

For: Council

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Agenda Item: 10

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## FIT FOR THE FUTURE - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION EXERCISE

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report updates Council on progress with our plans to involve the community, Members and partners to inform future phases of the Fit for the Future programme. A Member Working Group was established in autumn 2013 for this purpose and the Group, advised by the Staffordshire Intelligence Hub, has been considering various methodologies for engaging with local people. The preferred method identified is to use a questionnaire survey.
- 1.2 A final draft questionnaire is attached at **Appendix A** and approval for this is sought. The methods for distributing the questionnaire are described below; the intention is to secure a representative sample of the adult resident population by using several methodologies.
- 1.3 The Group has also been keen to involve partners in the process to generate wider public and stakeholder input into our future decision making. Lichfield's District Board has been involved in this process

### 2. Recommendation

Members are recommended to

- 2.1 Approve the final draft questionnaire attached at **Appendix A**
- 2.2 Approve the methodological approach to the exercise as set out in section 3.4

### 3. Background

- 3.1 As Members will be aware, the District Council continues to face a challenging budgetary position; in February, Full Council was advised that there is a budget shortfall of £3.143 million between 14/15 and 16/17 and more difficult decisions will be needed in order to ensure a balanced budget can be delivered in future years. Consequently, the Fit for the Future programme will continue through specific Service Reviews (already underway) and new ideas for increasing income and identifying efficiencies and savings. We want to make sure that the proposals we develop as part of the next phases of F4F take into consideration the views of local people, councillors and partners; this report focuses on our proposals for conducting a community consultation exercise.
- 3.2 A briefing paper outlining our proposals for consultation and scrutiny was circulated to all Members in October 2013, attached at **Appendix B**, which subsequently led to the formation of a Consultation Working Group consisting of representatives from both Political Groups plus officers from the Council and from Staffordshire Intelligence Hub as a technical adviser. The Working Group has met on 4 occasions; its terms of reference are attached at **Appendix C**

## **Principles**

3.3 After a broad discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches to engagement and consultation, the Working Group has focused its discussion on designing a questionnaire survey which would be administered using various methodologies. The Group has looked at questionnaire surveys and resulting reports produced by other local authorities, notably Wychavon and South Oxfordshire to inform this process. The principles underling the survey include:

- the survey and its associated communication plan, should inform and educate the public in an open and honest way about the purpose and functions of the Council and the financial challenges which we continue to face
- care needs to be taken with the formulation of questions to ensure that they are easily understood and will provide us with the information that we need; the questionnaire should be short and quick to complete
- the survey will make a distinction between those services we have to provide by law (statutory) and those we choose to provide (discretionary). Further to this it will ask people to let us know which services they value, which they feel we could cut back and which they feel we could stop.
- a symbolic indication of the costs of the services the council provides (both statutory and discretionary) will be included as part of the questionnaire (£ small budget - £££ large budget)
- a selection of possible saving/income generating ideas will be included in the questionnaire and respondents will be asked to tell us whether they do or don't support the ideas.
- a clear indication of amounts of extra income or savings each idea could generate will be included as part of the questionnaire.
- the ideas will relate to proposals that the council could consider taking forward and could practically deliver on, however the inclusion of the ideas will not indicate that each idea will be taken forward and this will be made clear in the questionnaire.
- a balance needs to be struck between ensuring residents feel it is worthwhile to respond to the questionnaire without leading them to expect that all proposals which receive public support will be implemented. At this stage, the questionnaire will contain ideas, rather than formal plans and indeed, some may not actually be worthwhile when formal business cases are developed.
- the survey will not give 'the answer' to our financial challenge because other factors will also need to be taken into account, but it will help us to make informed decisions
- feedback should be provided to those who have taken part (where this is possible) and a report of findings made available to the public

## **Methodology**

3.4 In order to maximize take up of the Survey and ensure it is representative of the community, it is proposed that several methodologies are employed including:

- Electronic copies of the survey will be made available on line via the Voice It page of the District Council's website
- Electronic copies of the survey will also be circulated to partners for dissemination through their outlets / to their customers
- Hard copies of the survey will be placed at public outlets such as the Council House reception

- Paper copies of the survey will be given out by those elected Members who feel able to support the exercise; this will be an informal process whereby Members can use routine contacts with local residents (e.g. advice surgeries) as an opportunity to publicise the survey and encourage take up.
- InTouch Council Magazine; the questionnaire will be included in the spring/summer edition of InTouch which is circulated to the majority of households across the District. A freepost address (which will be included on the final version of the questionnaire) following approval by Council will encourage returns.
- Face to face interviews to be administered by canvassers; 200 street interviews are proposed which will help to counteract the self selecting nature of other methods outlined above which could skew the results

### **Stakeholder Input**

- 3.5 The Working Group was keen to consider fully the role of partners in this exercise both in terms of their views as a recipient of a questionnaire and their assistance in promoting and enabling the consultation exercise. Consequently, a report was considered by the Lichfield District Board in March in order to secure their input to the process.
- 3.6 In seeking to identify other opportunities to gather community views, arrangements have been made for the Cabinet Member to attend the next meeting of Voluntary Voice (which is attended by representatives from a wide range of voluntary and community organisations which between them have extensive contact with local people, especially the hard to reach). This will be used as an opportunity to further disseminate the questionnaire.

### **Communication and publicity**

- 3.7 We have developed a communication plan as it will be important to alert residents to the opportunity to complete the Survey; key points include:
- working closely with the Lichfield Mercury, the Lichfield Gazette and other local newspapers to publicise the survey and opportunities to get involved, as well as start the debate about what money we have, where we spend it, how we bring money in and how we can save money
  - Publication of the survey in Intouch – the community newspaper which reaches about 70% of local households
  - PR campaign targeted at radio and newspapers
  - Partner promotion via Headlines
  - Direct partner promotion via email campaign from key officers to partners

### **Timetable**

- 3.8 The key next steps are as follows:
- Full Council to sign off the consultation approach and questionnaire
  - Advance publicity during first half of May
  - Questionnaire Survey to 'go live' from 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 23<sup>rd</sup> June
  - Results to be analysed during July
  - Draft report to be made available in late July

Dissemination of the final report during the summer

#### **4. Consultation**

The District Council has been supported by the Staffordshire Intelligence Hub in order to ensure that the questionnaire is robust and is likely to provide the information that we require. The results will be analysed through the Hub in order to ensure that the results are independently validated.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

A maximum budget of £8k is available for this consultation exercise. The majority of the cost will include:

- Employing door to door canvassers who will administer 200 of the questionnaires (estimated to cost £5k)
- Using the services of Staffordshire Intelligence Hub to analyse the results of the survey and produce and present a report of the findings

# District services questionnaire

# Your view

Give your views to help safeguard the local services that are most important to you

Every year, we spend over £10 million to deliver a range of services, from leisure centres and planning, to emptying bins and supporting local businesses. We've been cutting costs for a number of years as part of Fit for the Future - our current savings programme - and have already saved £4.8 million in recent years. Due to further cuts in our funding from Government we need to save at least another £2.4 million by 2016. To do this our councillors will face some difficult decisions about which services we should continue to provide, what we can cut or reduce, and which services we could charge for to raise more income.

We ask for your views every year, and the responses we've had to date have been used to shape the services we currently provide. However, because our financial position has become so much more pressured, we need to ask for your views again to help councillors make the right decisions. Your views will help shape the decisions councillors will make next year about our future budgets.

To give your views, send your completed questionnaire to Fit for the Future Questionnaire Returns, **FREEPOST XXX**, Lichfield District Council, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield WS13 6YY by 5pm on 23 June 2014.

You can also fill it in online at [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/fitforthefuture](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/fitforthefuture)



## WIN, WIN, WIN

Fill and return the questionnaire to be in with a chance to win:



See back of questionnaire for more details

We have to deliver some services by law - this includes things like emptying bins and checking the cleanliness of local restaurants (these are called statutory services).

### Q1 Please tell us about the services we **have** to provide

Is each service below **important and you use it, important but you don't use it or not important**. If you don't have a view, tick **don't know**.

This costs*	Important	Important, but don't use	Not important	Don't know
£££	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
££	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
££	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£££	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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££	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£££	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\*Key: £ small net budget (up to £50,000) ££ moderate net budget (between £50,000 and £200,000) £££ large net budget between (£200,000 and £900,000)

We deliver a range of discretionary services because they improve our district and support businesses and jobs. We could choose to cut back or stop these services.

## Q2 Please tell us about the services we choose to provide

Which services should we **protect**, **cut back** or **stop**. If you don't have a view, tick **don't know**.

This costs*	Protect	Cut back	Stop	Don't know
£££ We empty your brown bin and compost your organic waste.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£ We collect big items of household waste, like sofas & fridges for a charge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£ We provide a waste and recycling service to businesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ We promote and support town and city centres to boost footfall into shops and businesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ We help attract tourists to support local businesses and jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ We provide business support and advice and encourage new businesses into the area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£ We provide car parks at a range of locations and our wardens monitor parking in streets and car parks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£ We provide scooters to city centre visitors with limited mobility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ We provide and maintain public toilets at a number of locations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ Our customer services desk is open 8.45am – 5.15pm, Monday - Friday.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£££ Our telephone lines are open 8.45am – 5.15pm, Monday - Friday.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£ We issue 'intouch' magazine twice a year to keep you up to date.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£ We give advice to help people keep warm and reduce their energy bills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ We provide advice to protect and improve historic buildings and conservation areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
££ We manage countryside and areas of natural beauty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£££ We manage some parks and open spaces in Burntwood and Lichfield.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£££ We run three leisure centres and some outdoor sports pitches in the district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£££ We financially support the Lichfield Garrick and its community work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Q3 How often do you use Lichfield District Council facilities?

Please tell us approximately how often you use the following facilities we provide.

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Less Often	Never
Burntwood Leisure Centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friary Grange Leisure Centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
King Edward VI Leisure Centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lichfield Garrick Theatre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council run car parks in Lichfield City	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council run car parks in Chasetown	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lichfield City public toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burntwood public toilets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We've come up with some ideas that could save us money or generate income (which would mean we could cut fewer services). We have not taken any decisions, nor will the ideas necessarily happen, or indeed prove possible once further research has taken place. That said, we're keen to know if you support the ideas before we carry out further work.

## Q4 Ideas to generate income

Do you **agree** or **disagree** with each idea below. If you don't have a view, tick **don't know**.

This could generate (approx)	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Charge for emptying brown bins – other councils charge around £30 a year. £790,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charge for evening parking in Lichfield city car parks (after 6.30pm). £36,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charge for parking in council run car parks in Chasetown – for example £1 a day. £10,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charge people to park in disabled car parking spaces and bays. £40,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase council tax by a small amount every year (between £2 and £5 a year for example). £70,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charge more for leisure activities – such as swimming and badminton. £30,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charge the public for events like Lichfield Proms in Beacon Park, and charge event organisers more to use our parks. £5,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\*Key: £ small net budget (up to £50,000) ££ moderate net budget (between £50,000 and £200,000) £££ large net budget between (£200,000 and £900,000)

**Q5** Ideas to save money

Do you **agree** or **disagree** with each idea below. If you don't have a view, tick **don't know**.

This could save (approx)	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Close the public toilets in Lichfield and Burntwood and work with shops, cafes and pubs so shoppers and visitors can use their facilities.

£100,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Clean local streets, roads and paths less often.

£10,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Maintain district council run parks and green areas less frequently.

£20,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Don't give charities full business rate relief (by law charities get 80% relief, but sometimes we give a further 20%).

£34,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Reduce council tax discounts for working-age residents on lower incomes.

£490,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Cut back the annual subsidy we give to the Lichfield Garrick.

£150,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Reduce the amount of CCTV coverage in the district.

£20,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Open our customer services desk and telephone lines for fewer hours.

£46,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Stop community transport that gives low-cost transport to community groups.

£25,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Transfer leisure centres to a private management operator or trust.

£50,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Hand King Edward VI and/or Friary Grange leisure centres back to the schools to manage them.

£75,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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This could save (approx)	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Stop monitoring or fining people for allowing their dogs to foul public places.

£7,500	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Transfer parks, outdoor sports facilities and areas of countryside to parish councils, sports clubs or voluntary organisations.

£150,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Stop or reduce large grants (between £5,000 & £50,000 a year) to voluntary organisations who deliver services in the community.

£196,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Stop or reduce small grants (between £50 & £2,000) to voluntary groups.

£23,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Stop managing development projects such as play areas or community facilities, if other organisations can deliver them.

£59,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Take longer to process planning applications (still within statutory timescales).

£10,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Merge more services - from planning and benefits to finance - with adjacent council(s) or become a unitary council so we can cut costs.

£570,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Stop having a chairman's car and driver.

£17,000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Further reduce district councillors. From May 2015 there'll be 47. Could we cut back further?

£3,000 <sup>†</sup>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<sup>†</sup>per councillor

**Q6** Any other ideas

Do you have any ideas about how we could increase income or cut our costs?

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All figures are indicative based on net direct expenditure and take account of any income we receive. Figures for savings and income ideas are based on loose assumptions and may change if developed further.

## Q7 About you

This section will help us to get a picture of who took part in this survey. It will also help us to find out whether people from certain areas of the district, or from particular age-ranges, have different preferences. The information you give us will be held confidentially and will not be used to identify you, or passed to any third party.

What is your postcode?

This is used to help us analyse the results, and not to identify you.

Are you?  Male  Female

How old are you?

Under 18  18-24  25-34  35-54  
 55-64  65-74  75+

Do you have a longstanding disability, illness or infirmity?

Yes  No

To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

<input type="checkbox"/> White British	<input type="checkbox"/> Black / Black British – African
<input type="checkbox"/> White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> Black / Black British –Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern European	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple / Mixed – white & black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Asian British – Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple / Mixed – white & black African
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Asian British – Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple / Mixed – white & Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Asian British – Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Asian British – Chinese	

If other, please specify:

Are you?

Working full time  Working part time  
 Education/training  Unemployed/looking for work  
 Long term sick or disabled  Retired  
 Not working  Other

If other, please specify:

## Q8 Want to get more involved?

Are you interested in giving your views as part of future consultation activities run by Lichfield District Council?

Yes  No

If you are please let us know how you would prefer to be contacted:

Your name:

Your preferred method of contact:  
(telephone number or email address)

## Enter our prize draw

To thank you for filling in our questionnaire, we would like to enter you into a prize draw to win one of four fantastic prizes:

- One year's free gym membership
- Two tickets to see Houghton Weavers at the Lichfield Garrick on 11 September 2014
- A guided city walking tour and cream tea for two or a Gruesome & Ghostly tour
- A pair of tickets for Lichfield Cathedral's new tower tour

To enter the draw, please fill in your details below:

Your name:

Your preferred method of contact:  
(telephone number or email address)

To give your views, send your completed questionnaire to Fit for the Future Questionnaire Returns, **FREEPOST XXX**, Lichfield District Council, District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield WS13 6YY by 5pm on 23 June 2014.

Your details will not be cross referenced against the views you have given as part of this questionnaire. They will also be stored securely and will not be passed to any third party organisation in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Thank you for taking time to give us your views.

To keep up to date on the next steps, look out for our next issue of 'intouch', our community magazine which is issued twice a year, or visit [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/fitforthefuture](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/fitforthefuture)

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, or would like a large print version, please call 01543 308000.



# Phase two of Fit for the Future

Our plans to involve the community,  
members and partners

fit for the **future**

preparing us for the future

Date: October 2013

Presented by: Leadership Team

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## Introduction

We want to make sure that the proposals we develop as part of the next phase of Fit for the Future take into consideration local people's, councillors' and partners' views.

**This paper outlines the proposals for consultation and scrutiny as we enter the next and ongoing phases of the programme.**

## Our key opportunities

There are two main opportunities for consultation and scrutiny in the next phases of Fit for the Future.

### **Service reviews**

Firstly the individual service reviews we are carrying out as part of phase two will all include scrutiny and consultation. The level of public, member and partner involvement will differ from review to review - clearly there will be more need to understand people's reaction and views to reducing public facing services, such as leisure centres, than there will be for changes to internal audit for example.

### **Wider public consultation**

Secondly, we have the opportunity to carry out wider public consultation exercises to provide valuable information and views from our communities on future changes in council priorities, as well as give a broader understanding of what local people expect from the council, and their views on the impact of budget reductions.

## Budgetary impact and support

All activities will come at a cost – whether this is through extra staff time to carry out a review, room hire, or the appointment of a specialist firm to carry out a statistically valid consultation exercise. To ensure we achieve the required quality in any exercise we carry out, we have the opportunity to work with the Staffordshire Intelligence Hub who can provide expertise and support throughout the process.

# 1. Underway: service reviews

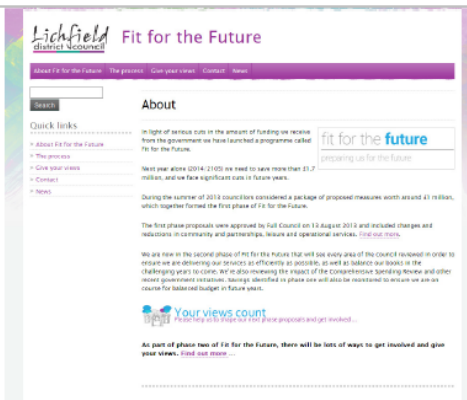
A number of service reviews are currently taking place across the organisation. Ultimately every area of the council will be reviewed. The purpose of the reviews are to consider what service we have now, what we need in the future and what options there are for delivery. The reviews will be tailored to each service, but as an underlying principle, they are being designed to be inclusive, and to provide both opportunities for scrutiny, and opportunities for service users, stakeholders and partners to be involved. Each review will have a communication and consultation plan that will feature:

- Identification of scrutiny opportunities
- identification of stakeholders
- details of how discussions/interaction on current service delivery will take place
- details of how discussions/interaction on preferred service delivery will take place
- details of how consultation on options and choices will take place and with whom
- details of how feedback will be taken on board

In terms of scrutiny, on large reviews it is recommended that this will take place at least twice – firstly when the current service has been scoped, and secondly when options for future service delivery are ready for consideration.

# 2. Under development: wider public consultation exercise

In addition to the service reviews, we have identified a number of options to generate wider public and stakeholder input in to our future decision making.



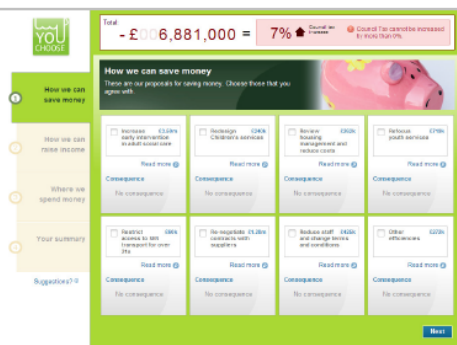
## 2.1. Fit for the Future website

A Fit for the Future website is being built, on which all consultations, questionnaires, proposals, service reviews and opportunities for involvement will be published.

This will ensure there is a front facing website that we can then advertise and promote to generate involvement.

The website will also be promoted through [www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/voiceit](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/voiceit) which is where the council hosts all consultations.

View the draft website at [www2.lichfielddc.gov.uk/fitforthefuture](http://www2.lichfielddc.gov.uk/fitforthefuture)



## 2.2. Budget consultation tool - YouChoose

The Fit for the Future website will link people through to a free budget consultation tool called YouChoose.

YouChoose allows people to tell us ‘how we can save money’, ‘how we can raise income’, ‘where we should spend our money’ and also gives them an indication of how their choices would impact our budget and local council tax charges. The YouChoose tool gives more information than a straightforward questionnaire, and is a far more informative way for people to understand the difficult choices we have to make. Special events will also be hosted to generate members’ feedback using the tool.

See more at <http://youchoose.yougov.com/redbridge2012>

We will be researching how this operates more fully and propose to run some trial sessions with elected members in October/November.

**Budget Consultation 2014/2015  
Residents Survey**

Every year Tamworth Borough Council has to set a budget for how much money it will spend in the next financial year. Our next financial year starts in April 2014 and finishes in March 2015. As in previous years, there are a number of different options for the budget and before deciding on how to proceed, the Council would like to gain the views of local residents. The closing date for this survey is 27th November 2013.

Our 'vision' is 'The Tamworth: Perfectly Planned'. Our focus will be upon working with our partners to:

1. **Aspire and prosper in Tamworth** - to create and sustain a thriving local economy and make Tamworth a more aspirational and competitive place to do business.
2. **Be healthier and safer in Tamworth** - to create a safe environment in which local people can reach their full potential and live longer, healthier lives.

3. **Place well as we have never seen a place like before and prepare for Tamworth** - we will work with our partners to create a place that is a better place to live, work and do business.

[http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations/budget\\_consultation.aspx](http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations/budget_consultation.aspx)

### 2.3. Online and paper questionnaire

We will develop an online and a paper based questionnaire. Like many councils we use regular consultation with residents to inform decision making and we last ran a general public consultation exercise in 2012.

We will need to think carefully about what questions we will include in order to generate useful results and the guidance we need from local residents. The Staffordshire Intelligent Hub recently helped Tamworth Borough Council with a similar exercise and will be able to help us with the development of our questionnaires.

### 2.4. Working with the press & intouch

We will work closely with the Lichfield Mercury, the Lichfield Gazette and other local newspapers to publicise the above opportunities to get involved, as well as start the debate about what money we have, where we spend it, how we bring money in and how we can save money. We will also use intouch, our community newspaper to communicate to local residents about the consultations and how they can give their views.

**A quick analysis** All the above approaches have strong merit in that they:

- provide people with an opportunity to give their views
- demonstrate our approach to openness and inclusiveness
- show we are listening
- show we are open and honest about our challenges and opportunities

That said, as they all rely on people being willing to take part and 'self selecting' the activity they take part in, the results are unlikely to be either statistically significant or representative of the views of the whole district. Again, because they are self selecting, they are likely to generate relatively low response rates - the highest response rate generated on YouChoose by other councils was 4,396 responses (Redbridge) and an average response rate of 420 (across 53 councils).

## 3. Researching: generating a statistically representative view

We are also looking at additional opportunities to gather local views, including targeted face-to-face questionnaires and a Citizens' Panel. These methods are widely accepted to generate a better quality and more statistically representative set of views. We have also started to consider the most effective way for all 56 members to assist in gathering data from across the district.

### 3.1. Targeted face-to-face questionnaires and residents' forums

Face-to-face interviews and residents' forums are seen as an important part of a package of consultation methods, and widely recognised to help generate a better quality/more statistically representative response, which would help to support the council's future choices. In considering this type of activity, we will need to balance its cost with its potential outcomes, as well as consider the use of in-house resources against the added-value independent facilitators can bring to such an exercise.

### 3.2. Citizens' Panel

We have determined that at a district level this is not currently possible, as we do not have the resources to effectively and purposefully recruit, maintain and work with a panel of people (usually about 3,000). The Staffordshire Intelligence Hub is however setting up a People's Panel and we hope that we will be able to access it in future. More details will be published in the coming months, but we understand the size of panel and its make-up will be balanced. It is however unlikely to be in place until mid 2014.

### 3.3. Involving members

Members have expressed real enthusiasm in being involved in the process, and in their role as ward representatives have unrivalled access to local residents. The concept of asking each member to carry out a small sample of between 10 – 20 questionnaires in their area (using a random sample of addresses provided by officers) has been discussed. This idea needs further work and we are currently developing proposals for how it could be delivered.

## 4. The next steps

### Consultation design

Significant work needs to be carried out to ensure we design the consultation exercises well, and that each element is meaningful for those who take part, and that the result are instructive and enlightening. General views should be sought, informing people of the areas where we have choice in what we spend and asking for their preferences in spending increases or decreases in certain areas.

Listing what we have to do, such as paying people benefits and collecting council tax, determining planning applications, collecting refuse, providing support for homeless people, and how much each of those services costs will be necessary.

Similarly for discretionary services, such as running our parks and leisure services, supporting the Garrick and supporting the economy, this information will also be needed.

The aim will be to get a sense of what services people value most and which they would chose to reduce in either quality or quantity.

To achieve this we will work with all members, the Staffordshire Intelligence Hub as well as alongside partner authorities and take a lead from successful consultations carried out elsewhere in the local government family.

### Timing

We are aiming to pull together a package of consultation options ready for launch in March 2014.

### Costs

We have a budget of £10,000 for the consultation work going forwards.

## 5. Feedback

➡ **We would welcome comments and feedback on all these proposals.**

## **Terms of reference for Working Group on Consultation**

### **Members of the working group**

Councillor Tittley (Chair)  
Councillor Smedley  
Councillor Mosson  
Councillor Hogan  
Councillor Eadie (replaced by Councillor Strachan in February)  
Councillor Mrs Stanhope  
Councillor Mrs Barnett  
Councillor Norman  
Councillor Mrs Woodward

### **Support officers**

Diane Tilley  
Helen Spearey  
Lizzie Thatcher  
Officers from Staffordshire Intelligence Hub (SIH)  
Any other officer as necessary

### **Purpose of the working group**

To assist in developing a consultation exercise for Lichfield District Council for 2014.

### **Background**

Lichfield District Council regularly consults with communities on either single issues – such as on the development of the Local Plan or the introduction of the Council Tax Reform Scheme - or on general satisfaction issues. The last of these more general surveys took place in 2012.

We have therefore been giving careful thought to the type of consultation exercise we should now undertake, taking into account what we want from that consultation, what resources we have available to us and what others are doing that we can learn from.

This working group will support the development of those ideas resulting in a recommendation to Strategic Overview and Scrutiny and then on to Cabinet and Council, of the approach to be adopted, in an inclusive way ensuring that all own the process we adopt.

A paper was circulated to all Councillors for consideration and comment and nominations to the working group invited.

### **Activities of the Working Group**

1. to bring forward ideas and examples of Consultation activity that they would like to be used for discussion
2. To consider and comment on ideas tabled by Officers and Members

3. To consider how partners could be involved in promoting the consultation exercise and in assisting in its delivery
4. To comment on, influence and co-design the questionnaire to be used, following professional guidance from Staffordshire Intelligence Hub and considering examples of best practice.
5. Define and agree the outcome required from consultation
6. To test and experiment with tools for communication such as YouChoose
7. To consider the most effective way of engaging with all Councillors and to enlist their support to the exercise.
8. To agree a set of activities which can meet our needs, enables the community voice to be heard and are affordable and timely to inform the decision making process.
9. To receive and comment on the findings following the consultation.

### **Process**

A series of meeting will be held between November 2013 and March 2014 to achieve these objectives.

It is recognised that as this is a short term piece of work timings of meeting may not be flexible enough to meet all Councillors requirements. Best efforts will be made to be flexible whilst maintaining momentum and ensuring officer support, especially from the SHI can be provided.

Diane Tilley  
25<sup>th</sup> October