

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the Budget Consultation exercise. It is not a detailed summary of the full report, but an articulation of some of the key findings.

The consultation ran from 2nd November 2017 until 14th December 2017.

A mixed methodology included an electronic and paper copy questionnaire promotion alongside targeted face-to-face engagement. **A total of 2,937 returns were received.**

Summary of responses:

- Three quarters (74%) of respondents agreed with ending the publication of the Council's free newspaper 'In Cardiff'.
- Seven in ten respondents (71%) indicated a willingness to make the switch to e-billing.
- Three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed with proposals to expand the Meals on Wheels service, with 22% of respondents knowing someone who could benefit from the service.
- More than half (54%) of respondents agreed with the proposed increase in prices for the Cardiff International White Water Centre (CIWW).
- Two-thirds (65.8%) of respondents supported an increase in costs for cremations and burials.
- Three-quarters (74%) of respondents supported an increase in costs for rehoming dogs.
- Amongst families using the school meal service 52% showed support for the proposal to increase costs compared to 42% that disagreed.
- Nine in ten (91%) agreed with the emphasis on early intervention and helping people stay in their own homes for longer. Similarly 88% of people agreed that the Council should be working with Health to deliver bespoke packages of care.
- 72% agreed with the aim of reducing the number of care home placements.
- Three quarters (76%) supported the move towards separate glass collections in order to reduce costs and meet recycling targets.
- More than two thirds (68%) agreed with proposals to explore the merger of the passenger transport team with a neighbouring authority.
- People were most interested in volunteer opportunities that would improve community safety and help the elderly or most vulnerable in their neighbourhoods.
- Public priorities for additional investment were:
 - Building more affordable houses and tackling homelessness
 - Investing in sustainable transport to reduce congestion and improve air quality
 - Intervening early to support vulnerable children

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

2. BACKGROUND

Public services are going through a period of rapid change. For the foreseeable future Councils, along with other public services, will have less money available to deliver local public services.

This comes at a time of economic uncertainty following the vote to leave the European Union, combined with a number of other pressures such as a rapidly growing population and changes in welfare reform meaning that demand for services is increasing year on year.

The Council is facing significant and ongoing financial challenges with a budget gap of **£23 million** for 2017/18 and a potential shortfall of **£73 million** over the next three years. This comes on top of £200m which has already been found over the last 10 years.

The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget. To make the savings needed and to protect the quality of our public services, significant changes have been made, and will continue to be made, to the way things are done.

There is no easy way to bridge a **£23 million** budget gap.

In preparing the draft savings proposals the Council has at all times sought to protect front line services, with proposals including net investment into services like schools and social services.

In addition, the budget strategy includes assumptions in relation to a 3.7% increase in Council Tax. An increase of this amount equates to 78p per week per household in Council Tax Band D.

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 City Wide Survey

Consultation on the budget proposals for 2018/19 took 3 forms:

- **City-wide Public consultation** on proposals which affect all citizens. (The contents of this report).
- **Service-specific consultation** with targeted service users/groups or organisations who may be impacted by any change. Examples of this can be found in relation to school transport services where any impact would be limited to specific individuals.
- **Internal Council consultation** -these elements relate to internal changes within the Council including back office efficiencies, staff changes and process improvements.

The questionnaire contained 37 questions (excluding demographic information) and covered a range of topics including:

- The proposed discontinuation of the council newspaper 'In Cardiff'.
- The introduction of E-billing for Council Tax.
- Expansion of the Meals on Wheels service.
- Increased charges for some services including: bereavement services, school meals and Cardiff International White Water Centre.

The consultation on these proposals began on **2nd November 2017** and ran until **12 noon on Thursday 14th December 2017**.

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

3.2 Consultation and Engagement Mechanisms

The consultation was undertaken via the following mechanisms:

- Online Survey, promoted electronically and made available on dedicated Council Web pages www.cardiff.gov.uk/budget and www.cardiff.gov.uk/haveyoursay .
- Paper survey – 2,000 copies distributed through leisure centres, libraries and hubs and available at a range of face-to-face events held at locations across the city.
- Eighteen community engagement events held at community buildings across the city. (See Appendix 1)
- A further 7 focus groups held with specific individuals who are less frequently heard e.g. mental health services users, BME groups and younger people. (See Appendix 1)
- Information about the consultation and a link the electronic survey were made available online via the Council’s dedicated budget pages www.cardiff.gov.uk/budget and www.cardiff.gov.uk/haveyoursay
- Regular promotion was carried out via social media throughout the consultation period via @cardiffcouncil and @cardiffdebate.
- Face book ‘Boosts’ were carried out to increase the visibility of the promotion
- Opportunity for people to email comments directly via budget@cardiff.gov.uk
- Consultation promoted via email to members of the Cardiff Citizens’ Panel and the wider Council email address list (91,391 unique email addresses)
- Communicated to approximately 6,000 staff within the City of Cardiff Council via Your News

3.3 Response

A total of **2,937 responses were received** to the consultation. This represents an increase of 17% (or c.500 responses) compared to the 2017/18 budget consultation.

The overall response includes a recurring bias towards those aged 55+ and those residing in the north of the city. Where appropriate further analysis by geography and demographic group has been undertaken to highlight any existing differences across demographic groups or geographies.

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

5.5 School Meal Provision

Cardiff Council's School Meals service supplies meals to every primary school and the majority of secondary schools in Cardiff. The price of a primary school meal is £2.40 and a set meal in secondary schools is £2.85. The Council is proposing to increase the cost by 10p to £2.50 and £2.95 respectively.

Does your household use the School Meals service?

Just under one in eight respondents (12.3%) were from households that used the Schools Meals Service.

Base: 2,685	No.	%
Yes	331	12.3
No	1,404	52.3
Not Applicable	950	35.4

Do you support the proposal to increase the cost of school meals?

Around half of respondents (users 51.5%) and all respondents (49.4%) were in favour of the proposed increase to schools meals. Around a quarter (27.9%) of all respondents were opposed to the proposal, this rose to 42.1% of those using the service.

Base: (All:-2,664)	All Respondents No.	All Respondents %	No. households using the service (330)	% households using the service
Yes	1,316	49.4	170	51.5
No	744	27.9	139	42.1
Not sure	604	22.7	21	6.4

If 'No', what are your concerns:-

A total of 577 additional comments were made in relation to school meals. Of these, around a fifth (20.6%) came from households currently using the School Meals Service.

The comments made centred on concerns regarding costs and the value for money of the service, particularly for low income and vulnerable families. For many the continuation of the service was described as 'vital' as for many children this is often their main meal of the day, although for some the costs were already felt to be prohibitive. Respondents were

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

also keen to see improvements in the quality and nutritional value of the meal provided particularly should a price increase go ahead. A selection of the comments include:

This negatively affects poorer families. I would prefer to pay more council tax to avoid this, to be honest. School meals should be free.

For some families this is the main meal of the day and will increase child poverty FSM threshold has not risen in line with inflation.

In Scandinavia all children received free school meals, I feel the benefits to health and well-being far outweigh the costs. Balanced diets, reduced obesity, fewer children off the premises, reduction in littering, anti-social behaviour and bullying and an increase social interaction.

If the quality of meals are staying the same then I don't agree with the price increase.

Seems too expensive as it is already.

The price is already such that it doesn't make financial sense. Any more and I expect usage to decline dramatically.

Pressure on people's finances to feed their children is wrong.

With so many needing food banks at present - this would be an extra burden on an already stretched pocket.

I feel that school meals are vital for all pupils in order to have the energy and capabilities to function when at school. A lot of children may not get the food they need at home and charging parents more may mean they don't get the full nutrition they need as a whole throughout the day.

At the prices already charged, the food doesn't represent good value for money. I would expect an improvement in quality if prices were increased.

CHANGES FOR CARDIFF 2018/19

9. YOUR PRIORITIES

The Changes for Cardiff 2018/19 document sets out the pressures that are facing the city because of population growth, poverty and the increased pressure on services. Savings have been sought wherever possible in ways that protect front-line services, but we know that the challenges we face will mean that difficult decisions about local public services will have to be taken.

At a time of austerity, where budgets are under pressure, we asked for the public's priorities from a range of options for how limited funding could be invested.

The top three priorities for respondents were:

- Building more affordable houses and tackling homelessness (48.4%).
- Investing in sustainable transport to reduce congestion and improve air quality (45.0%).
- Intervening early to support vulnerable children (37.6%).

We also asked for respondents to identify the issue ranked as the lowest priority for investment. This was Culture and leisure (39.8%).

	Rank Top (Base: 2,537) (Select Three)		Rank Lowest (Base: 2,157) (Select one)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Building more affordable houses and tackling homelessness	1,277	48.4	271	12.6
Support our children's education by investing in School Buildings	799	31.5	217	10.1
Intervening early to support vulnerable children	953	37.6	72	3.3
Investing in sustainable transport to reduce congestion and improve air quality	1,142	45.0	251	11.6
Keeping our streets and neighbourhoods clean and litter-free	729	28.7	166	7.7
Communities where people feel safe and where our most vulnerable adults are protected from exploitation and abuse	818	32.2	109	5.1
Helping older people live in the community for as long as possible	814	32.1	122	5.7
Creating more and better jobs	534	21.0	399	18.5
Culture and leisure	248	9.8	859	39.8
Improving the Condition of Roads in Cardiff	794	31.3	339	15.7