government in Wales in general anticipated.
- £60k – school transport

Transfers Out:

- £54k Teacher registration fees

Specific Grants:

- Currently stand at some £107m across all services
- Future allocations not available for all at this stage
- Environmental Grant being reduced by 6.7%
- Pupil Deprivation Grant +7.3%
- Financial Plan assumes that all others will be maintained at their existing level

Current Year Considerations

Main Variances:

- *Schools EVR and redundancy costs*

CM stated that the schools EVR and redundancy costs required to be re-looked at as this is an ongoing cost which is putting pressure on the Authority's budget.

Schools Funding

- The last year of WG funding protection for schools was 2015/16
- Current proposals assume no service protection going forward
- Original Budget Strategy proposals reviewed.

Latest position in the Budget Strategy:-

2017-18 = £109.247m
 2018-19 = £107.313m
 2010-20 = £105.527m

Delegated budget for 2017-18 = £107m

Estimated Impact on School Budget

Primary Schools: ranges from £-4k to -£32k calculated on pupil numbers in schools.

Secondary Schools: +£40k to -£127k

Other Potential Impacts

- Catering Service- bringing in admin and banking online payments. Parents of pupils will be able to pay for school meals online. Schools will be contacted to carry out this arrangement as a pilot scheme in the first instance.
- Free School Breakfasts (Catering Service)
- SEN (Inclusion Service)
- Community Leisure Centres
- School Improvement (ERW)
- Post 16 Transport
- School Crossing Patrols
- Music Service
- Educational Psychology

Concerns were expressed by some Forum members regarding pupils within their schools who require significant support.

CM informed Forum members to feed their concerns into the Budget Consultation which is available on the Carmarthenshire County Council website. CM also informed Forum members that the Authority's Executive Board are in a no-win position regarding the Authority's budget.

GM thanked CM for his valued contribution to the meeting.

JG stated that a Seminar is required to discuss school funding- Post 16, ALN etc to explain the formula allocation to Headteachers, Members and School Governors – a seminar to give a better understanding of the formula. GM to discuss this request with SN who will arrange such a seminar in the early part of 2017.

It was agreed that separate sessions be given to Secondary and Primary Schools. Primary School sessions to be arranged inviting a small number of representatives.

Unions Consultation 3rd January 2016

In attendance: UNISON Simon Dunn (SD) , Mark Evans (ME) , Yvonne Dunn (YD)
UNITE Mark Preece (MP)
GMB – Althea Phillips (AP)

The Director of Corporate Services gave an overview of the Revenue Budget Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 21st November 2016. The report provided Members with the current view of the Revenue Budget for 2017/2018 together with indicative figures for the 2017/2018 and 2019/2020 financial years. The report was based on officers' projections of spending need and took into

account the provisional settlement issued by Welsh Government on 19th October 2016.

It was advised that the announced settlement was significantly better than was expected, however it was recognised that the cash neutral settlement would continue to have a negative impact on the Council's resources.

In summary, the budget proposals would assume full delivery of the £24.6m identified savings. Furthermore, the budget proposals assumed a Council tax increase by 2.5% in the Strategy and a 1% movement equated to +/-£790k.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

UNISON raised concerns at the "Devastating" budget cuts, and the resultant impact on school staffing, and the adverse effect on the disadvantaged sections of community. Unison will be maintaining its 'No Cuts' campaign, and believe that Members should implement a "no cuts" budget.

Concern was raised regarding the accuracy of the figures used to inform decision making within Library Service. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that a business case supported the proposals put forward.

UNITE raised concern at the proposed withdrawal of a Mechanical Sweeper and the adverse effect this would have on the Authority's ability to comply with Environmental Protection Act. Unite queried the viability of the savings being proposed and questioned the implications on the budget if the savings are not delivered by departments

UNISON – commented that inflationary pressures are likely to result in pay demand exceeding 1% by year 3, and requested that CCC influence WLGA by making a recommendation supporting higher pay awards.

UNISON queried whether the Authority would be reviewing its policy on the Minimum Revenue Provision. The Director of Corporate Services confirmed that officers were currently reviewing this in conjunction with our Treasury Management Consultants.

Whilst changes to the terms and conditions relating to standby payments are not part of the future year's budget proposals, the Unions do not support reducing the rate. Instead they suggest that the number of officers actually on standby can be reduced.

UNITE raised concern at the amount of money being given to town and community councils in support of Asset Transfer.

Questions were raised as to what the proposals are in relation to the Severance scheme for future years. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the current scheme will run until March 2018, and that no decision had been made in relation to future years as yet.

