

Service and Resource Planning 2015/16 – 2017/18 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement Summary

1. This summary note sets out the key messages from Oxfordshire County Council's public consultation exercise and stakeholder engagement carried out to support its Service and Resource Planning process for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

Approach

2. Between 8 December 2014 and 9 January 2015 the council invited comments on its budget proposals, which were detailed in the papers published for consideration by the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 18 December 2014.
3. A budget feature item was created for the council's website that comprised an overview of the council's budget setting process; links to the full budget papers, a graphics based presentation to explain the financial pressures facing the council, a summary of the savings proposals and a link to an online feedback form. The feature item was promoted via the homepage of the county council website.
4. In order to ensure that key stakeholders were aware of the council's budget proposals the council identified a list of stakeholders and engaged with these directly using both face to face and written channels.
5. In total the council's budget feature item posted on its website was viewed 1,473 times and the consultation page was viewed 244 times. Comments submitted by the public and stakeholders in both letter and email format have also been accepted as part of this exercise.

Outcomes

6. Seven people submitted views via the online feedback form and the table below summarises the views expressed. One letter has also been received. These are listed by theme in alphabetical order.

Theme	Number of mentions
Children's Centres and Early Intervention Submission querying how the proposed savings in these areas be achieved without losing staff or cutting children's centres.	1 (County Councillor)
Community Action Groups (CAGs) Submission in support of the CAGs and request to reverse proposal to significantly reduce grant funding.	1 (Organisation)

Theme	Number of mentions
<p>Early Intervention</p> <p>Submission expressing concern about proposed savings in this area and their impact on society</p>	1 (Resident)
<p>Efficient public services</p> <p>Submission suggesting improvements to both staff productivity and time management, and another to improve contractual relationships.</p> <p>Submission suggesting need to more closely monitor time management and performance/productivity of staff. Concern expressed about team sizes and how well managers are equipped/enabled to manage effectively.</p> <p>Submission expressing concern about perceived value for money of contractual arrangements for staff mobile phones</p>	<p>1 (Resident)</p> <p>1 (Resident – former employee)</p> <p>1 (Resident)</p>
<p>Safety Net</p> <p>Submission expressing concern that the council is reacting to budget cuts in the wrong areas and expressing a view that the vulnerable, old and disabled (sic) must take priority.</p>	1 (Resident)
<p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>Submission expressing concern about proposed reductions in the Adult Social Care budget and its potential impact.</p>	1 (Organisation)

7. The council received 142 detailed email representations in support of the Community Action Groups (CAGs). These set out the value of the Community Action Groups from a range of different perspectives and requested the proposal to significantly reduce grant funding is reversed or urging the council to find a way to continue to support CAG projects.
8. The direct stakeholder communications prompted a range of dialogue with different organisations. Oxford City Council has submitted a written response in letter format. The themes addressed in the letter are summarised as follows:
- Serious concerns about the proposal to make savings of £3 million over two years in the Children, Education and Families Services
 - Concerns about the proposed £9million reduction in the budgets for Adult and Social Care services

Section 3.11

- Concerns about the proposal to phase out the support to the county's network of Community Action Groups
 - Support for the proposals for improved partnership working and joint commissioning; welcoming opportunities to discuss improved partnership and joint commissioning arrangements between the two authorities
 - Emphasising the importance of using of the Oxfordshire Joint Needs Assessment to inform choices and prioritisation in making decisions on spending reductions.
 - Welcoming further consultation and joint working in the process of implementing any service reductions in the city in order to seek to minimise impact, including future involvement in service and community impact assessments
9. All the responses to the budget consultation exercise have been collated into a deposit for all county councillors to review. The full response from Oxford City Council has been published on council's consultation portal, alongside this report at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation