

## Consultation Summary

1. This Annex sets out the key messages from Oxfordshire County Council's public consultation exercises carried out to support the Council's Service and Resource Planning.

### **Oxfordshire Voice Budget Consultation**

2. Between 5 August and 12 September 2011 members of Oxfordshire Voice, the Council's residents' panel took part in a survey looking at priorities for local public services. In total, 1,085 panel members completed this survey and the data was weighted according to Oxfordshire's demographic profile based upon age, gender, district and work status. Due to the differences between the panel and the population profile the weights are capped in order not to reduce the effective sample size too significantly.

#### Priorities for the local area

3. From the list provided, Health services and public transport remained the top two most important aspects in making somewhere a good place to live. (mentioned by 53% and 49% respectively in this survey). About two in five panellists also considered shopping facilities, education and good, affordable housing to be the most important aspects in making somewhere a good place to live.
4. The top priorities for improvement were road and pavement repairs (59%) and activities for teenagers (47%). These are also the two issues people would most likely consider a council tax rise for (24% and 21% respectively). Affordable housing remained an area of high priority in Oxfordshire, i.e. an area that is considered important to quality of life (38%) *and* in need of improvement (33%). Road and pavement repairs were also a priority.
5. Highways maintenance and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were considered to be the two most important services provided by the county council (both at 47%), followed by waste disposal (43%) and older people services (41%).

#### Financial Management

6. As regards financial management, half of the panellists responding (49%) believed that the council manages its finances well whilst a quarter (23%) had a negative opinion on the issue.
7. When panel members were asked for their opinion on possible future changes to the way the council manages and delivers local public services. The results show that prioritising the groups most in need of support is the measure which received most endorsement from panel members (75%). Most panel members also favoured allowing voluntary organisations and community groups to manage services (46% and 45%). On the contrary, increasing council tax, making cuts to existing services or allowing private companies to manage services all generated high levels of opposition (54%, 49% and 42%).

8. Over half (54%) of panel members thought that the Big Society Fund is a valuable resource for the public to have access to whilst one in five (21%) did not think so.
9. Finally, over half (56%) of panel members supported the idea of having a council tax referendum and over eight in ten (84%) said they would vote if there was a council tax referendum in Oxfordshire.
10. A full copy of this report is published on Council's consultation calendar available at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation).

### **Comments on Overall Budget Proposals**

11. Between 6 December 2011 and 2 January 2012, Oxfordshire County Council invited comments on its 2012-13 budget proposals. A web page was created with a link from the 'Have your Say' item on the homepage of the County Council's website. A feedback form, Freepost Service and document upload service were put in place to receive comments.
12. Three residents took up this opportunity to have their say. Comments are summarised below:
  - Gave an overall positive comment (representative of a group or organisation)
  - Expressed concern that the proposals for the future of the library service agreed by Cabinet on 12 December did not include costs and also about the counting of 'money put aside for consultation' and it being accounted for as a 'saving' for the library service (resident)
  - Submitting comments on Annex 7b Capital Investment Planning – 2012/13 Capital Programme Allocations (Street Lighting – Part Lighting). Urged the council to review energy supplier and the perceived financial and environmental implications of dropping the part-night lighting scheme and pursuing a trial of LED lighting. Also asked if the energy requirements and related carbon emissions of greater use of mobile & soft phones has been considered (resident)
  - Submitting comments on Annex 7b Capital Investment Planning – 2012/13 New Pressures and Proposals (11 RFID-Phase 2). Expressed support for lower prioritisation on priority order list. Seeking reassurance that the council's appointed contractors will provide the best value for section 106 money (resident)

## Consultation on Individual Proposals

13. Where appropriate and as we are legally required to do, plans are now being developed for formal consultations with service users and/or stakeholders where significant changes to services are proposed as part of the Directorate Business Strategies. The outcomes of these consultations will be used alongside other evidence such as the Equality Impact Assessment to inform formal decision-making about how service level proposals will be implemented. The timing of these consultations will vary and will be published on the Council's online consultation calendar, [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation).