



# **CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **REVENUE BUDGET 2016-17 to 2018-19**

### **CONSULTATION**

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# CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## BUDGET 2016-19 CONSULTATION

### INTRODUCTION

A mixed-method approach to ascertaining views on the 2016-19 budget took place during the period from November 2015, to January 2016.

In making savings, the Council is concerned to minimise the impact upon service delivery. Many savings are being made through internal efficiencies and the current financial strategy includes proposals totalling £12m under this heading. It is however recognised that some savings proposals will potentially have an impact on service delivery. These are known as 'policy' proposals and **29** (with a total value of £24.2 million) are being considered by the Council in making its budget for 2016-19.<sup>1</sup>

There are a variety of legal and policy reasons why the Council must undertake full and meaningful consultation, where service changes are under consideration.<sup>2</sup> 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) Summarises the **key findings**;
- 3) Details the **specific consultation findings** in relation to each of the 29 proposals;
- 4) Presents initial findings in relation to possible **service delivery methods**; and
- 5) Lists some ideas from the consultation for **making savings or generating income**

### 1) OUTLINE OF APPROACH AND CONSULTATION METHODS

As in previous years, the settlement provided by Welsh Government has 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

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that nine proposals were subject to detailed consultation during the previous budget consultation undertaken during November 2014 to January 2015. The results from this exercise have been carried forward into this report.

<sup>2</sup> 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 early January.<sup>3</sup> Proposals were considered in detail and feedback sought. Moreover, the efficiency proposals were tabled for discussion at a meeting of the Community & Town Councils Liaison Forum (TCCLF).

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

### **Publicity**

Information about the budget consultation, and ways to become involved, was disseminated widely. The issue was highlighted in Carms News and weekly bilingual coverage was secured in the Carmarthen Journal and Llanelli Star newspapers during the consultation period.

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 8th December. Businesses were also approached for comment, through a direct mailing.

### **Budget road shows**

Following publicity, sessions were held in three locations across Carmarthenshire.<sup>4</sup> The road shows led to discussion and contact with a total of around 240 people. Budget surveys were distributed as were 'postcards' highlighting the opportunity to participate through the on-line survey.

### **On-line survey**

The survey provided financial and service information on each of the 20 new policy proposals and asked respondents to express a view on the degree to which they supported the proposal.<sup>5</sup> Views were also sought regarding the potential impact of implementing the proposal on people and communities.<sup>6</sup> Hard copies were available by request. A total of 287 survey responses were received from various sections of the community.<sup>7</sup>

### **Question of the week**

Awareness of the consultation was promoted through social media. During the consultation period, weekly engagement was encouraged through asking users their views on a particular proposal. The 'question of the week' approach also allowed feedback to users. A total of 62 submissions were received on the featured proposals.<sup>8</sup>

### **Insight**

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Sessions were held in Llanelli (Elli Centre and Library), Ammanford (outdoor market and Tesco's) and Carmarthen (town centre and leisure centre).

<sup>5</sup> The format of the survey was identical to the previous budget survey, to ensure comparability of results for all 29 proposals.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Of the 287 respondents who gave completed answers to demographic questions: 96% were from individuals, 4% from Town and Community Councils, organisations or businesses; 92% described as white, 3% minority ethnic. Responses were received from all age groups (largest proportion – 23% from the 35-44 category). 51% of responses were from women (45% from men), and 25% were single. 15% described themselves as disabled, 38% held a religion or belief (42% did not), and 82% described themselves as heterosexual (5% either lesbian, gay or bisexual).

<sup>8</sup> Four of the proposals featured in 'question of the week': meals on wheels (23 responses); libraries (4); schools (11); and highways (24).

The Insight session took place 12<sup>th</sup> November at Parc y Scarlets 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 (QE High had two groups). 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.

### Other

7 responses were made by email, letter or in person, including responses from the Disability Coalition, and Equality Carmarthenshire.

Equality Carmarthenshire is a partnership consisting of public bodies and various groups, organisations and interested individuals who either live with protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, or work to support people and communities who do. Its response highlights concern about the cumulative effect of the proposals under consideration, particularly on disabled people, young people, old people and families with disabled children. Further comments are noted throughout the report.

The public consultation phase ran from 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2016.

**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**)

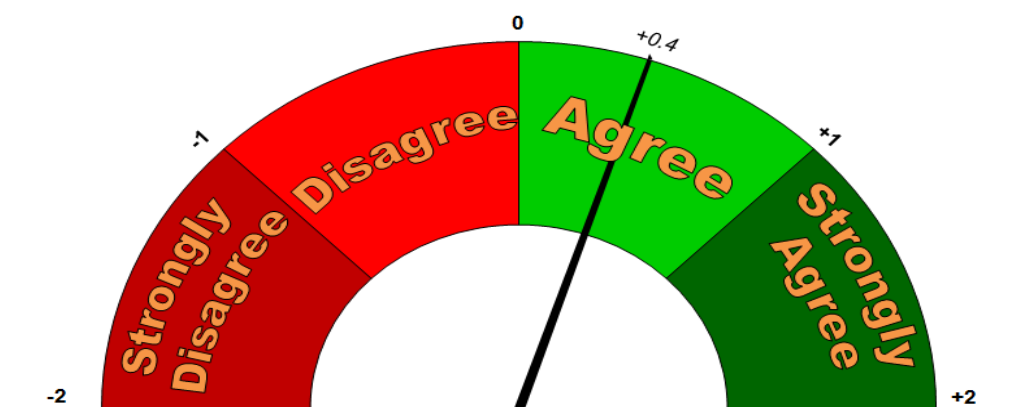
1 no opinion (each response worth 0, so=**0**)

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:  $4 \div 10 = \mathbf{0.4}$  (shown graphically below)



## 2) SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### Headline results – all 29 proposals

The table below shows the results from the on-line 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'*.<sup>9</sup> The table is ranked in order by AIS score. Those proposals with higher levels of support, reflected in higher AIS scores, appear first.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that the report considers 29 proposals, nine proposals of which were subject to detailed consultation during the previous budget consultation undertaken during November 2014 to January 2015.

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<sup>9</sup> The survey itself gave summary information about each proposal to inform the decisions of respondents.

<sup>10</sup> Values near to zero may indicate no clear consensus, or may reflect apathy in relation to the proposal.

Proposal	3 Year Saving (£'000)	Consultation Year	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Average Index Score
Public Protection - Animal Welfare [pp. 10]	30	2015	46	33	13	3	5	1.12
Council Fund Housing - Options and Advice Services (2) [pp. 12]	10	2015	38	37	16	3	6	0.99
Oriel Myrddin [pp. 14]	14	2014	29	32	31	4	4	0.78
Children Looked After (Leaving Care, Taxis & Individual Review Service) [pp. 16]	50	2014	20	42	23	9	7	0.59
Revenues & Cash Desk [pp. 18]	25	2014	24	23	35	10	8	0.47
Sports, Leisure, Theatres Alternative Service Delivery Model [pp. 20]	550	2014	18	35	31	9	8	0.45
Youth Services [pp. 22]	20	2015	13	35	34	9	9	0.36
Secondary Speech & Language Provision [pp. 24]	50	2014	18	36	19	15	12	0.33
Catering Services - School Meals [pp. 26]	300	2015	22	36	9	17	16	0.31
Home to College Transport [pp. 28]	516	2014	20	34	17	13	16	0.28
Libraries [pp. 30]	240	2015	15	35	17	17	17	0.13
Meals on Wheels [pp. 32]	57	2015	12	35	13	22	19	0
Catering Services - Free School Breakfasts [pp. 34]	110	2015	18	26	15	18	23	0
Car Parks [pp. 36]	108	2015	15	30	11	18	26	-0.09
Delegated School Budget [pp.38]	18,280	2015	15	26	16	18	25	-0.11
School Crossing Patrols [pp. 40]	110	2014	13	22	25	20	20	-0.13
Council Fund Housing - Options and Advice Services (1) [pp. 42]	29	2015	13	22	21	26	18	-0.14
Home Care Service [pp. 44]	1,000	2015	9	30	21	17	23	-0.16
Local Authority Residential Homes for Older People (Glanmarlais & Tegfan) [pp. 46]	200	2014	11	21	25	23	19	-0.18
Cleansing Services and Environmental Enforcement [pp. 48]	252	2015	7	25	22	23	23	-0.32
Educational Psychology [pp. 50]	60	2015	10	22	18	26	25	-0.33
Public Protection - Welfare Rights and Citizens Advice [pp. 52]	100	2015	13	22	13	19	33	-0.37
Inclusion Services - Special Educational Needs (SEN) [pp. 54]	200	2014	10	16	22	29	23	-0.41
Education other than at School (EOTAS) & Behaviour Services [pp. 56]	50	2015	9	16	22	28	24	-0.42
Local Authority Residential Homes for Older People [pp. 58]	350	2015	7	17	17	32	27	-0.55

Proposal	3 Year Saving (£'000)	Consultation Year	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Average Index Score
Flood Defence, Land Drainage & Coastal Protection [pp. 60]	118	2015	7	18	14	29	33	-0.63
Highways Infrastructure Maintenance [pp. 62]	1,271	2015	6	17	16	27	33	-0.63
Inclusion Services - Special Educational Needs (SEN) [pp. 64]	120	2015	7	15	12	30	36	-0.73
Short Breaks / Respite for Disabled Children & Young People [pp. 66]	50	2015	4	8	14	40	34	-0.93



### 3) CONSULTATION FINDINGS – ALL PROPOSALS

Below, all 29 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,<sup>11</sup> 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, road shows, 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 demographic groups are, on balance, in opposition.

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<sup>11</sup> The selected categories are: staff (CCC staff); BME (minority ethnic groups); a number of age categories; disabled (disabled people); religion (those having a religion or belief) and LGB (people describing themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual).

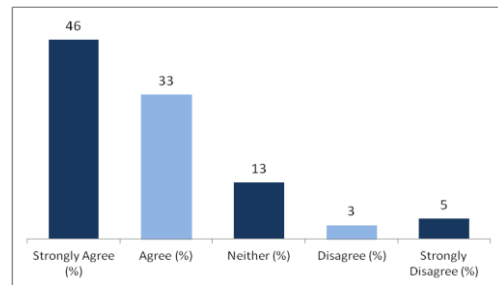
## Public Protection – Animal Welfare

**Total Budget:** £45,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £30,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
30	0	0

**Description:** Increase in licensing fees for breeding, boarding and riding establishments.

**Average index score:** 1.12  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 1  
**Sample Size:** 253



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.83	0.67	1.33	1.02	1.46	1.02	1.28	1.16	1.23	0.85	0.91
Sample	58	9	3	163	54	117	108	38	96	13	32

### Key themes from the public consultation (53 comments):

- Too much breeding and too many animals need re-homing.
- Will prevent people keeping animals for the wrong reasons i.e. puppy farming
- Increase 'underground' breeding.
- Establishments should be strictly licensed and regulated,
- May encourage improved standards at establishments and less unwanted animals
- Increase in boarding costs for animal owners.
- Could jeopardise facilities such as riding for the disabled
- Tax dog owners, use the money to clean up the mess
- Mitigation - exclude charities; access for public to check traders are licensed (i.e. council website), re-introduce dog license fees.

### Other relevant information:

N/A

### Councillor engagement:

- General acceptance of the proposal

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
Increasing the cost of licences for animal boarding and breeding establishments
<b>Affected groups:</b>
The owners of these establishments. No equality impacts on protected characteristics are anticipated. The consultation shows all demographic groups favour the proposal
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See above</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 1)

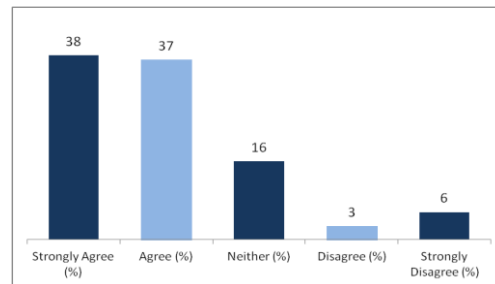
## Council Fund Housing - Options and Advice Services (2)

**Total Budget:** £300,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £10,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
10	0	0

**Description:** Increased income from landlords licences for houses with multiple occupation.

**Average index score:** 0.99  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 2  
**Sample Size:** 247



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.98	0.88	0.67	0.98	1.00	1.03	0.96	0.86	1.04	1.33	0.74
Sample	54	8	3	158	53	112	107	36	92	12	31

### Key themes from the public consultation (36 comments):

- Buy to let scheme would be discouraged as it involves making money at the expense of the tenants and could restrict the number of houses for first time buyers.
- All landlords should be licensed and fees increased.
- Costs will more than likely be absorbed into the rental costs.
- Monitoring of landlords and tenants, many have neglected their duties i.e. inadequate standard of properties.
- On-line register of licences landlords/properties.
- Penalties for properties which are poorly maintained and do not meet regulations.
- Mitigation - council to ensure all landlords are licensed and inspected to ensure that premises meet regulations; fixed rental cost agreed by local authority; profits from licenses used to build new social housing, make the fee pro rata so that landlords of multiple properties pay more.

### Other relevant information:

### Councillor engagement:

- N/A

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
Charging landlords more for the issue of licences
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Landlords primarily. The consultation AIS results show all groups are in favour, with a number strongly so.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advice on the changes, including conferences, will be provided to landlords</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> xxx (see appendix 2)

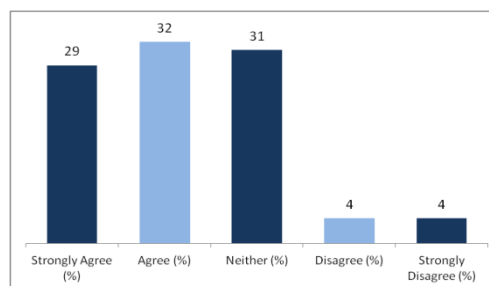
## Oriel Myrddin Gallery (Carmarthen) (2014)

**Total Budget:** £102,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £14,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
14	0	0

**Description:** Phased transfer to independent trust status from 2016/17.

**Average index score:** 0.78  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 3  
**Sample Size:** 602



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.65	1	0.63	0.81	0.8	0.77	0.77	0.69	0.77	0.56	N/A
Sample	190	5	30	352	186	296	258	80	321	9	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (85 comments):

- A 'necessary evil'. Service take-up lower than for other services. Not classified as a 'front-line' service
- Appreciation that arts and entertainment budget cannot be ring-fenced. As such, many have a preference to protect theatres, not art galleries
- Bestowal of trust status grants additional benefits such as tax exemptions, ability to apply for grants
- Art galleries are an important outlet for artists and provide exposure. Closure threatens career of professional artists
- Will stunt growth of cultural activities and tourism
- Mitigation – clear communication with service users; support until trust established

### Other relevant information:

- Expert Group representing Carmarthenshire Museum Service – it is necessary to preserve Carmarthenshire's rich heritage through the guardianship of artefacts. Inter-authority working would minimize administrative costs for Museum Services; Trust Status has had mixed success. Building maintenance, staff expertise and educational importance of service also requires careful deliberation.

### Councillor engagement:

- Views generally in support of the proposal (budget seminar 2014); some comments relating to the position regarding on-going subsidy (budget seminar 2015)

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
The continued operation of the facility will involve a need to draw funding from sources other than the Council. A service reduction is not proposed.
<b>Affected groups:</b>
All demographic groups use the facility and no adverse effect is considered likely. The AIS shows all categories support the proposal.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Source funding from the arts and business community</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 3)

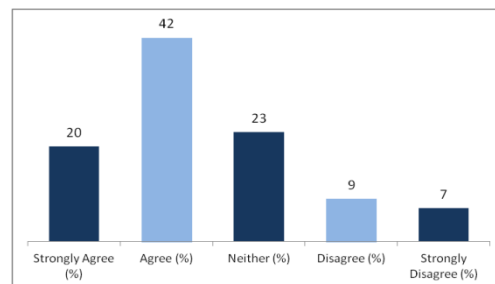
## Looked After Children - Leaving Care, Taxis & Individual Review Service (2014)

**Total Budget:** £711,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £50,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	50	0

**Description:** Taxis are used to transport children when Looked After, either going to school, or for contact. Care leavers receive ongoing support up to 21, or even 25 if in full time education. A reduction of children coming into care; and the additional resources to support their rehabilitation home through targeted resources should contribute to a fall in numbers; both those in care, and those leaving care, and as a result, should achieve a financial reduction in these areas over time.

**Average index score:** 0.59  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 4  
**Sample Size:** 627



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.52	0.8	0.03	0.6	0.69	0.46	0.71	0.47	0.59	0.78	N/A
Sample	198	6	34	361	194	308	269	89	336	9	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (103 comments):

- The Council should not identify efficiency savings in areas concerned with the protection of vulnerable individuals
- Some consider foster carers are well compensated and should be responsible for the provision of such journeys
- Use of taxis for long, across-county journeys should be reviewed
- Clarification sought on what is being proposed
- Given people will no longer be children, why is support provided up to age 25?
- Mitigation – more extensive use of public transport; transfer responsibility for transport to fosterers

### Other relevant information:

N/A

### Councillor engagement:

N/A



## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
The aim is to reduce the number of children looked after by using preventative services
<b>Affected groups:</b>
The consultation results show those 16-24 are only slightly in favour of the proposal
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See above</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> November 2014 (see appendix 4)

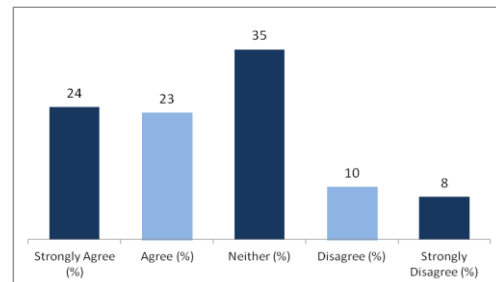
## Revenues and Cash Desk (2014)

**Total Budget:** £789,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £25,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
25	0	0

**Description:** Closure of Llandeilo Cash Office.

**Average index score:** 0.47  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 5  
**Sample Size:** 630



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.26	1.33	0.37	0.53	0.46	0.39	0.57	0.12	0.42	0.38	N/A
Sample	204	6	38	359	0.46	314	268	86	336	8	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (219 comments):

- Noted that many people now make payments using other methods
- Regarded as an issue specific to local (perhaps older) residents of the Llandeilo area
- The importance of the Council having a local presence was stressed
- Cash desk making more use of the library.
- Leisure Centres used as a payment point.
- Having mobile access.
- Mitigation: encourage shift to on-line payment; move function to local shop/bank/post office

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC – agreement providing functions can be transferred to local post offices (Llansteffan & Llanybri)

### Councillor engagement:

- Explore options for alternative provision with banks and post offices

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
The closure would affect current users, though the numbers are low and reducing
<b>Affected groups:</b>
The proposal could affect older people, people with communication or access issues (due to race or disability). The AIS for the consultation shows these groups are in favour of the change
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposed self service arrangements would be supervised, enabling support for those needing it</li><li>• The service would be offered from alternative locations in close proximity</li><li>• A mail shot of existing users would take place offering guidance on accessing the service in different ways (direct debit, Internet, post office, etc)</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 5)

## Sports, Leisure, Theatres Alternative Service Delivery Model (2014)

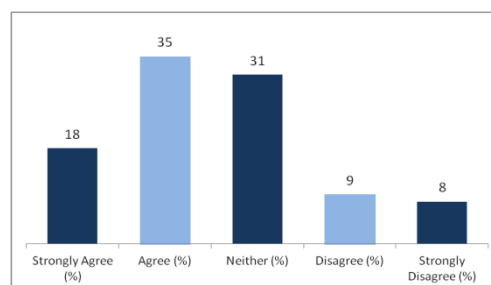
**Total Budget:** £2,937,000

**3 Year Savings:** £550,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	250	300

**Description:** The proposal is to save money by delivering Sports, Leisure and Theatres in a different way - i.e. by a trust.

**Average index score:** 0.45  
**Rank (of 29):** 6  
**Sample Size:** 615



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.42	1	-0.33	0.44	0.65	0.42	0.47	0.46	0.44	0.33	N/A
Sample	192	6	33	357	190	301	266	83	329	9	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (110 comments):

- Favour the change if it protects provision and we don't lose valuable assets.
- It is not obvious how a trust could deliver at a lower cost. More detail is needed
- They will no longer be accessible to communities when inflated charges are levied.
- New Trust to meet the Welsh Language requirements.
- Schools need to pay the proper rate for use
- Accountability – how would the trust relate to the Council?
- Mitigation: give thorough consideration of implications of trust status

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC – the Trust should be a locally established entity (Llanelli Rural)
- Insight session – sports, leisure and theatres are/offer important activities for young people; concern over possible increase in charges and removal of free swimming; CCC should maintain some degree of control/steering

### Councillor engagement:

- Acceptance of the need to consider a new model of delivery (including views concerning the advantages of commercial freedom); issues were raised in relation to service delivery and governance (budget seminar 2015)
- Clarification sought in relation to the status of Gwendraeth Leisure Centre (given closure of associated school) (budget seminar 2015)
- Clarification sought on implications of delivery via Trust on contractual arrangements of transferring staff (Scrutiny 2015)

- Trust model brings benefits of reduced subsidies (80% rate relief) and commercial freedom (Scrutiny 2015)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact:</b>
Alternative delivery of sports, leisure and theatres. The intention is to maintain the same outcome specification as presently exists and no detrimental impact is anticipated
<b>Affected groups:</b>
The services are open to and used by all sections of the community. The AIS shows support from all groups except those 16-24
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outcome specification can be determined by the Authority, ensuring continued high quality provision</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> October 2014 (see appendix 6)

## Youth Services

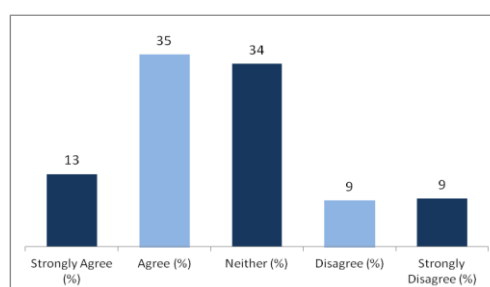
**Total Budget:** £427,000

**3 Year Savings:** £20,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	20	0

**Description:** Review the use of the Quay Centre. Alternative arrangements within the Carmarthen town area would need to be explored to ensure that service provision is maintained in the locality.

**Average index score:** 0.36  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 7  
**Sample Size:** 246



	Staff	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.26	-0.25	1.00	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.37	0.29	0.41	0.25	-0.09
Sample	54	8	3	160	51	114	104	34	92	12	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (37 comments):

- Low number of overall comments, with most unaware of Quay Centre
- Proposal lacks information on current usage and doesn't specify alternative arrangements
- Importance of youth centres in combating anti-social behaviour and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) emphasised
- Costs incurred in setting up new premises will detract from 3 year savings
- A view that the savings don't go far enough
- Mitigation: hire out Quay Centre to generate income; co-working/co-location with community sector (e.g. Dr M'Z project in Carmarthen and St Peter's church)

### Other relevant information:

- Llandoverly YMCA – youth centres have a wider community role and should be protected
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families with disabled children

### Councillor engagement:

- It was suggested that greater collaboration with Dr Mz could be beneficial; the proposal generally supported as a cost-saving measure (budget seminar)
- Continuity – some concerns about ensuring alternative arrangements are in place (budget seminar)
- Some views in relation to funding for the youth service in general, and the need to provide opportunities for young people (budget seminar)

### Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
The Quay Centre is currently used for post-16 youth work, including 'one to one' and 'drop in' work. No adverse equality impacts are anticipated
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Post-16 young people. The AIS for demographic groups shows support, except for the BME and carer categories.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suitable alternative premises exist in Carmarthen</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 7)

## Secondary Speech and Language Provision (2014)

**Total Budget:** £1,453,000

**3 Year Savings:** £50,000

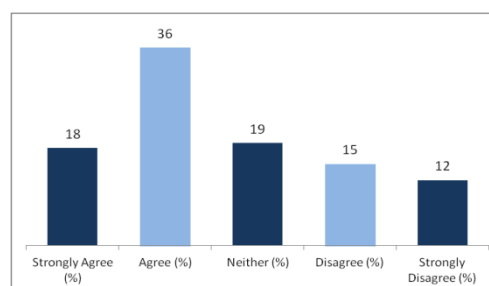
2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
50	0	0

**Description:** The County Council proposes to remodel how support is provided for secondary age pupils with speech, language and communication needs and move away from a special unit provision to enable support and provision in all schools.

**Average index score:** 0.33

**Overall Rank (of 29):** 8

**Sample Size:** 642



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.31	1	0	0.33	0.48	0.34	0.35	0.21	0.34	0.11	N/A
Sample	205	6	34	370	200	321	272	89	340	9	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (183 comments):

- Support for the principle of integration into mainstream education
- Concern mainstream provision may not be best in every case
- Service needs more, not less, investment
- Schools may lack required expertise, leading to poorer outcomes
- In providing support, lessons may be disrupted
- Mitigation: ensure schools are equipped with the expertise to cope with added demands; implement re-modelled provision on a trial basis to ensure it meets needs

### Other relevant information:

N/A

### Councillor engagement:

N/A



## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
Mainstreaming support in schools rather than within a specialist unit. Evidence suggests that functional and strategy-based approaches can be effective at secondary school level
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Pupils with additional speech and language needs; effected staff. The consultation shows no demographic groups are against the proposal.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Schools and teachers will be given training to ensure pupils receive effective support within a mainstream environment</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> November 2014 (revised December 2015 - see appendix 8)

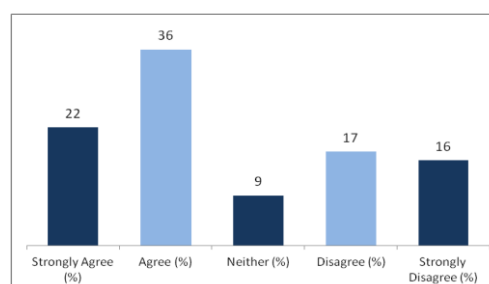
## Catering Services - School Meals

**Total Budget:** £204,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £300,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
100	100	100

**Description:** It is proposed to increase the cost of a primary school meal price to £2.40 in April 2016, £2.50 in April 2017 and £2.60 in April 2018. There will be similar increases in charges for food in secondary schools. Increasing the price of a school meal progressively over the next 3 years may have an adverse impact on take-up.

**Average index score:** 0.31  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 9  
**Sample Size:** 249



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.20	0.75	-2.00	0.17	0.72	0.16	0.48	0.34	0.34	0.64	0.09
Sample	55	8	3	160	53	116	105	35	94	11	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (100 comments):

- The increase is fair and school meals offer good value; with some views to the contrary
- Concerns that rise may impact upon take up. This may have health impacts, because school meals are seen as healthier than other options (packed lunch or food purchased elsewhere at lunchtime)
- Low income and larger families will be affected to a greater extent – particularly those just above free school meals (FSM) threshold
- Mitigation: avoid price rises through finding cheaper suppliers or developing an alternative delivery method (e.g., externalise the service); giving discounts to larger families and those just about the FSM threshold; promote healthy eating to parents and students

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – impact on low income / large families recognised. Price increase too steep and will encourage unhealthy eating (packed lunch or chippy). Schools responsible for good nutrition
- TCCLF – agreement that the increase was reasonable and necessary
- T&CC – increase will affect take up (St Clears)
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families of disabled children

### Councillor engagement:

- Queries about the impact on take up of school meals, and issues of fairness relating to applying the same rate to children of different ages (budget seminar)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
School meal price increases could impact upon take up.
<b>Affected groups:</b>
(Larger) families above free school meal threshold. In terms of AIS scores, those most in favour of the proposal were those 65+ and BME people; men were more strongly in favour than women
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to promote the health, quality and value for money of school meals</li> <li>• Promote the benefits of healthy eating to all students</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 9)

## Home to College Transport

**Total Budget:** £544,000

**3 Year Savings:** £516,000

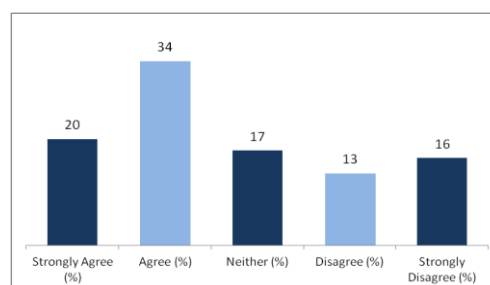
2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
65	451	0

**Description:** Post 16 transport is a discretionary service and statutory consultation is underway to sustain the service through the introduction of a charge.

**Average index score:** 0.28

**Overall Rank (of 29):** 10

**Sample Size:** 650



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.14	-0.6	-0.64	0.32	0.63	0.17	0.51	0.45	0.31	0.56	N/A
Sample	204	6	33	362	198	309	279	84	337	9	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (115 comments):

- Reasonable proposal as further education is not mandatory. College users should bear some of the cost in order to maintain the service
- Saving necessary to protect front-line services
- Encourages younger people to manage money responsibly
- Urban/rural divide and imbalance: adverse impact on rural residents
- Proposal impacts on the most vulnerable in society and restricts social mobility
- Discriminates Welsh speaking sixth formers in schools
- Will segregate Year 12 and 13 pupils.
- Proposal will increase young people classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and hinder their prosperity
- Mitigation - greater use of e-learning; means test to support pupils from low-income families; charge minimal fee to maintain participation; introduce tapered charge over 3 years; support young drivers' schemes; implement cycle hire scheme; combine with public bus routes

### Other relevant information:

- Youth Council – concern that this will constrain take-up of further education opportunities and force students to select courses that do not suit their career path (as may not be offered within nearest college)
- Insight session – points above reinforced, plus: taper charge to distance travelled; monthly payments; discounts for more than 1 bus pass per family

### Councillor engagement:

- A balance of views against the proposal, given concern about the impact of charges on families (budget seminar). The validity of the proposal was

questioned, given the views of the School Transport Member Focus Group against its implementation (scrutiny)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
Students currently having free post-16 transport will be required to pay. A concern that the charge will affect take up of further education
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Students from less well off backgrounds and those from rural areas. The AIS shows that BME people and those 16-24 were against the proposal
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce full charge over a number of years on a tapering basis</li><li>• Payment of annual change in instalments</li><li>• No charge for low income students</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2014 (see appendix 10)

## Libraries

**Total Budget:** £2,381,000

**3 Year Savings:** £240,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	92	148

### Description:

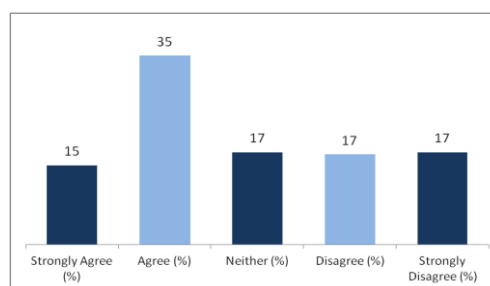
2016/17 - £92,000: The proposal is to change the way the mobile library service is delivered to make more effective use of the vehicles. Offering further services from mobile libraries (for instance, photocopying) is being considered as a way of improving the overall service.

2017/18 & 2018/19 - £148,000: To ensure a library service continues to be available in Carmarthenshire, the proposal is to close a number of branch libraries and rely on an enhanced mobile library service

**Average index score:** 0.13

**Overall Rank (of 29):** 11

**Sample Size:** 253



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	0.23	-0.22	1.33	0.10	0.25	0.12	0.17	0.14	0.1	0.08	0.12
Sample	57	9	3	163	53	118	107	36	96	13	34

### Key themes from the public consultation (143 comments):

- Mobile libraries not comparable to branch libraries given frequency of access, fewer facilities and limited choice. Removes flexibility for borrowers, particularly parents and those in full-time work
- Library functions as a hub – place to read, browse, use computers, hold exhibitions and meetings and make use of timetabled educational activities
- A number of comments in support of the mobile library service. Upheld as indispensable for those with mobility issues (physical disability and rurality)
- Proposal is synchronous with current times – books are increasingly accessed by digital means
- Some agreement providing mobile service visits regularly, is better advertised (location & timings made clearer), choice of books is retained and town centre libraries remain open
- Mitigation: 'click & collect' (reserve books online for pick-up at mobile library); reduce opening hours of branch libraries; co-location (integrate with colleges)

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – bigger impact on elderly and rural residents; combine with coffee shops or schools (evening access); prioritise most popular libraries

- TCCLF – community buildings could house books, in order to help sustain the service. Each collection of books could be refreshed periodically by the Council
- T&CC – agreement with the proposed changes at St Clears, involving use of staff and volunteers (St Clears)

**Councillor engagement:**

- Views in favour of the review; sought clarity on involvement in decisions about closure of smaller branches
- Expand the range of services available through the mobile libraries, to include consideration of customer service centre (CSC) services, blue bag provision and banking services (budget seminar)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b><i>Description of impact</i></b>
Mobile provision involves service improvement; some branches will need to be delivered in another way.
<b><i>Affected groups:</i></b>
Older people; digitally excluded; those in poverty. The AIS shows BME people are against the proposal, but others in support
<b><i>Mitigation</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal involves improving mobile provision</li> <li>• Opportunities for some smaller branch libraries to be delivered differently</li> <li>• Continued provision of housebound service to eligible (older and/or disabled) people</li> <li>• Welsh Public Library Standards will continue to be met</li> </ul>
<b><i>Assessment undertaken:</i></b> December 2015 (see appendix 11)

## Meals on Wheels

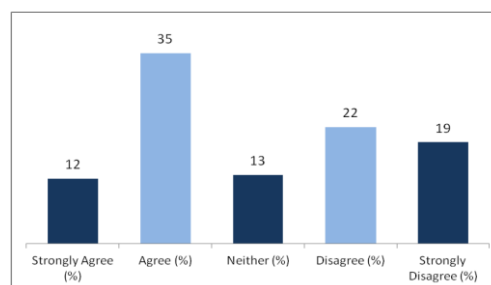
Total budget: £115,000  
3 Year Savings: £57,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
57	0	0

### Description:

Increase meals cost by £1.00 from £3.70 to £4.70

Average index score: 0  
Overall Rank (of 29): 12  
Sample Size: 251



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.21	-0.56	-1.67	-0.04	0.36	-0.2	0.21	-0.16	0.04	-0.07	0.03
Sample	58	9	3	161	53	116	107	37	96	14	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (105 comments):

- Meals on Wheels recipients should not have to pay more than the cost of making the meal themselves and some may not be able to meet the increased charges. Benefit claimants should be exempt from payment.
- More affluent residents prepared to pay the additional costs if the quality of the meal was adequate.
- Undertake means testing of income levels for residents receiving the service.
- Local restaurants or catering establishments supplying a meal for residents at a reduced cost.
- The 27% increase of an additional £5 a week is too steep.
- Could result in elderly residents cutting back on vital nutrition and impact on their wellbeing.
- Reducing the service further without a replacement will cause more social care packages to include meal preparation.
- Older and disabled (many lonely & isolated) people depend on this service.
- Mitigation - fund local cafes to provide meals for the elderly, assisting the local economy

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – above themes noted. Consensus that proposed increases are excessive and will impact isolation/loneliness. Involvement of local community groups and companies such as Wiltshire Farm Foods mooted
- TCCLF – take up in decline owing to private competition. Lack of volunteers to deliver meals a key constraint. Look to community luncheon clubs (undertake home delivery)



- T&CC – rise is likely to affect take up; value for money questioned (St Clears)
- Disability Coalition – incremental rise instead of single huge increase

**Councillor engagement:**

- A phased introduction of the increase would be more favoured
- Views against the proposed increase. Recognition of social aspect of meal delivery - combat loneliness. Larger voluntary organisations could sub-contract MoW service through smaller groups (Scrutiny)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
An increased cost of meals provided to people with an assessed need
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Older people living in the community. Though the overall AIS shows no view, (positive or negative), the results are negative for the BME, single, female and disabled categories (among others)
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of the Integrated Community Nutrition and Hydration Strategy</li> <li>• Ensure accessible information on good nutrition is made widely available</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December xxx (see appendix 12)

## Catering Services – Free School Breakfasts

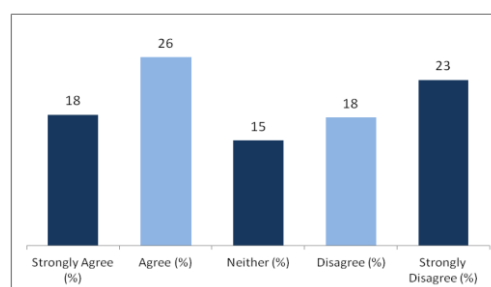
**Total Budget:** £842,000

**3 Year Savings:** £110,000

2015 - 16	2016 - 17	2017 - 18
100	10	0

**Description:** Remodel provision for Free Breakfasts in primary schools to reduce average time from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. There is a risk that some Free Breakfast settings may become unviable as a result of remodelling provision.

**Average index score:** 0  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 12  
**Sample Size:** 249



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.04	-0.25	-0.67	-0.15	0.38	-0.22	0.16	0.17	-0.01	0.15	-0.13
Sample	52	8	3	160	52	116	105	35	93	13	31

### Key themes from the public consultation (104 comments):

- The importance of the morning sessions to working parents was stressed. Many agreed that a cut in the session to half an hour was reasonable, although the reduced time may be detrimental to children with special needs
- It was noted that breakfast is important to the maximisation of individual learning, particularly where children do not have the meal provided at home (e.g., due to low income)
- Some suggested that provision of breakfast is solely a parental responsibility
- It was commented that parents who do not need the provision of a breakfast were taking advantage of the sessions as free child care.
- Concerns that sessions could become unviable because staff could not be identified to work for only half an hour
- Mitigation: suggestion that sessions should stay as 45 minutes, but agreement for the idea that parents pay for the balance of time (perhaps even extending the session providing childcare); keep session as it is in areas of deprivation only.

### Other relevant information:

- TCCLF – proposal achievable, though it was cautioned that clubs are sometimes used as a ‘babysitting’ facility. May be sufficient demand to continue the non-breakfast element of provision on a commercial basis
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families of disabled children

**Councillor engagement:**

- N/A

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
Reducing the time to ½ hour could affect the viability of some school breakfast clubs.
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Children attending smaller, Welsh speaking schools could be affected. Predominantly female workers could be affected by reduced hours. The AIS shows that age groups - other than those 65+ - are against the proposal
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Options to continue provision where services may be at risk will be discussed with governing bodies</li><li>• Discussions with schools and staff to overcome issues arising</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 13)

## Car Parks

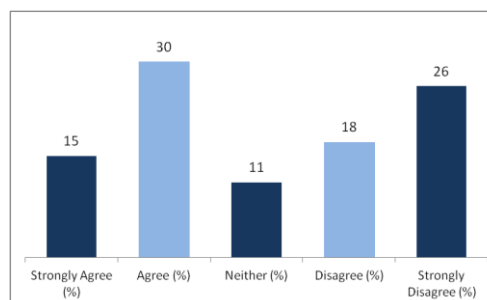
**Total Budget:** -£1,505,000 (net income)

**3 Year Savings:** £108,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	54	54

**Description:** A 20 pence increase in car park charges at major town centres will contribute £54,000 (yearly) to sustain transport and highway related services. Increased charges would take effect in 2017.

**Average index score:** -0.09  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 14  
**Sample Size:** 246



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.52	-1.13	-0.33	-0.01	-0.13	0.09	-0.21	-0.58	-0.11	-0.83	-0.42
Sample	56	8	3	158	53	116	102	36	92	12	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (104 comments):

- Opposing views – some regard current charges as ‘prohibitive’, others as ‘reasonable’ in comparison with neighbouring and English authorities
- Concern that further increases will severely deplete the health of town centres
- Proposal is a setback for independent shops given tough retail environment
- Increased charges will have a disproportionate impact on full-time employees who work within town centres and pay for parking
- Proposal will ease congestion and encourage use of alternative forms of transport such as buses and walking
- 20p increase permissible if money is reinvested into Carmarthenshire’s transport infrastructure
- A view that the abolition of car parking charges will boost local trade/tourism
- Mitigation: Smaller increases across all Council car parks; Council staff to pay for parking; suspend proposal in the interim to revitalise town centres; introduction of half-hour slots; better enforcement (traffic wardens) would negate need for increases; decrease parking costs, increase business rates

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – proposal discourages town centre shopping and may foster illegal parking. Increase penalty (not ticket) charges & use pay-upon-exit
- TCCLF – it was generally agreed that the increased charges could be considered
- Disability Coalition – consider reinstating free Blue Badge parking in Council car parks

**Councillor engagement:**

- A Task and Finish group is presently considering the issue and there was a concern not to pre-empt the outcome (budget seminar)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b><i>Description of impact</i></b>
Increased user charges
<b><i>Affected groups:</i></b>
Car park users. The AIS shows that all groups are against the proposal (to varying extents) except for women.
<b><i>Mitigation</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduce small charge for very short stay parking; improve public transport</li></ul>
<b><i>Assessment undertaken:</i></b> December 2015 (see appendix 14)

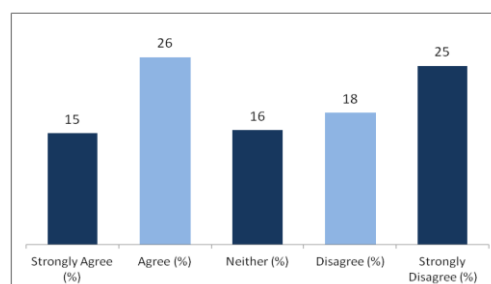
## Delegated school budget

**Total Budget:** £109,708,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £18,280,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
5,500	6,000	6,780

**Description:** Education is a significant area of spend for the Council. This proposal is to reduce the total budget to schools and support schools in achieving a number of cost savings, for example, further collaboration between schools, reducing "back office" costs to prioritise classroom provision, etc.

**Average index score:** -0.11  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 15  
**Sample Size:** 247



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.04	-0.63	0.67	-0.25	0.2	-0.48	0.23	-0.2	-0.26	-0.38	-0.25
Sample	54	8	3	160	54	114	106	35	95	13	32

### Key themes from the public consultation (80 comments):

- Importance of ensuring a fit and proper education for future generations
- Status quo – school budgets already stretched; many back-office staff have been made redundant
- Proposal (in particular, collaboration) will increase pressure on teachers (class sizes) and deter individuals from taking up the profession
- Will impact on equality of opportunity and widen gap between best and worst performing schools (e.g., some schools do not offer swimming lessons as a consequence of charges imposed by Council)
- Proposal does not make clear how schools will be affected by changes
- Scepticism that degree of savings can be realised through collaboration and back office costs alone. It is thought teacher redundancies, larger classes, reduced support for SEN pupils and fewer GCSE options will be likely
- Proposal seen as reasonable: a more central and/or collaborative system would avoid duplication; pooling of resources agreeable
- Mitigation: hire out school facilities in evening and weekends; closure of schools with below optimal number of pupils; smaller cuts over a longer period to best preserve standards; review new schools programme; academy schools; amalgamation should be situational

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – proposal will affect quality of teaching, breadth of curriculum and class sizes. May lead to more schools placed in special measures. Acceptance that schools need to be run efficiently. Share specialised staff

- Chair of Governors Coedcae School – proposal will lead to larger class sizes and teacher redundancies
- TCCLF – cuts may have an impact upon staffing levels and standards could be put at risk
- T&CC – severe impact on primary and secondary schools (St Clears)

**Councillor engagement:**

- Support for the idea of grouping smaller schools for the sharing of administration and back office functions

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
Schools would be required to run on a reduced budget, while maintaining standards
<b>Affected groups:</b>
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.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools Finance Group established to pursue savings whilst limiting the impact on learners</li> <li>• The Council to continue holding schools to account for standards</li> <li>• Appropriate arrangements to be in place for any arising staffing issues</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 15)

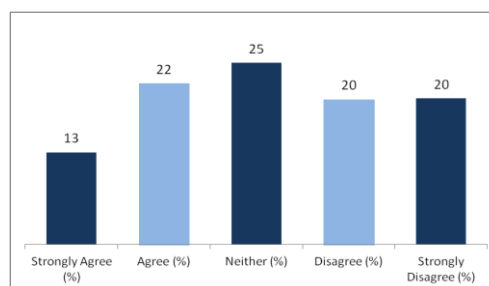
## School Crossing Patrols (2014)

**Total Budget:** £218,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £110,000

2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018 – 19
0	55	0

**Description:** Efficiencies can be gained by de-selection of School Crossing Patrol sites using the criteria for the assessment of school crossing patrol sites, published in RoSPA's School Crossing Patrol national guidance document. Where the School Crossing Patrol is affected, we will work with the school to look at alternative provision if required.

**Average index score:** -0.13  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 16  
**Sample Size:** 631



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.28	-0.63	-0.3	-0.1	-0.05	-0.16	-0.06	-0.08	-0.1	0.3	N/A
Sample	193	9	33	357	194	305	267	85	332	10	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (139 comments):

- A child's safety is of paramount importance. Increases risk of serious collision and injury
- Proposal unwarranted given increase in number of cars on the road and propensity to park/drop-off pupils in hazardous locations near the school
- More populous areas should be protected, irrespective of formulaic assessments. Criteria for selection of patrol sites should include school size and traffic flow
- Schools and/or parents should assume some or all responsibility for costs
- Crossing patrols are of limited significance as most pupils travel to school with a responsible adult
- Mitigation – greater use of pelican and zebra crossings; enforcement of 20mph speed limit; speed cameras; sponsorship; utilise volunteers; include road safety education in the curriculum

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – no need for school crossing patrols where there are traffic lights or calming measures; lollipop wardens in high risk areas only; service important for primary schools, automate process at secondary schools

### Councillor engagement:

- Any changes would need to be based on a thorough site-specific risk assessment. Consider attracting financial support from local businesses (budget seminar)
- Teaching staff could undertake patrol duties (Scrutiny, 2015)



**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
Remove some crossing patrols (subject to safety criteria)
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Pupils between age 4 and 17; evidence suggests boys are at greater risk of being injured in a road traffic collision. The AIS shows all groups are opposed (except LGB)
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 55% of sites do not meet threshold criteria and could be removed; introduce crossings (e.g., traffic lights); more emphasis on road safety education and awareness; volunteer-run service</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 16)

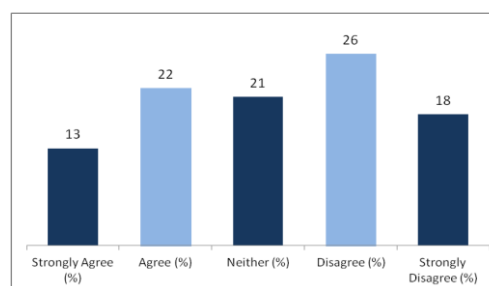
## Council Fund Housing - Options and Advice Services (1)

**Total Budget:** £300,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £29,000

2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018 – 19
29	0	0

**Description:** Reduce grants to Women's Aid and Shelter. Both organisations are changing working practices to try to minimise impact of services available to their client groups.

**Average index score:** -0.14  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 17  
**Sample Size:** 254



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.23	-1.00	0.00	-0.23	0.15	-0.47	0.19	-0.42	-0.08	-0.31	-0.3
Sample	61	8	3	164	53	120	106	31	95	13	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (66 comments):

- Homeless or Domestic Violence victims unable to seek the support that is needed.
- Services which are vital to the most vulnerable in our society and could put people's lives at risk.
- Organisations survive on a shoestring budget and volunteers.
- Drugs and alcohol lead to these services being a priority.
- Inadequate support available and issues increasing due to migration from other areas.
- Domestic violence tends to increase due to stress/poverty.
- Marginal savings do not justify or warrant the likely impacts on vulnerable groups. The people who rely on these organisations find themselves in desperate situations.
- Mitigation – continue support to voluntary groups that can utilise external funding; more social housing accommodation for single people in need.

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC – a need for greater collaborative working (St Clears)

### Councillor engagement:

- An acknowledged need to review support for agencies across the third sector (budget seminar)

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
Review of housing options service will result in the Section taking on the housing-related aspect of what has been provided by Shelter and Women's Aid. Specialist support will remain in place through these organisations
<b>Affected groups:</b>
People at risk of homelessness and/or domestic violence.. The Consultation results show a mix, but many groups are against the proposal, including, women, disabled and LGB people.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proactive work with perpetrators; reducing Shelter's overheads by offering office accommodation; alternative funding mechanisms are being pursued</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 17)

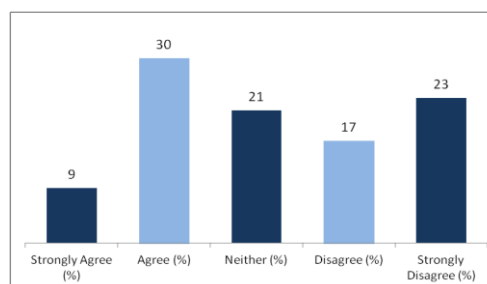
## Home Care Service

**Total Budget:** £14,966,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £1,000,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	500	500

**Description:** Implementation of alternative service model either through externalising the service or developing a Local Authority Trading Company model.

**Average index score:** -0.16  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 18  
**Sample Size:** 248



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.04	0	0.33	-0.22	-0.06	-0.29	0.01	0.19	0.01	-0.5	-0.71
Sample	57	9	3	158	53	112	108	37	93	14	31

### Key themes from the public consultation (105 comments):

- Assists people to live in their homes for as long as possible.
- Prevents 'bed blocking'.
- Local Authority provision much more professional than private sector, better quality of service.
- Provision to remain under the umbrella of CCC: well trained and reliable staff.
- Externalising this service would see it driven by profit not priorities.
- Service should be regularly monitored and audited. Accountability for this service needs to be determined.
- Reasonable wages and adequate training for staff working in this profession
- Time to undertake the relevant duties required.
- Welsh speaking staff for clients that require them.
- Mitigation: Local carers for clients would result in less travelling time and costs; an option for clients to self-budget their care provision; joint working with the Health Service.

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – a range of views: some favouring third sector models, others retention by CCC. Standards of care thought to be poorer in private sector. Service reduces pressure on NHS
- TCCLF – there was agreement that an arrangement in which the Council retained oversight was strongly preferred
- T&CC – agree, so long as it is the LA trading company model that is pursued (St Clears)

**Councillor engagement:**

- Clarification needed on the legal and governance structures that are being considered (budget seminar)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b><i>Description of impact</i></b>
The proposal would provide the same service standards to client groups, through a different delivery mechanism. Change is intended to help promote user choice
<b><i>Affected groups:</i></b>
Services are provided for older people; and disabled people; staff are predominantly female. The AIS shows that unpaid carers are strongly against the proposal
<b><i>Mitigation</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultation and engagement with affected groups would be undertaken</li><li>• Rigorous monitoring of delivery standards would be needed</li><li>• Regular consideration of the EIA as part of the governance arrangements for the project development process</li></ul>
<b><i>Assessment undertaken:</i></b> December 2015 (see appendix 18)

## Local Authority Residential Homes for Older People (2014)

**Total Budget:** £4,795,000

**3 Year Savings:** £200,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
200	0	0

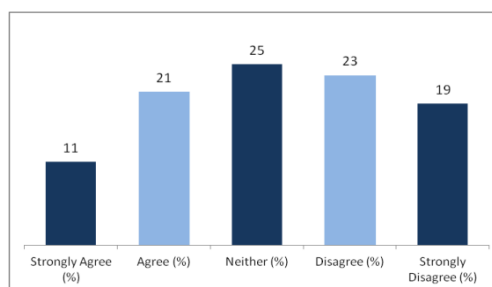
### Description:

Full year saving from closure of Glanmarlais/Tegfan and opening an extra care facility in the Ammanford area.

**Average index score:** -0.18

**Overall Rank (of 29):** 19

**Sample Size:** 613



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.33	0.2	-0.26	-0.16	-0.18	-0.31	-0.08	-0.49	-0.24	-0.33	N/A
Sample	188	6	34	354	191	298	267	83	324	9	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (143 comments):

- Displacement will trigger anxiety and illnesses. Stress of settling in at new home and meeting new people. Loss of valued friendships
- Concerns about capacity and quality of alternatives; impact on delayed transfers
- Ensure residents of Glanmorlais and Tegfan are supported through the change.
- Need adequate local provision catering for local need
- Lack of understanding of flexi beds and Ammanford Extra Care scheme
- Realism: priority should be given to home care services (independence)
- Mitigation – effective respite care to reduce number of admissions; undertake short familiarisation visits prior to move; evaluate new arrangements

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC –ageing population may increase demand (Gorslas)

### Councillor engagement:

- Emphasis needs to be given to the provision of high quality and timely information to councillors, staff, residents and families, should the proposal be supported (budget seminar)

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
The proposal is part of a strategy to promote independence, improve service and integration, and put users at the centre of plans, while modernising accommodation. The primary risk concerns the potential adverse effect of moving older people
<b>Affected groups:</b>
The proposal primarily concerns residents (older people), who may be more likely to be women or disabled. The consultation shows most demographic groups oppose the proposal (except BME): notably disabled people; single people; LGB and women.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication and consultation strategy; information to stakeholders; user involvement in making the change</li><li>• Adherence to the Protocol for Local Authority Care Home Closure Arrangements</li><li>• Redeployment Protocol will be followed with relevant staff</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2014 (see appendices 19a & 19b)

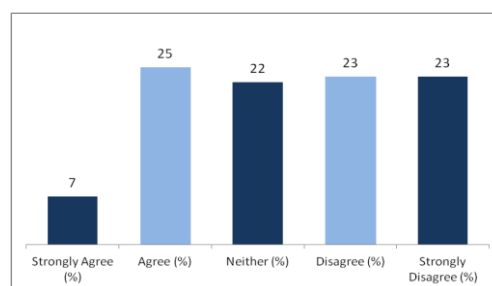
## Cleansing Services & Environmental Enforcement

**Total Budget:** £2,355,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £252,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
85	84	83

**Description:** Re- configuration of service delivery and methods of operation, and the re-assessment of service standards. The proposal also includes reducing the Environmental Enforcement supplies and equipment budgets by £13,000 over the period 2016-19. Likely impacts include (i) a reduction in the frequency of litter picking and sweeping in town centres and urban areas, with cessation of routine litter collection in outlying and residential areas; (ii) aesthetic appearance of residential, urban and rural areas and (iii) effects on income generation for commercial premises and tourism.

**Average index score:** -0.32  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 20  
**Sample Size:** 241



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.43	-0.75	0.00	-0.25	-0.62	-0.26	-0.38	-0.39	-0.31	0.08	-0.84
Sample	51	8	3	153	53	110	104	36	91	13	32

### Key themes from the public consultation (82 comments):

- Routine street cleaning and emptying bins of litter is an important Council function, irrespective of area. Poor cleanliness standards will lead to more littering
- Detrimental impact on tourism, civic pride and morale. Would encourage use of cleaner out of town retail parks. Effects on income generation should be weighed against targeted savings
- Proposal runs counter to the Council's plans to make Carmarthenshire's communities healthier and cleaner. Unpicked litter will attract vermin
- A view that the degree of savings does not justify probable impacts
- Compounds urban/rural disparity. Urban areas would be cleaner than rural areas, blighting idyllic countryside (roadside litter cited as a concern)
- Mitigation: education; greater role for community councils; volunteering (including volunteer litter wardens); community service; enforcement of penalties for littering; increased fines; work with fast-food outlets

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – above points emphasised. Also: litter picking by schools (Welsh BAC); prioritise service in summer (tourism); anti-littering campaigns
- TCCLF – impact of increased litter on tourism. Community councils could contribute towards costs of street cleaning within their areas



- T&CC – increase enforcement; relevant business to take greater responsibility (e.g., fast food) (St Clears)

**Councillor engagement:**

- Consider increasing fines; concern about service standards and the potential impact on tourism (budget seminar)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b><i>Description of impact</i></b>
Increased visibility of litter is possible
<b><i>Affected groups:</i></b>
All Carmarthenshire residents. AIS scores from the public consultation suggest opposition from most demographic groups
<b><i>Mitigation</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase fines and enforcement; community litter picks; more responsibility from relevant businesses (e.g., fast food)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Assessment undertaken:</i></b> December 2015 (see appendix 20)

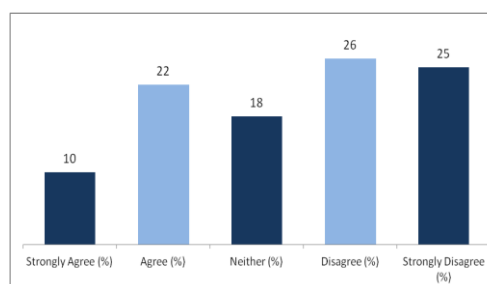
## Educational Psychology

**Total budget:** £883,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £60,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
0	60	0

**Description:** Reduction of 1 post through review of existing structure. Reduced capacity for psychology support to schools and vulnerable children.

**Average index score:** -0.33  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 21  
**Sample Size:** 249



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.36	-0.50	-0.67	-0.37	-0.21	-0.62	-0.02	-0.68	-0.43	0.31	-0.26
Sample	55	8	3	160	53	117	105	37	94	13	31

### Key themes from the public consultation (54 comments):

- Proposal is of detriment to vulnerable pupils requiring specialist support
- Reduced support will compound waiting lists, shorten time spent with vulnerable pupils and may have secondary impacts on wider class
- A view that the current service is overstretched and in need of improvement
- Mental ill-health is on the rise and is unlikely to abate in the near future
- Proposal is ambiguous – does not mention the number of psychologists employed nor number of pupils receiving the service
- Concern that schools are being hit hard by current round of proposals
- Mitigation: impacts can be alleviated if less time is spent preparing reports (prioritise 1:1 support); provide access to other counselling services; train volunteers

### Other relevant information:

- TCCLF – insufficient information to comment
- Disability Coalition – how is demand for service to be managed?
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families of disabled children. Educational psychologists are often the gateway to further services and support

### Councillor engagement:

- N/A

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
Reduced psychology support
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Young people 0-19 with SEN; disabled children and young people (up to 25) The AIS scores show opposition from all groups, except LGB.
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritise activity to those with most significant need</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 21)

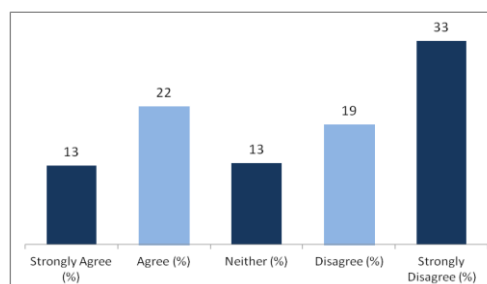
## Public Protection - Welfare Rights and Citizens Advice

**Total Budget:** £148,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £100,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
100	0	0

**Description:** Make savings by reviewing contribution to voluntary organisations providing Benefits Advice (Catch up / CAB / Mencap).

**Average index score:** -0.37  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 22  
**Sample Size:** 275



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.68	-1.44	0.33	-0.36	-0.29	-0.52	-0.18	-0.62	-0.26	-0.21	-0.58
Sample	65	9	3	181	55	127	117	37	96	14	36

### Key themes from the public consultation (137 comments):

- High demand service in austere times. Will impact on those in greatest need
- Important given reduction in availability of legal aid – people need access to impartial advice
- These organisations offer home or group visits (access cited as an issue for some rural areas) and are often a preferred option to DWP
- These services contribute to the local economy.
- Impact on people unable to source an alternative.
- Mitigation - train front line staff; combine organisations providing service (one stop shop); incorporate this service into the HUB; make statutory agencies more approachable; ensure a forum of service providers is maintained; information should be available on the internet.

### Other relevant information:

- Llandovery YMCA – weekly CAB sessions at YMCA could be put at risk
- TCCLF – there is often duplication of benefits advice
- T&CC – need for more collaborative working (St Clears)
- Disability Coalition – Catchup provides unique service; can't sustain cut of this scale
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families with disabled children

### Councillor engagement:

- An acknowledged need to review support for agencies across the third sector (budget seminar)

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
The reduction may affect the availability of welfare advice, however, there may be duplication of provision
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Those in or facing poverty; rural users. The AIS results show all groups are against the proposal (except those 16-24)
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotion of the variety of information sources available</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 22)

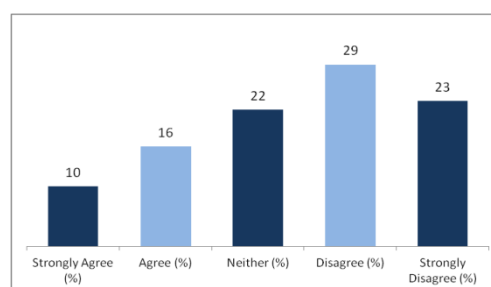
## Inclusion Services – Special Educational Needs (2014)

**Total Budget:** £1,453,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £200,000

2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018 – 19
<b>200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Description:** When learners with a Statement of Special Education Needs leave school the Statement comes to an end. It is planned to reduce the level of funding provided to schools by giving up some of the funding associated with statements that expire. Consequently, there will be less funding available to schools to support children and young people with additional needs.

**Average index score:** -0.41  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 23  
**Sample Size:** 644



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.47	0	-0.44	-0.51	-0.14	-0.57	-0.2	-0.6	-0.51	0	N/A
Sample	205	6	34	370	201	318	276	90	343	8	N/A

### Key themes from the public consultation (171 comments):

- Proposal impacts upon vulnerable young people who need support
- May increase class disruption
- Support is currently under-funded. 30% cut is too great
- Reduced support may lead to further problems in future, such as increasing those NEET<sup>12</sup>. Children deserve opportunities to fulfil their potential
- Stop pocket money for children in care.
- Mitigation: additional training to enable teachers to manage needs; greater involvement of charities who support disabled children

### Other relevant information:

- School governing body – council should have regard to the costs of implementing new national arrangements for supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs

### Councillor engagement:

- Issues are best tackled at an early stage in partnership with parents (budget seminar)

<sup>12</sup> Not in education, training or employment

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
The change would involve delegation of funding to schools who then have greater opportunity to develop solutions fitting local need
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Pupils with a SEN requirement. The consultation shows most demographic groups oppose the proposal (notably disabled people, and the group most likely to have children at school – those 25-64)
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• N/A</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 8)

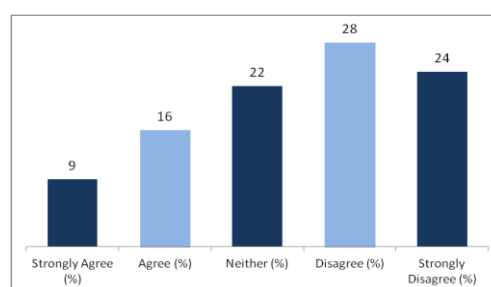
## Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) & Behaviour Services

**Total Budget:** £1,464,000  
**3-Year Savings:** £50,000

2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018 – 19
0	50	0

**Description:** Remodelling behavioural management services, informed by the strategic review of current provision, which includes Rhydygors Day Centre. Possible impacts include a reduced service for schools in respect of behaviour support which could lead to higher exclusion rates.

**Average index score:** -0.42  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 24  
**Sample Size:** 248



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.42	-0.38	0.33	-0.49	-0.28	-0.68	-0.17	-0.59	-0.44	-0.23	-0.45
Sample	53	8	3	160	53	116	105	34	95	13	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (58 comments):

- Effect on education and attendance of young vulnerable people who need support
- Impacts on other children in mainstream schools; has a detrimental effect on pupil attainment, which could see an increase in anti social behaviour.
- Schools do not have the ability and support to provide the specialist assistance for pupils. Children with problems who are not helped and supported grow into adults with problems, which affects communities.
- Higher exclusion rates leads to unproductive adults in low paid or no jobs resulting in higher welfare costs.
- Parents should be more involved in the behaviour of their children.
- Mainstream education is not effective for all pupils, they need to be able to access the curriculum to gain skills that will benefit them and their community.
- Mitigation - alternative support ensuring young people are not isolated from mainstream; more support in local schools; behaviour management training for school staff.

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC – a reduced service will significantly impact on quality and standards (St Clears)
- Disability Coalition – no difficulties, assuming service is maintained
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concerns about the impact on families with disabled children



**Councillor engagement:**

- N/A

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b><i>Description of impact</i></b>
Reduction of operational costs through redesigning service. Possible impact on exclusions and standards
<b><i>Affected groups:</i></b>
Children and young people (4-16) with special/additional educational needs; disabled children and young people (4-25); parents and carers. The consultation shows most groups are strongly opposed; in particular, women, disabled people and carers.
<b><i>Mitigation</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The redesign will build the capacity of schools to meet needs within their own establishments</li><li>• Redesign will include consideration of maximising support services, including: psychology; social, emotional and behavioural provision; and mental health services</li></ul>
<b><i>Assessment undertaken:</i></b> December 2015 (see appendix 23)

## Local Authority Residential Homes for Older People (2015)

**Total Budget:** £4,355,000

**3 Year Savings:** £350,000

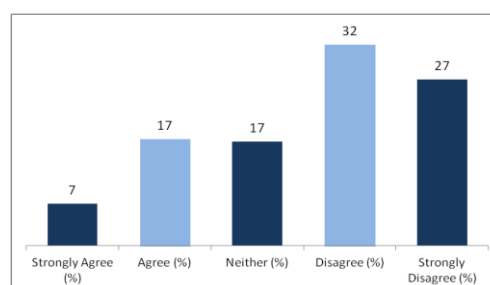
2016 – 17	2017 – 18	2018 – 19
0	0	350

**Description:** Implementation of alternative service model either through externalising the service or developing a Local Authority Trading Company model. This may compromise residents' ability to obtain a placement of choice close to family and friends.

**Average index score:** -0.55

**Overall Rank (of 29):** 25

**Sample Size:** 250



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.53	-0.33	0.33	-0.59	-0.54	-0.78	-0.33	-0.24	-0.38	-1.07	-1.06
Sample	57	9	3	160	54	115	108	37	95	14	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (107 comments):

- Older people should be able to choose the location of their residential home, perhaps close to family and friends. A placement away from familiar surroundings could have a detrimental effect on social and mental wellbeing.
- Visiting hours impact on the family if not suitable with public transport timetables.
- Private homes expensive and unaffordable to many residents, driven by profit and maximising income rather than prioritising services.
- Quality of care provided at private homes not acceptable in comparison to the care received at local authority homes.
- More local authority homes required.
- Difficult to locate accommodation, even in an emergency situation.
- Staff need adequate training, decent wages and time to undertake tasks.
- Welsh language speaking staff required for residents who require it.
- Mitigation - limit the profits; more work on health promotion and exercise schemes to keep people active and independent longer; create a not for profit organisation instead of privatisation.

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC – support for local authority trading company approach (St Clears)
- Disability Coalition – concerns over quality and standards

### Councillor engagement:

- Clarity needed on the legal structure and governance arrangements for the service

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
The proposal will provide the same service standards to client groups, through a different delivery mechanism. Change is intended to help promote user choice
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Services are provided for older people; and disabled people; staff are predominantly female. The AIS shows all groups are against the proposal (except those 16-24)
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation and engagement with affected groups to be undertaken</li> <li>• Rigorous monitoring of delivery standards</li> <li>• Regular consideration of the EIA as part of the governance arrangements for the project development process</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 18)

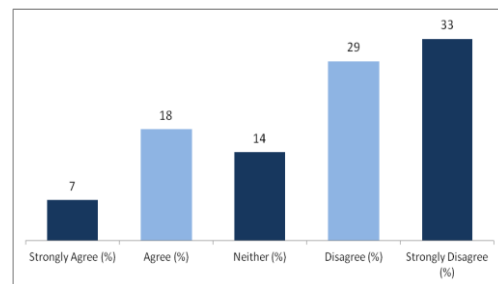
## Flood Defence, Land Drainage & Coastal Protection

**Total Budget:** £393,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £118,000

<b>2016 – 17</b>	<b>2017 – 18</b>	<b>2018 – 19</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>26</b>

**Description:** Reduction in preventative maintenance of flood defence and coastal protection assets potentially reducing our ability to react to future storm and severe weather events. Emergency works will have to be addressed through the re-prioritisation of departmental budgets.

**Average index score:** -0.63  
**Rank (of 29):** 26  
**Sample Size:** 246



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.78	-0.13	1.00	-0.6	-0.91	-0.75	-0.54	-0.89	-0.60	-0.69	-0.79
Sample	55	8	3	156	54	115	103	35	91	13	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (65 comments):

- Proposal is penny wise and pound foolish – short term savings will be nullified by longer term costs (e.g. remedial works)
- Proposal is at variance with climate change predictions. Council should be preparing for an increase in flooding related incidents. Half measures will not adequately protect Carmarthenshire residents
- Recent events have brought to the fore the social and economic devastation caused by flooding – homelessness, loss of life etc.
- Flood defence spend is already low. Costs of one major flooding event will exceed proposed three year savings. Strengthening of defences needed
- A view that Natural Resources Wales should take greater responsibility
- Mitigation: prevention better than cure; prohibit floodplain developments; more effective planning; build resilient communities; community preparedness; artificial reefs to prevent coastal erosion (reduces wave energy)

### Other relevant information:

- TCCLF – 3 year savings are a significant proportion of overall spend. Community councils likely to oppose the reduction
- T&CC – foolish given recent adverse weather (St Clears)

### Councillor engagement:

- A lack of support, and a view this could be a ‘false economy’. A view that inspection needs strict prioritisation (budget seminar)

- Mention was made of the effects of global warming and recent floods in Cumbria. It was suggested that a lack of specialist vehicles to maintain gullies and culverts could lead to unnecessary flooding (Scrutiny).

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
Reduced preventative flooding and coastal protection works
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Communities in affected areas. The consultation shows all groups against (except 16-24) with a number strongly against, including people 65+ and disabled people
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not giving permission to build on floodplains</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 24)

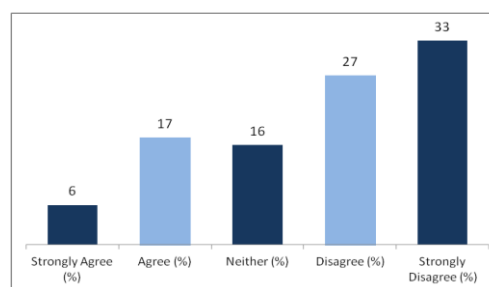
## Highways Infrastructure maintenance

**Total Budget:** £7,082,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £1,271,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
512	478	281

**Description:** Reduction in routine maintenance of highways infrastructure assets (bridges, retaining walls / support embankments, drainage and highways/footway works). In practice, this means: a reduction in the number of gully emptiers; a reduction in the number of mechanical sweepers; a reduction in the general maintenance and response to category 1 (emergency) defects, such as potholes, flooding etc; mowing and weed treatment curtailed to address safety issues only with no general mowing and treatment taking place and, in respect of winter maintenance gritting, the current primary presalt routes will be reduced by up to 25%. Emergency works will have to be addressed through the re-prioritisation of departmental budgets.

**Average index score:** -0.63  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 27  
**Sample Size:** 249



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.64	0.00	-0.33	-0.61	-0.74	-0.66	-0.6	-0.95	-0.43	-0.46	-1.06
Sample	55	8	3	160	53	116	105	37	93	13	32

### Key themes from the public consultation (93 comments):

- Correlation between functioning transport network and local economy
- Proposal is a serious risk to public safety and will give rise to litigation
- Future trends – increase in adverse weather conditions (flooding, icy and snowy weather) and number of road users as population grows
- Important to retain emphasis on prevention – reactive measures will cost more than preventative measures
- Rurality – rural areas will be hardest hit by the proposal. Some roads said to be in a state of disrepair given low levels of maintenance. Concern that rural roads will become impassable, resulting in lost work days
- Impact on cyclists
- Mitigation – review payment structure (overtime); reduce spending on signage and traffic calming measures; reduce grass-cutting on highway verges; incentivise public transport; regional working; prioritise work on basis of seasons; keep maintenance work in-house

### Other relevant information:

- Insight session – safety concerns shared; danger of ageing bridges; cut is significant and will hit rural areas; tourism impact; more effective repairs

- T&CC – concerns for safety and impact on tourism (St Clears)
- TCCLF – 3 year savings considerable. Community councils commented on how they could assist in identifying works of local priority, which could help ensure the best use of limited resources.

**Councillor engagement:**

- A lack of support. A general view that the saving may lead to longer term pressures, including increased exposure to litigation (budget seminar)
- Concern expressed over current state of roads/bridges; backlog faced and record against key performance indicators (Seminar)

**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
Less routine highway maintenance
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Carmarthenshire’s road users. The consultation shows demographic groups are generally strongly opposed – particularly carers and the disabled
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritise works in response to public consultation (reduce signage, cutting of verges, etc).</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 25)

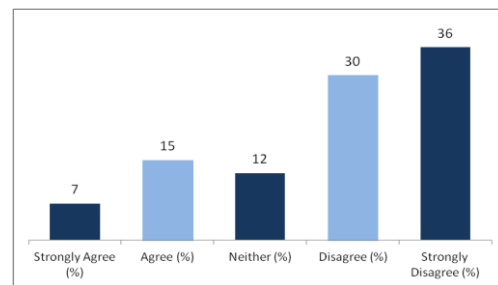
## Inclusion Services - Special Educational Needs (SEN)

**Total Budget:** £1,983,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £120,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
120	0	0

**Description:** Remodel provision for Additional Learning support. This may result in reduced staffing and support for learners and could impact attendance and standards.

**Average index score:** -0.73  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 28  
**Sample Size:** 250



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.60	-0.50	-0.33	-0.86	-0.66	-1.07	-0.50	-0.77	-0.75	-0.54	-0.94
Sample	53	8	3	161	53	116	106	35	95	13	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (63 comments):

- Concerns that the proposal will have an adverse impact on SEN students in achieving their potential. Some holding this view considered that more, not less resource should be available to the service
- Support for the need to provide services to SEN students
- Any changes introduced to the service must secure fair outcomes for SEN students
- Comments suggesting that reduced provision will result in longer term costs for individuals and society
- Mitigation: hold inclusive community support groups for students struggling with key stage subjects; volunteers or parents to provide additional support

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC - reduced service will impact on standards and quality of service (St Clears)
- TCCLF – some concerns raised, with members suggesting the broader trend is an increase in the need for SEN provision
- Disability Coalition – against the proposal, since service is needed at its present level
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families with disabled children

### Councillor engagement:

- N/A



**Equality Impact Assessment summary:**

<b>Description of impact</b>
The change would involve delegation of funding to schools who then have greater opportunity to develop solutions fitting local need
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Pupils with a SEN requirement. The consultation shows all demographic groups oppose the proposal (notably women, carers, and the group most likely to have children at school – those 25-64)
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• N/A</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 8)

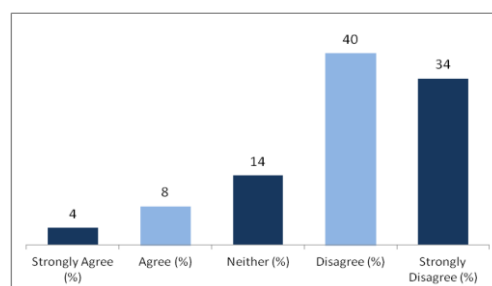
## Short Breaks / Respite for Disabled Children & Young People

**Total Budget:** £338,000  
**3 Year Savings:** £50,000

2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19
50	0	0

**Description:** Reduce County Council's School Improvement team, reducing support for humanities subjects. Reduce scale of specialist provision out of school hours. The reduction of this funding will mean the likely closure of two Breakthro' services which serve the needs of children with disabilities, particularly supporting them through holiday periods.

**Average index score:** -0.93  
**Overall Rank (of 29):** 29  
**Sample Size:** 250



	Single	BME	16-24	25-64	65+	F	M	Dis-abled	Rel-igion	LGB	Carer
AIS	-0.89	-1.50	-2.00	-0.97	-0.8	-1.14	-0.8	-1.11	-0.70	-0.54	-0.91
Sample	55	8	3	160	54	116	106	36	94	13	33

### Key themes from the public consultation (66 comments):

- A prevailing view that the proposal is unjust and targets vulnerable individuals
- Breakthro' recognised as a much needed service providing invaluable support to families
- Increased hardship. May result in family breakdowns, distress and more children in care (thereby straining foster care services)
- Respite provides an opportunity for disabled children to interact with others
- Lack of alternative support
- Taken together with other proposals, such as Inclusion Services – SEN, cumulative impact on disabled children and young people is considerable
- Mitigation – develop specialist family placement scheme; charge for service; work in partnership with voluntary sector

### Other relevant information:

- T&CC - service users would be disadvantaged (St Clears)
- TCCLF – insufficient information to comment
- Disability Coalition – strongly against; parents need support
- Equality Carmarthenshire – concern about the impact on families with disabled children

### Councillor engagement:

- A lack of support, due to the potential impact upon this vulnerable group (budget seminar)

## Equality Impact Assessment summary:

<b>Description of impact</b>
Reduced provision could affect family life, isolation from peers; and an increase in looked after children
<b>Affected groups:</b>
Disabled children and young people, and their families. The AIS shows all groups are against the proposal
<b>Mitigation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• See consultation comments above</li></ul>
<b>Assessment undertaken:</b> December 2015 (see appendix 26)

#### 4) DELIVERING SERVICES

In considering how to deal with sustained budget reductions, councils are examining the ways in which services can be delivered, including partnership working, delivery through the voluntary and/or private sectors and community ownership. The following outlines the public acceptability of delivering in these ways.<sup>13</sup>

	Preferred choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> choice	3 <sup>rd</sup> choice	4 <sup>th</sup> choice	last choice
<b>Consumer protection</b>	CCC (47%)	CCC & partners (47%)	Voluntary sector (20%)	Private sector (12%)	Community ownership (9%)
<b>Council Housing</b>	CCC (60%)	CCC & partners (39%)	Private sector (13%)	Voluntary sector (10%)	Community ownership (10%)
<b>Council Housing Repairs</b>	CCC & partners (51%)	CCC (45%)	Private sector (24%)	Voluntary sector (10%)	Community ownership (7%)
<b>Environmental Health / Trading Standards</b>	CCC (62%)	CCC & partners (43%)	Private sector (10%)	Voluntary sector (7%)	Community ownership (3%)
<b>Services and facilities for older people</b>	CCC & partners (57%)	CCC (51%)	Voluntary sector (27%)	Private sector (19%)	Community ownership (12%)
<b>Services and facilities for ill and disabled people</b>	CCC (54%)	CCC & partners (53%)	Voluntary sector (26%)	Private sector (16%)	Community ownership (10%)
<b>Youth clubs &amp; facilities for young people</b>	Voluntary sector (50%)	CCC & partners (49%)	Community ownership (34%)	CCC (26%)	Private sector (17%)
<b>Countryside Access</b>	CCC & partners (42%)	CCC (38%)	Voluntary sector (34%)	Community ownership (28%)	Private sector (16%)
<b>Waste &amp; recycling</b>	CCC (62%)	CCC & partners (41%)	Private sector (24%)	Voluntary sector (10%)	Community ownership (9%)
<b>Leisure centres</b>	CCC & partners (47%)	CCC (44%)	Private sector (33%)	Community ownership (23%)	Voluntary sector (14%)
<b>Theatres &amp; art galleries</b>	Private sector (45%)	CCC & partners (42%)	Community ownership (36%)	Voluntary sector (30%)	CCC (26%)
<b>Parks, including Millennium Coastal Park, open spaces</b>	CCC (55%)	CCC & partners (45%)	Community ownership (29%)	Voluntary sector (18%)	Private sector (15%)
<b>Playgrounds</b>	CCC (49%)	CCC & partners (38%)	Community ownership (33%)	Voluntary sector (16%)	Private sector (12%)
<b>Festivals and events</b>	Private sector (50%)	CCC & partners (42%)	Community ownership (36%)	Voluntary sector (33%)	CCC (22%)
<b>Bus services</b>	CCC (50%)	CCC & partners (45%)	Private sector (36%)	Community ownership (9%)	Voluntary sector (8%)

<sup>13</sup> Percentages will not aggregate to 100 as respondents could select multiple options

<b>Bus shelters</b>	CCC (46%)	CCC & partners (43%)	Private sector (26%)	Community ownership (18%)	Voluntary sector (8%)
<b>Pavement maintenance / repairs</b>	CCC (71%)	CCC & partners (37%)	Private sector (14%)	Voluntary sector (5%)	Community ownership (3%)
<b>Road maintenance / repairs</b>	CCC (76%)	CCC & partners (34%)	Private sector (12%)	Voluntary sector (3%)	Community ownership (2%)
<b>Public car parks</b>	CCC (60%)	CCC & partners (40%)	Private sector (16%)	Community ownership (11%)	Voluntary sector (3%)
<b>Public conveniences</b>	CCC (56%)	CCC & partners (42%)	Community ownership (20%)	Private sector (15%)	Voluntary sector (8%)
<b>Street cleaning</b>	CCC (65%)	CCC & partners (36%)	Private sector (18%)	Community ownership (11%)	Voluntary sector (9%)
<b>Recycling facilities</b>	CCC (55%)	CCC & partners (44%)	Private sector (28%)	Community ownership (10%)	Voluntary sector (8%)
<b>Refuse collection</b>	CCC (72%)	CCC & partners (38%)	Private sector (15%)	Community ownership (3%)	Voluntary sector (3%)
<b>School transport</b>	CCC (50%)	CCC & partners (42%)	Private sector (29%)	Voluntary sector (12%)	Community ownership (11%)
<b>Street lighting</b>	CCC (71%)	CCC & partners (36%)	Private sector (10%)	Community ownership (6%)	Voluntary sector (2%)
<b>Planning services</b>	CCC (73%)	CCC & partners (33%)	Private sector (12%)	Community ownership (3%)	Voluntary sector (2%)
<b>Nursery education</b>	CCC (53%)	CCC & partners (41%)	Private sector (27%)	Voluntary sector (20%)	Community ownership (14%)
<b>Primary &amp; Secondary education</b>	CCC (84%)	CCC & partners (28%)	Community ownership (6%)	Voluntary sector (3%)	Private sector (3%)
<b>Adult education</b>	CCC (51%)	CCC & partners (48%)	Private sector (21%)	Voluntary sector (20%)	Community ownership (19%)

Respondents prefer Carmarthenshire County Council to deliver 22 out of 29 listed services. In these cases, alternative models of service delivery attracted variable degrees of support. To illustrate, 76% of respondents thought CCC should carry out road maintenance and repairs, 34% thought joint working (CCC and partners) was acceptable, whilst 12% felt this service should be performed by the private sector (also: vol. sector 3%; community ownership 2%).

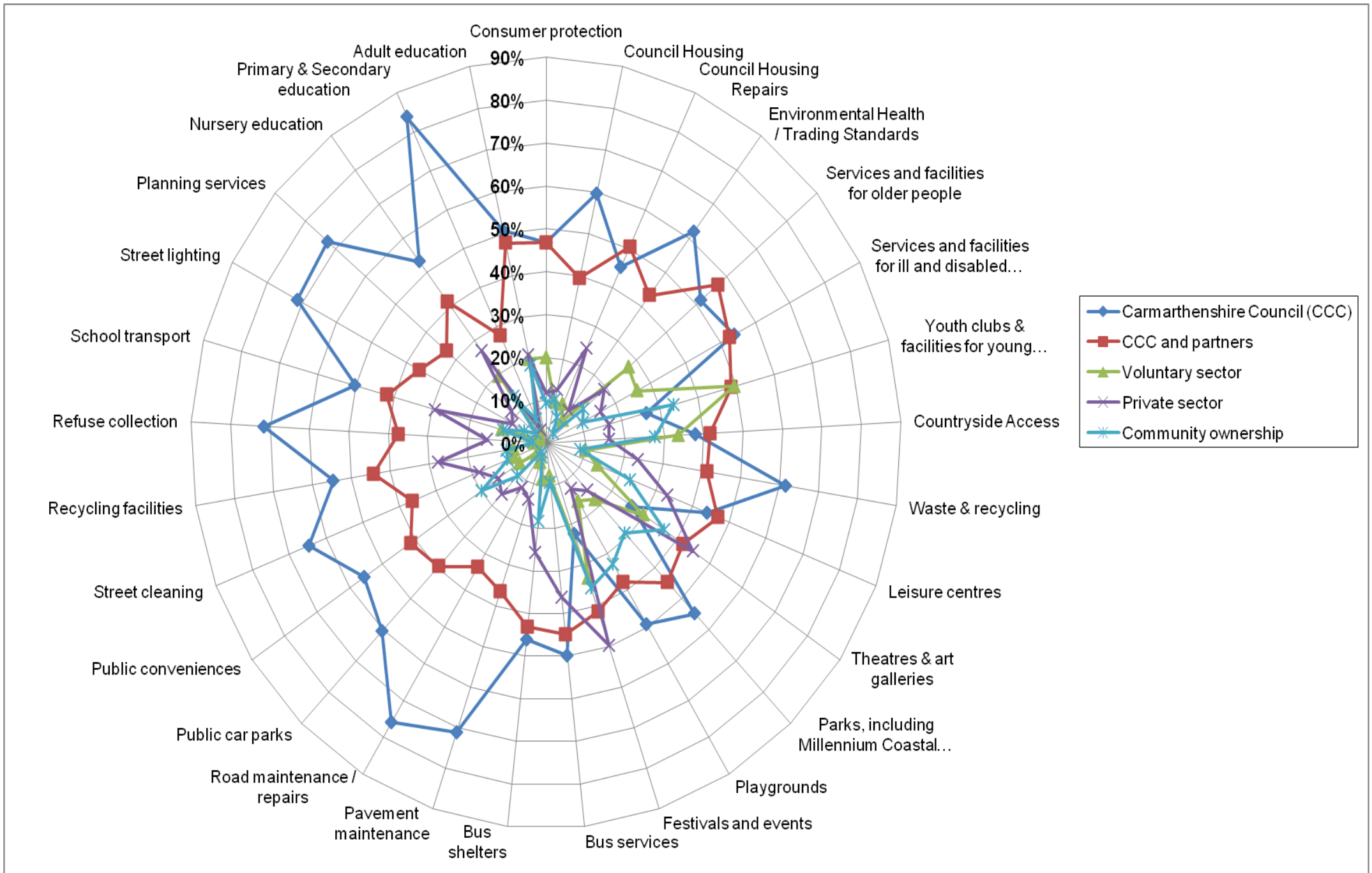
Only one in five (22%) thought the Council should deliver festivals and events in isolation and, similarly, around one in four (26%) thought youth clubs and facilities should be the sole responsibility of the Council, suggesting that respondents are amenable to the involvement of other stakeholders.

Delivery via the private sector is supported to some degree for a number of services, in particular those concerned with leisure and regeneration. Support for private sector involvement is highest for festivals and events (50%) and theatres and art galleries (45%) and lowest for education (3%) and environmental health / street lighting (both 10%). Generally, it takes up a position as the third most popular option, behind CCC and CCC and partners. In the main, service delivery models which transfer provision to the voluntary sector or local communities do not garner much support, although there are some exceptions (see youth clubs/facilities).

The chart overleaf is useful in showing the overall distribution/spread of values. It reinforces, for example, that delivery by Carmarthenshire County Council is typically the preferred option, attracting high degrees of support. In contrast, community ownership is tightly clustered around the lower percentage values though does have several outliers; attracting support for services such as festivals and events.

On the topic of delivering services in different ways, the following additional points were raised:

- Acknowledgement that it is not financially viable, nor cost effective, for the Council to provide all services
- Prioritising on basis of statutory / non-statutory functions is justifiable, however ceasing non-statutory services may have knock-on effects on statutory ones
- Pursuit of joined-up working strongly encouraged
- Service-specific comments, including a view that the (contentious) involvement of the private sector in matters such as planning, waste collection and environmental health could be counterbalanced by retaining directors in an overseer role



## 5) SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING SAVINGS OR RAISING INCOME

As with last year, 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 1105 comments were made through the public consultations.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

A 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 52 proposals discussed earlier.

Another common view was that the Council should seek **different ways of doing things**. There was widespread support for further 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 could play in service delivery. Of

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<sup>14</sup> The breakdown of results is 970 (2014) and 135 (2015).

<sup>15</sup> This should not be interpreted as indicating general opposition to Council Tax rises, rather that some respondents identified it as being an issue.



interest is evidence to suggest that reorganisation may be considered acceptable, if this enabled the quality of service delivery to be protected.

Other comments related to the need to further examine options such as asset transfer, and perhaps more radically, the establishment of a trading arm of the Council

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
- Outsource maintenance work to private contractors
- Reducing the frequency of domestic waste and recycling collection; consider privatising the service
- Reducing cutting schedules for highway verges, or just maintaining areas such as junctions
- Use of libraries as mini Customer Service Centres
- Reducing street lighting (see specific proposal)
- 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
- Addressing energy use in Council buildings (heating and lighting)
- Delivering more through competitive tenders (Technical Services)
- Prohibit use of consultants

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

- 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 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

### 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.

**Statutory provision** – such services must be provided, but (as with other services) judgements need to be made concerning the quality specification of service delivery.

**Collaboration** - which results in cost savings - should be exhaustively pursued. For instance, it is sensible to link with Local 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?

**Alternative service delivery** – more information for members on alternative delivery models and implications. Theme relates to leisure provision, ‘outsourcing’ of home care etc but also to the general question of what the Council is doing to prepare the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector for a potentially greater role in service delivery. Consideration should also be given to the development of a trading arm as a source of income.

**Performance** – consideration of the financial, or other, impacts of reducing performance in particular areas of service delivery. This will assist in addressing financial challenges in a way that continues to meet public needs.

Further issues included:

- **Cuts elsewhere** – considering what can be learnt from looking at examples in England.
- **Integrated services** – there is a need to ensure obligations are met at the interface with social care. Additional concerns arose in respect of growing demands for social care (given demographic trends)
- **Workforce** – a need to develop a greater pool of generic job roles across council services; consideration of the role of the severance scheme in reducing costs
- **School reserves** – work with schools to support use where prudent
- **Back office functions** across the Council. Examine, with a view to achieving reductions.
- **Third sector<sup>16</sup> grants** - review corporate impact to ensure value for money.

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<sup>16</sup> The term third sector refers to organisations includes charities and other not for profit organisations.

- **Asset transfer** - 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.

## 6) SCRUTINY COMMITTEES:

### COMMUNITY SCRUTINY 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th November 2015. It was advised that Welsh Government (WG) had announced the provisional settlement the previous day and that Carmarthenshire would see a 1% cut in budget rather than the 3.3% on which the Strategy was predicated. WG was also protecting schools budgets although the extent of the protection was as yet unclear. The Strategy had been based on there being no protection of school budgets. There had been no indication for the settlement in future years. In summary, the shortfall in efficiency savings identified for 2016/17 might not now be needed, however delivery of the £13.6m identified savings was essential. Council tax was set to increase by 5% in the Strategy and a 1% movement equated to £760k.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

It was proposed and seconded that the report be deferred given the uncertainties surrounding the settlement. The Group Accountant advised that it was important that Members commented on the proposed efficiency savings as these would need to be confirmed early in the New Year. Deferring the report would not allow this. Following a vote, the motion was defeated.

*(In accordance with CPR 16.5, Councillors S.L. Davies, T. Devichand and R. Thomas asked that their vote in favour of the motion be recorded.)*

It was asked if the managerial saving proposals of realignments in Leisure and Sports services had previously been brought to the Committee's attention. The Head of Leisure & Sport confirmed that they had over the last 2 – 3 years.

It was asked whether or not there was a proposal to amalgamate leisure facilities particularly within the countryside function. The Head of Sports & Leisure advised that the proposal to deliver certain functions via a Trust included sports and leisure facilities as well as theatres. The majority of countryside facilities would remain under the control of the Authority however consideration was being given to including the Ski Centre in Pembrey Country within the Trust. In response to an additional question, he reminded the Committee that it had considered a detailed report looking at management options for sports and leisure services last September. This had included the rationale for proposing a Trust in terms of cost benefits and income generation for services where there was market experience. The next steps were to develop a tender which could take 6 months or so and then to test the market. The final decision would rest with Elected Members.

It was asked if staff transferring into the proposed Trust under TUPE arrangements would have their terms and conditions protected, particularly in relation to zero hours contracts. The Head of Sports & Leisure stated that prior to the process being completed there would be a period of competitive dialogue during which these issues would be explored. The Authority's existing policies aim to steer away from zero hours contracts and any Trust would be required to join the Dyfed Pension Fund for any staff transferring over. It was also intended to ask any potential partners what they had done in the past with other authorities and also what their intention was for staff and workforce practice here. Another driver could be that potential partners may wish to bid for contracts elsewhere in the region and would therefore be seeking to develop positive relationships with staff and the authority as potential referees. It was not possible however to guarantee the terms and conditions of transferring staff in the future, just as there are no guarantees if the service were to stay 'in-house' with

the authority. A number of positive workshops had been held with staff and trade unions regarding a potential transfer and its implications, and further information was available to all staff via the Council's intranet site.

A question was asked about the level of research that had been done regarding trust models and their sustainability, particularly within such a competitive market as leisure. The Head of Sports & Leisure confirmed that a significant amount of research had been done through visiting and speaking to other authorities with trusts and using a consultant with expertise in the area to appraise the various options. There were examples of successful trusts elsewhere in Wales, in England and the majority of leisure services in Scotland were delivered through trusts. He reminded the Committee that the division had delivered significant savings over the last 5 years however the level needed from 2017/18 onwards meant that the facilities would not be sustainable under the current arrangements and the alternative may be closures or a significant reduction in opening hours.

It was asked if a subsidy would be required to support a trust model. The Head of Sports & Leisure advised that some facilities would always require subsidies given their nature and location. A trust model would reduce the subsidy level significantly as it would get 80% rate relief which equated to around £500k per annum for the whole of Leisure. It would also have more freedom to trade commercially which was needed in a competitive sector.

The latest position regarding the Archives service was requested. The Head of Sports & Leisure stated that a report had recently been considered by the Executive Board which had decided that the Archives should be retained in Carmarthen or within the county if possible. A tender process had been completed for the removal of collections for specialist cleaning by a company in Oxford and temporary storage in Glamorgan Archives. Options within the county and Carmarthen were being carefully considered with potential partners such as the University of Trinity Saint David. There was also some merit in having discussions on a regional basis in terms of identifying strategic leads and the digital service agenda.

Further information was requested in relation to the efficiency proposal within Minerals and Waste. The Head of Planning Services clarified that the service was being reviewed via the TIC process. Seven different agreements were currently in place, with inconsistencies in how information was obtained from other authorities and how payments were made. She would be meeting with all the authorities early in the New Year and was also aware of some other authorities who were interested in using the service. It was therefore important to understand the level of resources that was required to deliver it.

Forward Planning was referred to and it was asked what issues could affect this in the future. The Head of Planning Services advised that the Local Development Plan (LDP) adopted last year required review every 4 years to ensure it was still fit for purpose in terms of meeting needs. The new Planning Act required Welsh Government (WG) to produce a National Development Framework (NDF) for public consultation in 2017. The LDP would have to reflect the content of the NDF. There might also be Strategic Development Plans (SDP) in between to consider and plan cross border issues such as housing demand in an integrated way. WG had already suggested Cardiff and Swansea and surrounding counties as potentially needing a SDP (Carmarthen might therefore be included). She advised that authorities were able to make Expressions of Interest (EOI) for a SDP as of now however it would need a considerable amount of research to underpin the EOI.

It was asked what the impact of reducing grants to Women's Aid and Shelter would be given the importance of the work of both organisations. The Housing Services Manager advised that this was the third year of a planned reduction in grant that both

organisations were committed to. Both were also supported in other ways that were appropriate such as the co-location of Shelter in Eastgate which had resulted in closer working relationships.

Further information was requested in relation to the efficiency savings proposed for the mobile library service. The Head of Sports & Leisure stated that the provision would be largely retained and most of the savings were from reducing the cost of the vehicles. Replacing the current fleet with more agile and accessible vehicles was being considered.

It was noted that the Housing (Council Fund) budget estimates over the next 3 years remained largely static. It was asked if these were liable to change. The Housing Services Manager advised that these were conservative estimates as the service needed to understand the implications of the new Housing Act which had some WG grant funding at the moment. The Group Accountant added that the budget estimates reflected validation and any growth areas less the efficiency saving proposals over the next 3 years.

An update was requested in relation to Burry Port Harbour. The Head of Leisure & Sport stated that colleagues in the Environment Department were developing a brief for the dredging and other maintenance issues including the Harbour walls. They were also looking to appoint contractors via the framework to take this work forward. He would report the cost of the tender and timeline going forward. In response to an additional question, he confirmed that the mooring fees had been frozen for the last couple of years because of the access issues caused by the siltation of the Harbour.

It was noted that there were limited increases planned for fees within culture and heritage. The Head of Leisure & Sport advised that there was realistically little potential to increase fees for theatres in particular and also it was important not to set income targets too high in case they could not be met. Both charging and income targets had been challenged by the HoS, however, the Theatres Management team felt that the proposals were realistic and deliverable given the current market.

It was asked why some charges in leisure had not been implemented in the previous year. The Head of Leisure & Sport stated that some charges such as those in Pitch and Putt were the maximum and managers had discretion to reduce them for certain groups. In some cases they had not been fully implemented and this was being discussed further with the relevant site manager.

**RESOLVED to:**

**6.1 Receive the report**

**6.2 Endorse the charging digests.**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SCRUTINY 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th November 2015. The Interim Head of Financial Services advised that Welsh Government had announced the provisional settlement earlier that week (9th December) and that Carmarthenshire would see a 1% cut in budget rather than the 3.3% on which the Strategy was based. Whilst the settlement would mean an extra £7.5m for Carmarthenshire, most of this additional funding would be allocated to cover other requirements such the shortfall in efficiency savings and the recently agreed Employees Pay Offer. He added that the extent of the Welsh Government's protection of schools budgets was as yet unclear, even though the Council's strategy had been based on there being no protection of school budgets. The Director of Environment and the Public Health Services Manager also gave a brief overview of their respective service areas.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

Reference was made to the Welsh Government's settlement announcement and it was asked whether the figures outlined in the budget strategy would change and if so, would this not make consideration of the report irrelevant. The Interim Head of Financial Services strongly advised the Committee to consider and comment on the proposed efficiency savings and charging digests as delivery of the identified savings was essential and these would need to be confirmed early in the New Year. Deferring the report would not allow sufficient time for this.

Reference was made to the Environment Department's Policy & Performance Division and it was asked whether this, as an administrative function costing in excess of £900,000, should also be bearing significant efficiency savings when front-line services were being reduced or cut. The Director of Environment reminded the Committee that in order for the department to operate successfully, there would always be a need for a back-office function. However, there were always opportunities to make such functions more efficient and that this would be looked at as part of other corporate initiatives to rationalise back-office services, systems and infrastructure.

It was suggested that there was a dichotomy between the information presented in the report relating to public lighting and the information provided to members at the Environment departmental budget session earlier in the week. It was claimed that whilst the report stated that the proposal was to reduce operating costs without turning lights off, the information at the seminar indicated that the savings might not be achieved and would result in total shut-off of the public lighting system. The Street-Scene Manager clarified that the Welsh Government Invest to Save funding would be used to install LED lighting and timers for part-night illumination during the first two years. The scheme would then be evaluated to assess the extent of its success against expected outcomes. The Director of Environment added that the business case had been developed on the basis that the savings would be realised but an evaluation would still be required after two years.

It was asked whether the managed car pool system savings of £200,000 would be achieved if other departments did not sign up to the scheme and clarification was sought as to how the pool cars were monitored to prevent misuse. The Head of Transport & Engineering informed the Committee that staff mileage in the current year had reduced significantly and the proposal was to roll-out a managed pool car scheme per building/site across the Authority to assist with the savings target and this would impact on all departments. The business case included a proposal to fit the pool cars with a GPS tracking system to monitor performance and active monitoring of mileage was required. Approximately 75% of the Authority's existing vehicle fleet was already fitted with tracking devices.

Reference was made to the proposal for charging for post-16 transport and it was suggested that it should not be included in the budget report prior to the findings of the recent consultation. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services reminded the Committee that this was included in the proposals as it had been passed as part of the 2015/16 budget by County Council in February 2015. The Head of Transport & Engineering acknowledged elected members' feelings on this issue but reminded the Committee that officers were seeking to sustain the service for a modest charge of circa £5.60 per week and that following the extensive consultation, a report would be presented to elected members in due course. The Director of Environment noted that if the charge was not introduced, there would be a £516,000 gap which would need to be found. This might lead to a removal of the service completely. The proposal presented, sought to avoid this.

It was suggested that the annual budgetary proposals were about what the Council wanted rather than what residents needed and that there was no reference to opportunities to income generate. The Director of Environment noted that the proposals did include some income-generating proposals but it was an option that should be given more consideration.

It was asked what alternatives were in place for schools who faced not only cuts to their budgets but the loss of a school crossing patrol operative. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services reminded the Committee that assessments were made for all schools and where a road was deemed safe and a patrol was not required, such positions would not be re-advertised. However, no existing patrols were being removed. The Head of Transport & Engineering informed the Committee that where there was a vacancy, the Authority would always seek to recruit and when there had been difficulties covering absence due to illness or leave, schools and Police Community Support Officers had been contacted to

provide assistance. In response to an additional suggestion that teaching staff could undertake crossing patrol duties, the Head of Transport & Engineering confirmed that the Authority's insurance would indemnify school staff if they were required to undertake such duties on behalf of the Authority. He added that the assessments for the respective school sites (a Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents assessment template), could be made available to local members if required.

Concern was expressed at the effects of global warming and reference made to the recent flooding in Cumbria. It was also suggested that the lack of specialist vehicles to maintain and empty gullies and culverts could also lead to unnecessary flooding in some areas of the county. The Street-Scene Manager clarified that the proposals outlined in the report would affect the provision of new works, but much of the County's flood defence infrastructure has been upgraded to modern standards over the past 10-15 years. Routine maintenance works on the existing defences would continue to be prioritised and the further development of flood risk plans would allow the Authority to target resources where required.

It was asked whether the current task and finish review of car parking charges would have any impact on the proposed 20p increase in car parking charges, outlined in the report. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services stated that this was also included in the proposals as it had been passed as part of the 2015/16 budget by County Council. Upon taking on her portfolio, she had requested that this not be implemented in 2015/16 and wished to wait for the Task and Finish Group to make its proposals.

Serious concerns were expressed at the state of the county's highways and bridges, the backlog of work that faced the Authority and its continued poor performance in respect of key performance indicators. It was also suggested that the Authority would be open to litigation due to poor maintenance of its infrastructure and it was asked when the corporate manslaughter development session, requested in a previous meeting, would be provided for elected members. The Executive Board Member for Technical Services acknowledged the concerns but reminded the Committee that Carmarthenshire did have the second longest highway network in Wales and that whilst it appeared that highway services were being reduced, officers were seeking to work in more effective and efficient ways in order to minimise the effect on these front-line services. The Assistant Consultant informed the Committee that its request for a development session had been included on the Elected Members' Development Programme but that a date had yet to be finalised. He agreed to clarify this with the Learning & Development Unit.

In response to a question on the tendering exercise for future waste and recycling services, the Street-Scene Manager informed the Committee that a significant



amount of work had been undertaken to date, especially in conjunction with the Authority's Legal Services. Whilst no further details could be disclosed at this stage, the interim contract with CWM Environmental was still in place and he assured members that progress was being made with respect to scoping and preparatory work to provide valuable information to inform the debate with regard to the best solution for the future.

Concern was expressed at the potential 25% reduction in the Sustainable Waste Management (SWM) Grant and how this would impact on the Authority's ability to meet the Welsh Government's expectations in relation to reducing waste and increasing recycling. The Interim Head of Financial Services noted that at the time of writing, the forecast had been up to 25% but recent indications were now of a 6.5% reduction (approximately £250,000) for Carmarthenshire.

It was suggested that the information provided in relation to the pumping stations in Appendix A(ii) was insufficient and further detail was requested. The Director of Environment informed the Committee that officers had since been in discussions with Welsh Water which would now carry out the work on behalf of the Authority and meant that these pressures would not now be as great. Discussions were on-going but more details could be provided for the Committee in due course.

It was asked why the Authority was continuing to fund CCTV operations as members were of the understanding that this service had ceased. The Community Safety Manager reminded the Committee that whilst the Executive Board had decided to cease 'live' monitoring of the cameras, it had made a commitment to cover on-going costs relating to the operation of the cameras, namely the electricity and links. The Police were able to review the recordings taken by the cameras should they be required in conjunction with a particular incident. However, the Police's contribution in the future had yet to be determined due to a Force review of the future use of CCTV. The Authority did not have any contractual agreements with the cameras' manufacturers/suppliers but a legal agreement between itself and the Police was being drafted in order to clarify the roles, responsibilities and financial contribution of each organisation in the future.

Reference was made to licence fee increases as it had been noted in a previous meeting that these would be reviewed. The Public Health Services Manager reminded the Committee that due to previous legal challenges brought against other local authorities, the Authority could only charge fees to cover the cost of its work and was not permitted to make a profit. She also reminded the Committee that this was the subject of the next item on the agenda.

Clarification was sought as to the funding prognosis for the Bwcabus service and its future operations. The Head of Transport & Engineering acknowledged that this was a flagship service and dialogue with the Welsh Government was on-going in order to secure future funding. A detailed report was also being prepared for the relevant minister.

In response to a question about fees for sports pitches, the Executive Board Member for Technical Services informed the Committee that a meeting between officers and sports clubs representatives was scheduled for January. She believed that agreements had been reached with most clubs although there were some difficulties with other clubs which had declining memberships (e.g. lawn bowls).

Clarity was sought as to whether vets inspection costs were included within the proposed dog breeding and riding establishment fees. The Public Health Services Manager stated that there might be specific contracts in place with certain veterinary providers for these services but that she would clarify this for the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received.

## **Social Care and Health Scrutiny 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th November 2015. It was advised that Welsh Government had announced the provisional settlement earlier that week (9th December) and that Carmarthenshire would see a 1% cut in budget rather than the 3.3% on which the Strategy was based. The Welsh Government was also protecting schools budgets although the extent of the protection was as yet unclear. The Strategy had been based on there being no protection of school budgets. In summary, the shortfall in efficiency savings identified for 2016/17 might not be needed however, delivery of the £13.6m identified savings was essential. Council tax was set to increase by 5% in the Strategy and a 1% movement equated to £760,000. The Director of Community Services also gave a brief overview of the Social Care Service area.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of the report:

It was asked how the Authority addressed schools with budget deficits. The Interim Head of Financial Services informed the Committee that in such circumstances, a school would be required to produce a plan to show how it was intending to address its budget deficit. The Director of Community Services noted that very often, schools budgets were affected by falling pupil ratios and it was essential that schools had effective and appropriate financial arrangements in place. The Authority did have powers to intervene in certain situations. In response to an additional question regarding the uncertainty around protecting school budgets, the Interim Head of Financial Services noted that the Welsh Government was usually quite explicit about how it wished budgets to be protected and so forth. However, following the recent announcement, there was no further guidance on this matter. A meeting of senior local authority officers and the Welsh Government had been held and further discussions were planned in order to come to an agreement and gain clarity on the matter.

An explanation for the reduction in grants to voluntary organisations in relation to Older People & Physical Disabilities and Learning Disabilities Services was sought. The Director of Community Services informed the Committee that the reduction was in relation to the way in which the Authority was now buying provision from these organisations. The Authority was now moving to spot contracts where it paid for the services it used rather than via block contracts and was a far more efficient method of procuring services. In response to a suggestion that these reductions could be spread over three years, the Interim Head of Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Services noted that this could be considered but informed the Committee that some of the reductions had been planned for some time, one example being the Llanelli & District Gateway Club which was due to close in the near future. Other reductions such as the £65,000 for Mencap had been built-in to recently agreed grant funding. The Director of Community Services reassured the Committee that the reductions in grants did not mean that the affected organisations would close and was part of an on-going efficiency drive and that officers had been working closely with the relevant groups.

Clarification was sought with regards to progress in implementing alternative service models for the Local Authority's Residential Homes for Older People either by externalising the service or developing a Local Authority Trading Company model. The Director of Community Services reminded the Committee that this had been approved by County Council following consideration of the Carmarthenshire Vision for Sustainable Services for Older People 2015-2025, at its meeting in October 2015. A business plan was being developed for what was a complex proposal and would

be presented to the Committee later in 2016. In response to a further question, the Director advised the Committee that there were a variety of models that could be adopted as well as a number of freedoms delegated to the arms length entity by the Authority, which would remain as the main shareholder. He assured the Committee that the detailed report would provide members with a range of options for its consideration.

In response to a query regarding the reasons for the reduction in private sector residential home placements, the Head of Integrated Services noted that the Delayed Transfers of Care performance did not mean that the Local Authority was not providing social care and that there were often health-related problems which prevented transferring older people from hospital beds back in to their homes or other residential settings. She added that the Transfer of Care & Advice and Liaison Service (TOCALs) provided a real opportunity to work with hospital staff to further progress and improve performance in this area. The Welsh Government had also informed Health Boards that it expected to see improvements in discharge planning.

In response to concerns expressed at the proposed increase in charges for Meals on Wheels, the Director for Community Services reminded the Committee that the increase was not about closing the service but about cost recovery and ensuring that funding to provide this service was not taken from other service areas. The Director also reminded the Committee that the reality was that the demand for this service was changing significantly. Many individuals, who may have previously received meals in their homes, were now buying frozen meals which could be heated at a time of their choosing. Officers were now working with the WRVS (Royal Voluntary Service) who had been tasked by the Executive Board Member for Social Care & Health to look at how the service could be enhanced to cater for more than just meal delivery, with a special focus on preventing loneliness.

Following further discussion regarding the proposed increase to charges for Meals on Wheels (Appendix Ai) and Community Meals (Appendix C), it was suggested that increasing these charges across three years be explored, rather than introducing it in 2016/17. The Committee agreed to this proposal.

It was asked whether the larger national voluntary organisations operating within the county could operate services by sub-contracting through smaller local groups. The Director of Community Services acknowledged that this was a way in which smaller local groups could be safeguarded and supported and that the Authority had a role to play in ensuring that this was included in any procurement exercise. However, it was often the case that voluntary groups had seen each other as competitors rather than seeking to work together to offer the best services to the county's residents.

**RESOLVED** that:

7.1 The Corporate Budget Strategy for 2016/17 – 2018/19 be received.

7.2 The Charging Digest for the Social Care & Health Department be endorsed.

7.3 The option for spreading the proposed increases in Meals and Wheels and Community Meals across three years, be explored.

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

The Committee considered the Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 (Appendix A) which had been endorsed by the Executive Board for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th of November 2015. It was advised that Welsh Government (WG) had announced the provisional settlement on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December and that Carmarthenshire would see a 1% cut in budget rather than the 3.3% on which the Strategy was predicated. This equated to an additional £7.5m for the 2016/17 budget however this also included the Outcome Agreement Grant. WG had

funded £35m to protect education and £21m to protect social care on an all Wales basis which equated to £2.1m and £1.3m respectively for Carmarthenshire. It was still unclear what the protection of school budgets entailed. Eleven grants had not yet been confirmed however the reduction in the Waste Grant (now the Single Environment Grant) was far less than anticipated at 6% rather than the 25-50% which was previously indicated by the Minister. In summary, the deficit in efficiency savings identified for 2016/17 would not now be needed, however delivery of the £13.6m identified savings was required.

Concern was expressed about the timing of the WG announcement of the final settlement in early March, given the need to set the level of Council Tax by 11<sup>th</sup> of March. It was asked what might be the impact of any variations in the final settlement. The Director of Corporate Services advised that this was difficult to answer. A means of accommodating minor adjustments were being planned for and WG officers had previously indicated that they were not anticipating much movement. The picture would be clearer in early February following the end of the consultation period on 20<sup>th</sup> of January. The overall timescales and the lateness of the announcements were linked to the Westminster Comprehensive Spending Review.

Disappointment was expressed that the protection of education was unclear. The Director of Corporate Services stated that our Strategy is to plan to passport the £2.1m onto schools which would reduce the efficiency savings they were expected to deliver in 2016/17 to £3.4m. The Chief Executive advised that he was representing Local Government in dialogue with WG about the protection of education. It was his understanding that all local authorities were planning to pass their share of the £35m onto schools. There was also ongoing dialogue about potentially including £90m specific education grants in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which would mean £5.4m more for Carmarthenshire. He added that 4 rural authorities had suffered the highest cuts under the provisional settlement and WG was proposing a rural deprivation grant of £5m to assist them.

It was noted that the benchmarking of support services across Wales had been referred to in the member budget seminars. An update was requested. The Director of Corporate Services stated that the Regional Treasurers Group of 6 local authorities was working through the KPMG report commissioned by WG to consider the reasons for any variations. It was however some months from conclusion.

The Charging Digest was referred to and it was asked why some fees had not increased. The ACE Regeneration & Policy advised that generally increases were based on inflation however some within her remit were statutory fees, whilst others were set on a market basis. The Director of Corporate Services added that the general policy was that fees should be increased at a minimum in line with inflation unless there was a justified reason not to, for example, the level of inflation was sometimes so low that the administrative cost of implementing an increase outweighed the benefit.

Further information was requested in relation to the new charge for payroll overpayment invoicing of external organisations. The Interim Head of Financial Services advised that that the charge would be applied where organisations had not notified payroll of transfers or terminations.

**RESOLVED to:**

**6.1 Accept the report.**

**6.2 Endorse the Charging Digest.**

## **7) SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015**

The Interim Head of Financial Service addressed the Forum and circulated a report entitled "Revenue Budget Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19". The Executive Board, in September 2015, received a report on the Revenue Budget Outlook for 2016/17 to 2018/19 which appraised members of the financial outlook and the proposals for taking forward the budget preparation for the 3 year period.

### **Current Medium Term Financial Plan**

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
<b>Council Tax Rise</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Efficiencies Required (Schools)</b>	<b>£18.2m (£7.4m)</b>	<b>£13.8m (£6.5m)</b>
<b>Welsh Government Funding</b>	<b>£244.15m</b>	<b>£236.09m</b>

### **Forward Financial Plan**

#### **WG Settlement Assumptions**

- Comprehensive spending review due 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015
- Provisional settlement 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015.
- WG setting final budget 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- Final settlement 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016
- Council Tax setting meeting 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016
- 1 year settlement figures
- Outlook reflects annual 3.3% reductions in the WG settlement (£8.6m in 2016/17).

#### **Headline Figures**

Forecasted overspend at Departmental level - £2.3m

#### **Main Validations (1)**

- General inflation 0.6% (Yrs 16/17); 1.4% (Yrs 17/18); 1.8% (Yrs 18/19)
- Pay Awards: 1% per annum
- Fuel: -12.5% (Yrs 16/17); 3% per annum
- Energy Costs 3% per annum

#### **Main Validations (2)**

- National Insurance rebate of 3.4% for staff in pension funds removed in 2016/17: £4.1m
- Auto Enrolment from April 2017: £1.6m
- The Teachers Pension Scheme – rate increased from 14.1% to 16.4% from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. Additional £575k cost in 2016-17.
- Council Tax modelled at 5% increase per annum.

A copy of the power point presentation will be circulated to Forum members.

The Interim Head of Financial Services was thanked for his presentation and attendance at the meeting.

The Chief Education Officer addressed the Forum and shared the information discussed at the Members Budget Consultation meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> November regarding School Budgets.

### **Schools Funding**

- Last year for WG funding protection for schools 2015/16
- Current proposals assume no service protection going forward
- Target saving for schools:  
2016-17 £5.5m (4.9%)  
2017-18 £6.0m (5.5%)  
2018-19 £6.7m (6.4%)

**Total: £18.280m**

The Chief Education Officer informed the Forum that further discussions will be undertaken regarding efficiency savings:-

- Benchmarking exercises – teachers; support staff, TLRs;
- Back office remodelling
- Collaboration
- Supply insurance and cover
- Impact on EVR/Redundancy budget
- HR advice and support
- Impact on Service Level Agreements
- Procurement
- Protection for small schools for 1<sup>st</sup> year

The Chief Education Officer will provide all schools with a copy of his power point presentation

The Director of Education and Children stated that it is inevitable that money will be taken out of the system. All schools will be required to work collaboratively to reach the savings required.

The Head of Ysgol Bro Banw asked if information had been received regarding the statutory Regulations relating to the Foundation Phase. The Chief Education Officer informed the Forum that he is attending the Ministers Annual Meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> November and will be asking this question at that meeting.

The Chief Education Officer will update Forum members.

## **8) CONSULTATION MEETING WITH THE TRADES UNIONS**

### **Corporate Employee Relations Forum - Budget Consultation 22 October 2015**

Present: Caroline Green (CG), GMB Branch Secretary  
Mark Evans (ME), UNISON Branch Secretary  
Mark Preece (MP) UNITE Branch Secretary  
Chris Moore (CM) Director of Corporate Services (part meeting)  
Paul Thomas, (PT) Assistant Chief Executive (part meeting)  
Robert Jones-Young (RY), Deputy HR Manager

The Director of Corporate Services referred to the Preliminary Executive Board Report (14/9/15) - Revenue Budget Outlook 16/17 to 18/19 - which had been circulated in advance of the CERF meeting.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that WG provisional budget would not be released until 8<sup>th</sup> December, two months later than is usual. Assumption made that budget will reduce by 3.3%

Updated report to be taken to Executive Board on 16 November which will trigger round of consultation with stakeholders.

The Director of Corporate Services estimated that £40 million of savings would need to be made over the next three years.

Assumption made that, unless Welsh Government confirm a level of protection for schools, education budget would be reduced in line with other services.

Trade unions considered that there are areas where efficiency savings can be made and that they have highlighted these previously eg standby

MP questioned the use of NPS when it is believed that purchases can be made locally at a lower cost.

The Director of Corporate Services acknowledged the concerns in respect of NPS and is aware that some other authorities have similar concerns. The Director of Corporate Services thought it likely that a report would be provided for Corporate Management Team in the near future.

### **Corporate Employee Relations Forum - Budget Consultation 22 January 2016**

Present: Carmarthenshire CC  
Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services  
Paul Thomas Assistant Chief Executive  
Robert Young Deputy HR Manager  
Dylan Jones Schools Finance Manager

Unions  
Mark Evans Unison  
Mark Preece Unite  
Caroline Greene GMB

The Director of Corporate Services stated that the first consultation exercise had taken place at the end of October 2015 where an overview of the financial outlook was given.

At this time, the indications were that the Authority would face a funding reduction of 3.3%, however the publication of the provisional settlement in December 2015 stated that Carmarthenshire CC would face a reduction of 1%, a difference equating to £7 million. Although this settlement figure is better than originally expected, it will present a significant challenge once inflationary factors are considered. Welsh Government have only provided a one year indication and also there are 11 grants not declared as yet. Welsh Government have continued to protect schools at 1% above their budget. The Director of Corporate Services went on to explain that additional items such as the Apprenticeship levy, the new rate of National Insurance for those in an occupational pension scheme and growth items make the task of delivering these savings even more difficult.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that the Final Settlement is due to be published on 2 March 2016, which would be after the Authority had set its budget for 2016-17. The situation could also become even more difficult as the Welsh Government are currently looking at 'rural flooring' to ease the impact on those authorities hardest hit by funding reduction, and possibly reallocate funding between authorities by the Final Settlement.

Unison re-iterated their stance regarding a 'no cuts budget' and that the budget they provided last year would still apply.

In response to comments made regarding the way the consultation was carried out and concerns that the responses do not reflect a true view of the public, the Director of Corporate Services and the Assistant Chief Executive stated that any feedback would be welcomed that could improve response and capture a greater audience.

### **CONSULTATION WITH TOWN & COMMUNITY COUNCILS 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

Cllr Jenkins introduced the discussion by explaining the Council's financial position in broad terms, stressing there are hard times ahead with further reductions in the money available to councils over the coming few years.

Chris Moore, Director of Corporate Services, then gave a detailed presentation. The report that went to the Council's Executive Board was circulated for reference. A question was raised in respect of the lack of note made of consulting with town and community councils over the budget. The Director of Corporate Services explained that the report was considered in advance of the consultation exercise. Subsequent reports later in the process will reflect consultation such as this meeting.

The Director of Corporate Services explained that the UK Government position has implications for Wales and these effects can then 'knock on' to affect Welsh local government. The July budget signalled a continuation of 'austerity' policies. The UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was concluded fairly recently. Due to levels of protection for health and education, the amount allocated to Wales was better than expected (an increase of 0.7%). The Director of Corporate Services suggested the reduction for Carmarthenshire CC may not be as bad as anticipated, though the provisional settlement for local government was pending tomorrow (9<sup>th</sup> December).

The Director of Corporate Services explained the difficulty in agreeing the budget, since the actual settlement for the Council is not expected until March, yet the Council must agree its budget by 11<sup>th</sup> March at the latest (1982 Act statutory deadline for precepting authorities). He explained that a 1% variance in the amount from WG had a value of £2.5 million, compared to £760,000 for a 1% variance for Council Tax. £51 million in savings have been delivered by the Council over the last 5 years, with further savings necessary until at least 2020, due to austerity policies at a UK level.

The Director of Corporate Services went on to describe the impact of education and social care spending. Education is the largest area of spend (stable), followed by social care (pressures due to demographic changes). When budgets overall are reducing, over a period of time, less money is available to deliver all the other Council services. Should WG protect education spending, the impact on other services will be greater.

The Council's financial projections are based on a number of considerations, including:

- 5% Council Tax rise (maximum)
- 0.6% inflation
- 1% pay award
- 3.4% due to removal of 3.4% National Insurance rebate
- Financial impact of the new auto-enrolment system with respect to pensions



- Pension increases for teachers

It is currently unclear how the £40 million promised by WG for education will affect the situation. Council departments have worked to identify proposals for saving money over the coming three years. The 'policy' proposals amount to £7.4 million (2016-17); £8.2 million (2017-18); and £8.6 million (2018-19).

Following the overview, the Director of Corporate Services explained the Council's approach. Its' priorities are: rural development; job creation; regeneration; and protecting front-line services. Proposals for saving have been developed as illustrated in the consultation survey (copies were circulated to assist the discussion).

A number of comments were made. A question concerned the level of reserves held by schools and whether these could assist the Council's budget. The Director of Corporate Services indicated the total reserve was around £5 million and, although difficulties would exist in the Council claiming reserves, there is an expectation that schools have plans in place to spend the money. In addition, School Improvement Officers are working with schools to address their use of reserves and it was suggested that community councillors take the message concerning the use of reserves back to their school governing bodies.

There was discussion over the Council's overall reserves. The Director of Corporate Services advised that these amounted to £72 million (earmarked for specific purposes) and £8.5 million (general), and were slightly lower than Wales Audit Office-recommended levels. Capital is being used to help fund the Modernising Educational Provision programme, amongst other things.

A discussion ensued on potential impacts of cuts of school budgets on education standards. It was suggested that cuts would have an impact upon staffing levels and that standards could be put at risk. Cllr Jenkins related the view that all the reductions under consideration were undesirable, but that choices need to be made. The governing body of Ysgol Dyfryn Amman, for example, were discussing significant reductions. The Director of Corporate Services informed the meeting that discussions were taking place with head teachers and there was general agreement that the £5.5 million saving proposed for next year was achievable. Cllr Stephens stressed the need for schools to consider all options in addressing savings, including levels of federation. It was commented that there was a real risk to smaller rural schools.

The issue of achieving savings through collaboration was raised. The Director of Corporate Services assured the meeting that avenues were being actively pursued and cited the examples of joint posts with the health service, and a joint head of IT, with Pembrokeshire County Council. It depends on the function in question, though a great deal of consideration is being given to collaborating wherever possible. Collaboration was also cited in response to a question concerning preparedness for local government reorganisation.

The matter of public interest in the salaries of senior staff was discussed. The reduction in the number of directors and heads of service over recent years was explained. Cllr Jenkins related that public attendees of the budget road shows had been almost exclusively concerned with this topic. He pointed out contractual obligations, which would arise should senior staff be made redundant, work against moves in that direction.

There was discussion over the proposal to reduce support for organisations providing benefits advice, at a time when the service is much needed. Cllr Jenkins commented that there is duplication of benefits advice which needs addressing. Cllrs Jenkins and Stephens assured the meeting that Executive Board is primarily concerned with protecting vulnerable people.

The meeting then moved to consider specific savings proposals, as set out in the budget consultation survey.

Cllr Jenkins observed that the information in relation to the proposals could have been more detailed and committed to making improvements in subsequent years. Cllr Stephens highlighted the importance of the meeting as an opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation with community councillors.

School meals – agreement that the increase was reasonable and necessary.

School breakfast clubs. It was explained that some parents use these as ‘babysitting’ for their children, whereas their intended purpose is to provide a breakfast to all pupils. Breakfast could be supplied in a shorter period, involving less time. It was suggested that there may be sufficient demand to continue the non-breakfast element of provision on a commercial basis.

Special educational needs (SEN). Cllr Stephens explained that the Education and Children’s Services department is expecting a decline in expenditure on SEN. Some concerns were raised, with some members suggesting the broader trend is in increase in the need for SEN provision.

Youth services. In reference to the use of the Quay Centre, it was suggested that greater collaboration with Dr Mz could be beneficial.

Members of the meeting considered that there was insufficient information to support comment on the educational psychology and short breaks proposals.

Libraries. The Director of Corporate Services explained that the proposal concerned updating the service to provide a better facility in a more cost effective way. The mobile library would be updated to include IT facilities and other services. Some smaller branch libraries would be closed as part of the proposal. It was suggested that community buildings could house books, in order to help sustain the service. Each collection of books could be refreshed periodically by the Council.

Home care service. The proposal involves considering the development of an arm’s length organisation, which could provide the service at a lower cost and could attract grants. The Director of Corporate Services clarified that the company could operate as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council – according to the current arrangement in relation to Cwm Environmental. There was agreement that an arrangement in which the Council retained oversight was strongly preferred.

Meals on wheels. Cllr Stephens described the service and explained that take up is in decline, partly due to commercial operators, such as Wiltshire Farm Foods. A lack of volunteers to deliver meals is a key constraint on the service. A comment was made concerning community luncheon clubs who also undertook home delivery.

Flood defence. It was noted that the proposed saving was very large in comparison to the overall budget. Some affected community councils would oppose the reduction. The Director of Corporate Services explained that the proposal has resulted from a reduction of specific funding from Welsh Government (WG).

Highway maintenance. Again, it was noted that the proposed saving was very large against the overall budget. Cllr Stephens asked communities to consider the help they may be able to give. Cllr Evans explained that she understood the frontline nature of this service, but that her department needed to take its share of the cuts. A number of community councils commented on how they could assist in identifying works of local priority, which could help ensure the best use of limited resources.

Cleansing services. It was asked that the impact of increased litter on tourism be given weight. Some representatives indicated that their community council may be prepared to fund street cleaning within their areas.

Car parks. It was generally agreed that the increased charges could be considered.