



# **Difficult Decisions Consultation 2018-20**

## **'YOU SAID. WE DID'**





# Introduction

In October and November 2017, Wrexham County Borough Council asked the public of Wrexham to take part in the 'Difficult Decisions' consultation, to inform the decisions we had to make in order to contribute to the estimated £13million we need to save over the next two years.

The consultation involved a survey, a market stall event and social media activity. 3,797 people took part in the consultation in all , and we would like to thank all those people and groups who took part.

A really important part of any consultation is feeding back to the participants about what has happened since they gave their opinions, and what effect their views have had. This process of feedback is about being able to show where your views have directly impacted on a proposal, and also explaining when there are times where we could not do everything suggested by the public (and explaining why).

So, we are now presenting this 'You Said, We Did' report to show you the final decisions that have been made about each of the proposals presented for consultation.

If you want to read all of the details about the proposals the Council made, and the results of the consultation, you will find a full report at [www.wrexham.gov.uk/budget](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/budget) (Link to be updated following Executive Board Approval)

If you're interested in taking part in more consultations and letting Wrexham Council know what you think, why not sign up to Wrexham PSB's engagement hub – Your Voice Wrexham. [www.yourvoicewrexham.co.uk](http://www.yourvoicewrexham.co.uk)

<sup>1</sup>\*This gives a Confidence Level of more than 95% and a Confidence Interval of less than 5% (based on 3,620 who responded to the survey)

A confidence level is an expression of how confident a researcher can be of the data obtained from a sample. Confidence levels are expressed as a percentage and indicate how frequently that percentage of the target population would give an answer that lies within the confidence interval.

A confidence interval is the margin of error that a researcher would experience if he or she could ask a particular research question, say, of every member of the target population and receive the same answer back that the members of the sample gave in the survey.



# Survey Analysis

## Average Score

Rather than simply presenting the % of responses which agreed/disagreed with each proposal, each proposal has been given an 'Average Score'

This means that for each response, a score of 2 was given for each response of 'Strongly Agree', 1 for 'Agree', 0 for 'Neither', -1 for 'Disagree' and a score of -2 was given for 'Disagree Strongly'. These scores were then added together and divided by the total number of responses to that question to give an average score between -2 and 2.

Viewing the responses in this way allows us to demonstrate more clearly the strength of opinion for each proposal, and therefore demonstrates the results more accurately.



# ECONOMY

## **We proposed:**

### **Introduce a charge for public conveniences**

The Council manage a number of Public Conveniences (i.e. toilets) across the county borough. A charge is already in place at town centre public conveniences (Henblas Street and St Giles Way). It is proposed that we also introduce a charge of 20p at public conveniences in Trevor, Chirk and Froncysyllte to cover the cost of cleaning and staffing. **It is estimated that this could generate additional income of approximately £5,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.73**

## **You Said:**

- You agree with this proposal as long as the facilities are maintained to a high standard
- You had concerns that people might not have change or cash available when using Public Conveniences
- Public Conveniences should remain free of charge
- You had concerns that the administration costs around charging may outweigh the income generated

## **We Did:**

There was a majority in favour of charging for the use of public conveniences in Trevor, Chirk and Froncysyllte. The precedent was set in 2016 when the Council began charging for the use of facilities at Henblas Street and Brook Street in Wrexham town centre. Further work will be undertaken to review the investment required to enable a charging request to be implemented, including cleaning and site management, before this proposal is progressed.





## We proposed:

### Free breakfasts

It is proposed that that from September 2018, the Breakfast Scheme continues to be open from 7.50am to 8.50am but would consist of two elements. This would be offering a childcare service from 7.50am to 8.20am (for which there would be a charge of £1) and a healthy breakfast from 8.20am to 8.50am (which would continue to be free). If a child arrives after 8.20am there will be no charge, but if the parents want to take advantage of the scheme and the child arrives between 7.50am and 8.20am then a charge of £1 per child per day is proposed. **It is estimated that this could generate additional income of approximately £106,000 in 2018/19 and a further £52,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.77**

#### You Said:

- Some families, especially those with more than one child, would not be able to afford the cost of this service
- That low income families should be exempt from paying the charge
- It should be the Parent's responsibility for giving children a breakfast, and not the Council's
- That the suggested charge of £1 was a reasonable amount and that it should be introduced

#### We Did:

Whilst the feedback suggests that there is a general agreement for this proposal other comments have highlighted that some families will not be able to afford the cost of this service, especially if they have more than one child in the school. As a result we are considering a reduced fee for additional children.

It is also assumed that this service will predominantly be taken up by parents who are in employment as it will allow them more flexibility with their work patterns and also allow them to extend their working hours.

Families where one or both of the parents are unemployed will theoretically not require this service as they can drop their children off later for the free breakfast element and should face no additional financial burden.

Children who are entitled to free school meals will not be charged for the service. Where schools have introduced a free breakfast scheme independently from the Council, all are currently charging more than £1 for the childcare element. The range is from £1.60 to £4.00. Further consultation with schools will be undertaken to shape the way the new charging regime will operate from September 2019



## **We proposed:**

### **Libraries Service Review**

Wrexham Council manages a number of libraries across the county borough. Whilst the Council does have to deliver a library service, the way in which we provide this service is at our discretion. In 2018/19, the Council is making savings of £57,000 within the Library Service however, we would like to get your thoughts on further proposed changes to the service. It is proposed that over the next couple of years, a full review of the Library Service is carried out to ensure it is cost effective and fit for purpose. This may involve looking at changes to existing service provision, including possible changes in location, accessibility to the services and alternative operating models including community ownership. Depending on the outcome of the review, investment may be required to respond to any proposed service changes resulting from the review to enable WCBC to maintain a visible and viable public library service which meets the Welsh Public Library Standards.

This proposal received an average score of **0.23**

#### **You Said:**

- You required further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision
- That libraries are an important part of the community and should be accessible to all
- The library service should be maintained and that libraries should remain open
- A review of the library service was required and may be beneficial
- Co-location of libraries with other services in communities might be a possibility

#### **We Did:**

Libraries are acknowledged as an important part of the community and need to be accessible to all; and therefore a review of our libraries will take place to ensure going forward they provide a modern and accessible service ensuring that the public funding invested into the service is spent as efficiently and effectively as possible. The review will be concluded during 2018/19 and consultation with service users will take place before final recommendations are considered and adopted.





## **We asked:**

**Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Housing and Economy' section?**

### **You Said:**

- That too much money is being spent on upgrading Council Houses
- That more affordable social housing is needed in Wrexham
- There were a number of comments around ways in which the Council could make efficiency savings
- The roll out of agile working across the department should happen
- The Council should be looking to cut councillor costs and expenses instead of making budget savings within this department

### **We Did:**

It is our requirement to complete works to council houses to bring them up to Welsh Housing Quality Standard's by 2020 which involves major investment. The Department is on target to achieve this. It is the belief of Members and Officers alike that every Wrexham tenant deserves a good quality modern and safe home and environment in which to live and flourish.

It is agreed that there is a requirement for more affordable social and intermediate housing within Wrexham, and the Welsh Government have set a target across Wales to deliver on this key indicator. Wrexham

is continuing to develop its strategy to ensure we meet our targets. The Local Housing Strategy 2018-23 is currently being developed and this takes into account the need for additional social housing in Wrexham.

The Housing Department is striving to modernise its services through ensuring customers have access to services on-line. As part of the departmental plan for moving forward, the intention is to develop mobile working and agile working in some key areas for staff, and provide additional opportunities for customers to engage and communicate and access services through a digital platform.

Mobile devices will allow staff to work across areas without being office based and is a key priority for estate staff thereby enabling them to engage with the customer and have a greater presence out on the estates, in addition to reducing costs and utilising resources more effectively

Councillors' pay is fixed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales set up by the Welsh Government to ensure a nationally consistent approach to member remuneration. Individual Councils are not permitted to fix allowances outside the IRPW recommended scales.



# PEOPLE

## Children's Social Care

### We proposed:

#### Placements for looked after children

It is proposed that we increase the fees we pay to Council employed foster carers if they provide placements for these children. It is envisaged that this will reduce the amount we spend on independent foster placements. This proposal will also add capacity to the service by increasing the number of foster carers available to children in Wrexham. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £10,000 in 2018/19 and a further £10,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.73**

### You Said:

- Children need to be at the centre of any decisions being made around this proposal
- That you needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision on this proposal
- That money should not be the motivation for foster carers although people also thought that foster carers do need adequate pay and support

### We Did:

We have re-established the role of Recruitment Officer to help us recruit more foster carers for local children.

We continue to pay foster carers in line with Welsh Government guidelines with a skills fee to make the financial reward competitive with the independent sector.

The quality of foster placements is monitored through the regulatory inspection framework and the Annual Quality of Care Review





## We proposed:

### Childcare sustainability grants

Childcare Sustainability Grants are small allocations of money given directly to some private and third party childcare providers to assist them in making sure that their businesses are sustainable. It is proposed to cease the allocation of Childcare Sustainability Grants. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £10,000 in 2018/19 and a further £10,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.26**

#### You Said:

- Businesses should not receive these grants and therefore they should cease however, there was also concern that some childcare providers would not be able to survive without these grants
- That childcare is crucial to support employment and removing these grants might have a negative impact on peoples working life
- A lot of respondents felt that they needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision

#### We Did:

The remit of the Child Care Team will be circulated to all providers to emphasise the support the team can offer. Early intervention for advice, information and support is available to avoid financial difficulties and plan for stability. This will be shared as we implement this proposal.

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## We proposed:

### Council funded childcare training

The Council currently provides funding for training of private and third party childcare providers. The training includes paediatric first aid, food hygiene and safeguarding. It is proposed to cease this funding which will mean the workforce in the private sector will need to fund this training in an alternative way. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £10,000 in 2018/19 and a further £10,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.42**

#### You Said:

- Providers should pay for their own training but there were concerns that this could have a detrimental effect on the standards of childcare
- There would need to be a monitoring system in place which ensures that childcare providers still undertake the relevant training
- There were also a number of alternative suggestions around this proposal put forward

#### We Did:

As we implement this proposal, the Training Directory will be updated and circulated to all providers to ensure that existing training across the sector is utilised



### **We asked:**

**Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Children's Social Care' section?**

### **You Said:**

- There should be no reduction in funding for children and that the safeguarding of children should remain a priority
- Children need support and are our future society
- The Council should be looking to cut councillor costs and expenses instead of making budget savings as well as reducing staff costs by reducing salaries and the number of managers within the Council
- There were also a number of alternative suggestions around this proposal put forward

### **We Did:**

In Wrexham all social work posts are covered to ensure that safeguarding remains the highest priority.

Children and families are offered information, advice and assistance to help them flourish as an alternative to statutory intervention.

We will continue to carefully monitor the support and services needed by families to make sure they are able to access services that help them to help themselves.





# Education

## We proposed: Music service

The Council currently provides a very comprehensive music service to schools which includes peripatetic instrument tuition (i.e. tutors visiting different schools), facilitating orchestras and youth choirs to a number of pupils across the borough. This is not a statutory service and it is therefore proposed that the Council withdraws the funding for this music service. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £300,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **-0.54**

### You Said:

- There are many benefits to children by taking part in musical activities and therefore many people disagreed with this proposal
- All children should have equal access to these opportunities but many people also felt that it was not unreasonable to expect people to pay for their music lessons
- The Council should be looking to cut councillor costs and expenses instead of making budget savings as well as reducing staff costs by reducing salaries and the number of managers within the Council

### We Did:

Following the consultation period and the proposal to remove £300,000 from the budget that provides a music service to schools, concerns expressed included that there would be a disproportionate detriment to groups of learners and specifically those who are unable to afford to pay for music tuition. This risk has been mitigated through establishing a budget of £50,000 per annum to provide a bursary fund.

Councillors' pay is fixed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales set up by the Welsh Government to ensure a nationally consistent approach to member remuneration. Individual Councils are not permitted to fix allowances outside the IRPW recommended scales.

Wrexham's senior management structure is one of the slimmest in Wales following recent senior management restructures. Reducing it further would present serious governance risks.



## **We proposed:**

### **Schools budget**

For a number of years the Council has protected school budgets. It is proposed that schools' budgets are protected and given the same allocation as 2017/18 but not increased over the next two years. This means that schools will be required to meet growth pressures and inflation which are currently estimated at **£1,158,000 in 2018/19** and a further **£1,408,000 in 2019/20**. This proposal has been consulted on with the School Budget Forum.

This proposal received an average score of **-0.31**

#### **You Said:**

- Schools are already struggling financially and therefore many people disagreed with this proposal
- A good education is important for individuals and for Wrexham and that education should be prioritised
- This will have a detrimental effect on education and therefore many disagreed with the proposal

#### **We Did:**

Education is one of the Councils' main priorities, to ensure that the children and young people of Wrexham reach their potential and that learner outcomes and wellbeing are good across the County Borough. The Council has a good record of protecting school budgets and following the consultation process has demonstrated its on-going commitment to ensure funding finds its way to front line delivery though increasing the schools delegated budget by 1.48%, as opposed to providing a standstill budget to schools.

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## **We asked:**

**Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Education' section?**

#### **You Said:**

- There were additional comments about the music service
- That education must be prioritised
- We need to invest in schools to improve education locally
- Children are the future and we need to invest in them now
- There was also alternative savings/income generation ideas suggested

#### **We Did:**

The council has a good record of protecting school budgets as evidenced by the decision to increase school budgets for 2018-19 by 1.48%. In respect of music, the Education Department will work closely with schools to explore options for music delivery across the Borough.



# ADULT SOCIAL CARE

## **We proposed:**

### **Day and work opportunities**

This review is underway and is focusing initially on three projects providing work opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairment and mental health needs (namely PAT Testing, Alyn Waters Café and Coverall laundry). This review will help determine if the Adult Social Care department should still be running these projects, whether these services are still required and identifying any other ways we can support people to access employment and volunteering opportunities. Alongside this work we will also review two other day services, the Erilas Garden Project and the Cunliffe day centre, to ensure we develop sustainable services fit for the future. As part of the review, we will also look at the possible relocation of staff currently based within our Greenacres site to reduce staff accommodation costs. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £67,493 in 2018/19 and a further £402,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **-0.06**

#### **You Said:**

- We must protect the most vulnerable in our society but at the same time, it is reasonable to ensure that the services provided are cost effective
- These projects are important and should be supported to continue in some capacity as the people who access these services need this support
- A few respondents felt that they needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision

#### **We Did:**

The Adult Social Care Department has been working on the review and future options for Day and work opportunities for the past two years, listening to the views and aspirations of the people we support, their families and carers and our staff. This together with an understanding of future projected demand for services and opportunities available has helped to shape the options for moving forward. The department has now commenced a period of formal consultation with the people we support, their families, carers and our staff to help ensure we move forward with the most appropriate and sustainable option for the future. This work will continue to develop and the people we support will remain at the heart of this.



## **We proposed:**

### **Review Direct Payments**

We want to make Direct Payments accessible to more people. Direct Payments allow people, who are eligible to receive care and support, the option of managing their own budget with or without help. This gives people increased flexibility about when and how they receive care and who provides it. We are looking at ways to make Direct Payments easier to manage and we are reviewing the support services we currently have in place. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £125,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.71**

#### **You Said:**

- Some service users may not be capable of managing this for themselves and there is the possibility of people using this money inappropriately
- A few respondents felt that they needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision
- There was a lot of general agreement with the proposal but people felt that some support measures would need to be put in place to help people

#### **We Did:**

Improving access to Direct Payments is an important way of enabling people who need care and support to have choice and control and we will be progressing with this proposal. We are fully committed to ensuring that we have the right support available to enable people to safely manage their Direct Payments.





## **We proposed:**

### **Review Respite services**

We want to improve the services we make available to carers including carer respite services. These are services designed to give carers a break from their caring role. We propose to cease using domiciliary care providers to deliver carer respite and to commission a new service for carers offering flexible services at a more sustainable cost. We have also been successful in securing a grant to enable us to build an extension onto Park View our specialist respite facility for adults with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. This will enable us to increase the level of specialist respite services available and could also help to generate income as the service would be available to the Health Board and other Local Authorities to purchase thus making the service more sustainable. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £120,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.67**

#### **You Said:**

- You needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision
- That you feel carers provide a valuable service and should be supported and that this should not impact negatively on carers or a reduction in services
- You agree to the proposal but many also thought this could lead to problems elsewhere or in the future

#### **We Did:**

We are committed to supporting Carers and are currently working with carers to develop our 'carer's strategy' and services moving forward. This year we will be commissioning a new carers information, advice and respite service based on what carer's tell us they need and want.





## **We proposed:**

### **Review of Care and Support services**

We will review all people in receipt of care and support services to identify any alternative ways to support people to meet their needs and to ensure there is no over provision of services. As part of this we propose to review the provision and delivery of Project Work Support. It is proposed to review the use of and eligibility for Project Work Support and to identify alternative lower cost delivery models such as Direct Payments and Shared Lives. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £125,000 in 2018/19 and a further £225,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.42**

#### **You Said:**

- You felt that you needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision
- There was a lot of general agreement with the proposal but people also suggested we need to protect and provide for the most vulnerable and not take services away from people that need them.
- That current care and support provision needs to be improved

#### **We Did:**

We remain committed to ensuring we meet the needs of vulnerable people. We are working with people on an individual basis to review the support they receive to ensure it is achieving their desired outcomes, to identify any alternative ways of supporting people and to ensure we are making the best use of the resources available. This is not about leaving people without the support they need.





## We proposed: Supported living

We propose to review Supported Living to ensure the model is affordable and sustainable for the future. Supported Living offers support and accommodation to people who have high levels of need. Most Supported Living houses have a member of staff who sleeps in overnight. We are proposing to review this as we know that not all houses require this level of staff presence. Adult Social Care also funds any voids in the Supported Living houses. We propose to review this and improve our management of voids. We also propose to review the level of need being supported within Supported Living and to identify more suitable alternative services for people whose needs exceed that level. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £197,622 in 2018/19 and a further £250,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.39**

### You Said:

- The Council should protect and provide for the most vulnerable and ensure these services meet people's needs
- A few respondents felt that they needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision
- Some people disagreed with this proposal and felt this might be detrimental to services and service users

### We Did:

We remain focused on meeting people's needs in the most appropriate way for them. It is important to know that we are not taking a "blanket approach". We are working with people on an individual basis to ensure they receive the right levels of support, have an opportunity to live as independently as possible and have access to a range of telecare, daily living equipment and adaptations to support their independence and safety.





## **We proposed:**

### **Out of county placements**

It is proposed that we continue with work already underway to support people back into Wrexham who have been placed in care homes or Supported Living services out of County and ensure we are making full use of Supported Living as an alternative to placements where appropriate. As part of this work we will review the use and potential expansion of the Recovery Service (our specialist mental health service) working in partnership with the Health Board. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £75,000 in 2018/19 and a further £75,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.71**

#### **You Said:**

- People should be supported in the local area as it's better for them
- That you needed further information regarding the proposal to be able to make a decision
- The council must ensure that the right expertise and capacity are available in Wrexham and that this proposal must not have a detrimental impact on standards

#### **We Did:**

We are committed to supporting Wrexham citizens to remain living in Wrexham and are working hard to develop services to ensure this is possible.



## **We asked:**

**Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Adult Social Care' section?**

## **You Said:**

- That budget savings should be made in other areas instead of cuts to services for the vulnerable
- The Council should be looking to cut councillor costs and expenses instead of making budget savings as well as reducing staff costs by reducing salaries and the number of managers within the Council
- A good standard of Adult Social Care must be a priority and more funding is required, not less
- The Adult Social Care Department should be about providing care, not saving money

## **We Did:**

The council remains committed to protecting the most vulnerable people in our community and to ensuring we make best use of the resources available in a time of increasing demands on social care. The Adult Social Care Department continues to reshape and modernise to achieve the shift to focusing resources on providing

timely quality information and advice and investment into services to support people to remain as independent as possible thus ensuring resources remain available to support people with complex needs. We have already reduced the number of service managers and team managers within the Adult Social Care department and have reshaped to ensure we are working as efficiently as possible. We are also working hard to modernise services and develop new creative approaches to better support people to achieve their outcomes so that we can protect access to support and services despite the reductions in funding.

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Wrexham's senior management structure is one of the slimmest in Wales following recent senior management restructures. Reducing it further would present serious governance risks.



# PLACE

## Environment and Planning

### We proposed:

#### Charge for green waste collections

The Council provide Green Waste bins for people to dispose of garden materials. Currently it is possible to purchase additional green bins, and have them emptied free of charge. It is proposed to introduce a charge for the collection of any additional Green Waste bins. The collection of one bin will remain free of charge, but additional bins will be charged at £30 per bin per year. **It is estimated this could generate additional income of approximately £15,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.66**

#### You Said:

- That additional green waste bins bin should be charged for
- That charging may lead to fly tipping leading to extra costs to clean up after
- We should be encouraging people to recycle/compost and charging for an extra bin will have a negative impact on this
- The Council Tax rates are already too high for the services received and the amount paid should cover the cost of the bins
- There was some general disagreement with this proposal

#### We Did:

Most responses made by the public were supportive of this change and it will be implemented from April 2018. To mitigate any potential harmful impact, the Council will continue to encourage the public to bring recyclable/ compostable materials to the Household Waste Recycling Centres and prioritise the monitoring and enforcement of fly tipping.



## We proposed:

### Review blue badge parking

Currently blue badge holders can park for free in Council Car Parks. The blue badge scheme is not financially means-tested; therefore there is no need to assume that those people who hold blue badges are unable to pay for parking. It is proposed to introduce charging in Council car parks for those people who possess a blue badge. **It is estimated that this could generate additional income of approximately £25,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.65**

#### You Said:

- A blue badge is about disability not about income
- The misuse of blue badges needs to be enforced and people who park in a disabled space without a blue badge should be fined.
- We must ensure disabled spaces are suitable, locate pay meters close to disabled bays and offer card facilities or season tickets
- We shouldn't assume that blue badge holders can't pay as many get mobility benefits or are well-off
- There was also some general agreement with this proposal

#### We Did:

Most responses made by the public were supportive of this change and it will be implemented following statutory consultation. The Council will actively monitor the location and provision of blue badge spaces and machines to ensure that they are reserved for blue badge users and in the most accessible and convenient locations.





## **We proposed:**

### **Introduce car park charges in various parks and locations**

Wrexham Council manages a number of country parks across the county borough. It is proposed to introduce a charge for visitors at car parks at Alyn Waters, Ty Mawr, Nant Mill and Trevor Basin of £1 all day. **It is estimated this could generate additional income of approximately £47,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.26**

#### **You Said:**

- This will result in car parking in front of houses around country parks and we should consider how to mitigate this
- Introducing a charge may deter people from visiting the parks and possibly decrease income
- Introducing a charge may discourage people getting exercise and lead to longer-term health and well-being issues
- There was also some general agreement with this proposal with people stating that this is a small and reasonable amount to pay

#### **We Did:**

Most responses raised concern about potential on-street parking, a reduction in use of the country parks and a resultant impact on health and wellbeing. The Council considers that this change will have only a marginal impact on usage of country parks and that any displaced on-street parking can be mitigated through Traffic Orders and on-street controls. This change will be implemented in 2018/19.

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## **We proposed:**

### **Staff and member car parking**

The Council currently provides free parking to some of its staff and to Elected Members in town centre car parks. It is proposed to remove this entitlement to encourage more sustainable modes of travel to work (e.g. public transport) and to generate additional income. **It is estimated that this could generate additional income of approximately £49,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **1.19**

#### **You Said:**

- Staff and members should have to pay for parking as the public have to pay
- You disagreed with the proposal as you feel staff should be able to park at their workplace for free
- Charging for everyone would make it consistent for all staff or all staff should receive free parking
- There was some general agreement with the proposal with people stating that they felt a minimal charge or concessionary rate should be introduced

#### **We Did:**

There was overwhelming support for this proposal and it will be implemented in 2018/19. The charging regime put in place will be fair to both elected Councillors and Council staff.



## We proposed: Country parks review

The Council manages 11 Country and Urban Parks. It is proposed to reduce the number of park rangers working within the parks. The service will be realigned to focus on the safe management of the key park sites (Alyn Waters and Ty Mawr Country Parks) and further review at our seasonal park facilities. Streetscene Service will assist the rangers in the cleansing of the parks. Facilities and staff that are grant supported will continue to be maintained according to the grant criteria. The result of the reduction in staff will mean some services including events and school work will be reduced and there will be a new service model developed. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £100,000 in 2018/19**

This proposal received an average score of **-0.54**

### You Said:

- You felt that parks may become untidy or deteriorate
- Parks and green spaces should be promoted for people's health, social aspects and overall well-being
- Park Rangers do a good job and therefore they should not be reduced
- Children and Young People will be negatively affected by this proposal
- Our parks are an asset and places to be proud of
- Schools use the facilities a lot and this proposal may affect the usage by schools

### We Did:

Most responses made by the public raised concerns about the potential impact this change might have on the country park service. The Council is reviewing the delivery model to prioritise safe environments and to minimise, as far as practicable, any impact on events, promotional work and general usage by the public. This change will be implemented in 2018/19.





## **We proposed:**

### **Increase annual fee for discretionary bus passes**

The Council currently provides concessionary bus passes to non-qualifying students on school transport services where there is spare seating capacity. It is proposed to increase the existing charge of £50 a term to £100 per term. **It is estimated that this could generate additional income of approximately £6,000 in 2018/19**

This proposal received an average score of **-0.17**

#### **You Said:**

- A 100% increase in the cost is too much
- This would put pressure on students, families who have a limited income or families who are financially deprived
- You agree to an increase but by a lower amount
- There was also some general agreement with this proposal

#### **We Did:**

Most responses made by the public were not supportive of this change. All statutory home-to-school transport for eligible children (those living more than 2/3 miles from their nearest school, depending on their age) will be unaffected. Discretionary passes are only provided for non-qualifying pupils where there is extra capacity. This change will be implemented from April 2018.

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## **We proposed:**

### **Increase Crematorium charges**

The Council manages the Pentre Bychan Crematorium facility. The cost of cremations at Pentre Bychan Crematorium has risen to cover inflation only for the last few years and the Council has continued to invest and improve the facilities. The proposal is to increase the Cremation fees from the 1st of April 2018 by £50 for single cremations and £100 for joint/double cremations. **It is estimated this could generate additional income of approximately £100,000 in 2018/19.**

This proposal received an average score of **0.27**

#### **You Said:**

- Funeral costs are already expensive and therefore we shouldn't be making them more expensive
- It is unfair to do this to grieving people
- Not enough information is provided to be able to make a decision
- We should increase the charges further and charge more than is being proposed
- There was also some general agreement with this proposal

#### **We Did:**

There was a mixed response from the public, including agreement, a request for more information and concern about impact on grieving families. The crematorium provides a first-class service, the Council is investing in the facilities and the proposed charges are comparable to those of other service providers. This change will be implemented from April 2018.



## **We proposed:**

### **Increase Allotment fees**

The Council provides allotment sites at Prices Lane, Erddig, Tan y Fron and Victoria Road. There are currently 455 allotments plots. It is proposed to increase allotment fees for all tenants by 25% from the 1st April 2018. This would mean a quarter plot would cost £39, a half plot £72, and a full plot £122. **It is estimated this could generate additional income of approximately £4,000 in 2018/19.**

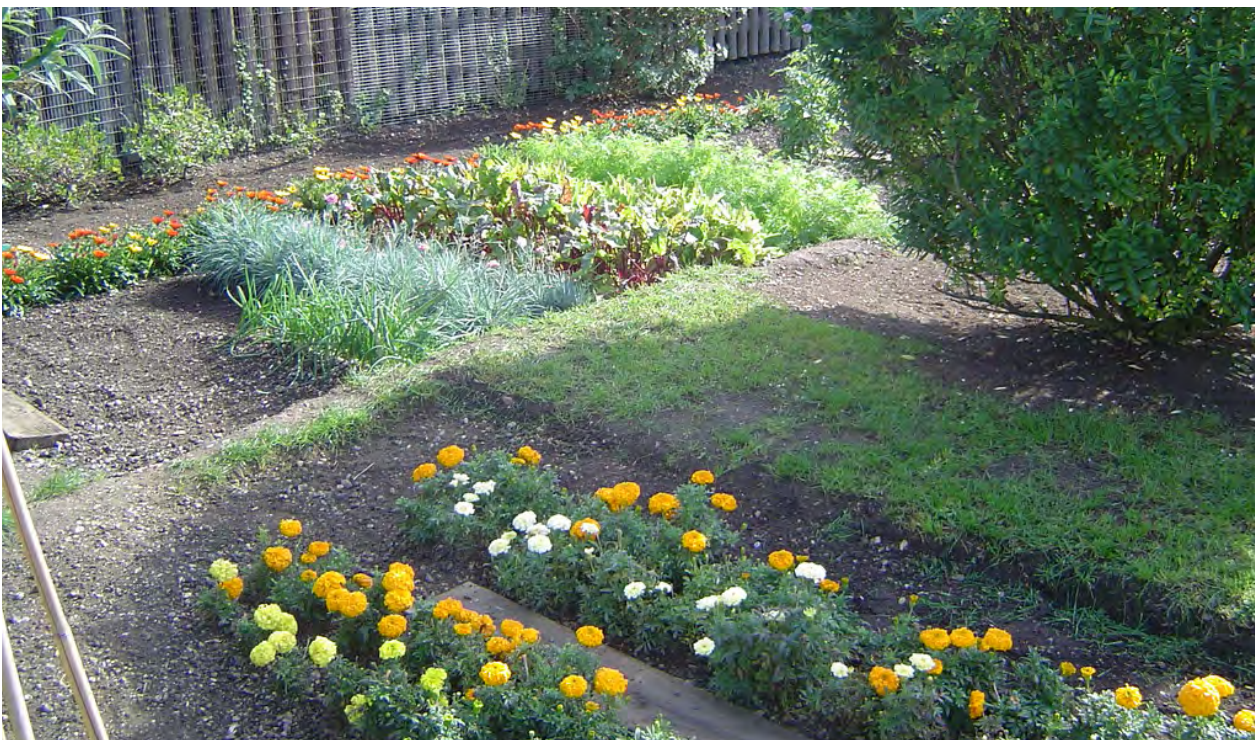
This proposal received an average score of **0.44**

#### **You Said:**

- The health and social benefits of allotments will be lost if people have to give them up
- The additional income received is not worth it
- The use of allotments should be encouraged as it encourages the growing of healthy food
- A 25% increase in the cost was too high
- There was also some general agreement with this proposal

#### **We Did:**

Most responses made by the public were not supportive of this change. However, the proposed increase in fees merely recovers the costs to the Council in administration and servicing of the allotments. This change will be implemented from April 2018.





## We proposed:

### Waste and recycling collection review

The Council has been reviewing its Waste and Recycling Collection Service for the past two years as we strive to increase our recycling rates to meet Welsh Government targets and to improve service efficiency. We have invested in new recycling vehicles, improved kerbside collection of additional recyclable material, and rolled out both weekly food waste collections and new kerbside collection receptacles (trolleys). The Council's medium term aim is to review the collection frequency of residual (black bin) waste. The proposal is to review waste services with a view to improving recycling rates and achieving service efficiencies.

This proposal received an average score of **-0.20**

#### You Said:

- We should keep black bin collections fortnightly as black bins are already full after two weeks
- The amount of fly-tipping would increase if there was a decrease in the frequency of black bin collections
- Need more info to fully comment - should be further consultation on this once actual proposals are known
- If collection frequencies reduce then the amount of vermin, rats, bad smells and other risks to health would increase

#### We Did:

Most responses made by the public were not supportive of this change. This proposal will not be implemented at this stage, but this feedback will be considered as part of the overall waste and recycling service review when we develop our future strategy later this year. Only then will Councillors take a decision on whether to implement this or any other major change.





### **We asked:**

**Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Environment and Planning' section?**

### **You Said:**

- There should be no cuts to the parks service
- Suggested improvements to household waste collections
- The roads and highways of Wrexham need to be improved
- Wrexham Council's planning department and services should be improved
- Protecting the environment is important now and for the future, and there should be no cuts in this area

### **We Did:**

The Council is reviewing the delivery model within Parks to prioritise safe environments and to minimise, as far as practicable, any impact on events, promotional work and general usage by the public.

The feedback on suggested improvements to household waste collections will be considered as part of the overall waste and recycling service review when we develop our future strategy later this year.

As the Council has limited and diminishing resources it cannot improve all of the roads/highways in the County Borough. Instead it must prioritise the main, heavily used roads in the interest of highway and pedestrian safety.

Over recent years, financial cuts have meant that the Planning Service has been reduced to a statutory minimum. However, the service is improving public access to information on Planning applications via the Council's website.

The Council has had to face very difficult decisions regarding the prioritisation of its limited resources, but fully accepts its responsibilities under the Environment Act.



# **ORGANISATION**

## **Corporate and Customer Services**

### **We asked:**

**Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Corporate and Customer Services' section?**

### **You Said:**

- Don't supply new ipads to councillors or ask councillors to buy their own ipads
- Share more services with other Councils or Organisations
- Don't outsource services
- Review the number of Council buildings, combine locations where possible and sell off unused buildings
- There was also some general agreement with these proposals

### **We Did:**

IPads are the most cost effective medium for Members to access their business materials. Significant savings have been achieved over the cost of printed agendas for example. Asking Councillors to buy their own IPads would be contrary to the

recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales set up by Welsh Government tasked with assessing a consistent approach to Member remuneration.

Opportunities to share service capacity with other organisations are being actively pursued. The Council has a policy of a mixed economy to ensure that services are provided by the most economically attractive provider.

In 2012 WCBC occupied nineteen buildings for office accommodation, and in 2017 we occupy 11. We have also reduced the average cost per square foot of this accommodation by approximately 44%. There are plans to consolidate the buildings we occupy even further through continued agile working and a more efficient use of space.



# FINANCE

## **We proposed:**

### **Community support officers**

The Council provides funding to North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner to fund community support officers (PCSO's). The funding agreement is due to end in March 2019 and it is proposed to bring this forward to October 2018. Therefore if this funding cannot be identified from elsewhere, this could result in the number of PCSO's within the County Borough reducing. **It is estimated this could generate savings of approximately £140,000 in 2018/19 and a further £140,000 in 2019/20.**

This proposal received an average score of **-0.56**

#### **You Said:**

- PCSO's are needed
- With the amount of Anti-social behaviour in Wrexham, PCSO's should not be cut
- Reducing PCSO's could lead to more crime and anti-social behaviour
- More PCSO's and Police Officers are required
- PCSO's are not effective

#### **We Did:**

The proposal to end the contract with NW Police was reconsidered in the light of the comments received. A much less severe reduction has been agreed which results in half of the Council's contribution continuing. The service arrangements will be influenced by the professional advice of the Police service.

## **We proposed:**

### **Are there any other comments you wish to make about anything you have read in the 'Finance' section?**

#### **You Said:**

- We should be looking to cut councillor costs and expenses instead of making budget savings as well as reducing staff costs by reducing salaries and the number of managers within the Council
- Don't reduce the number of PCSO's
- Do not outsource or use consultants
- There was also comments about general council efficiencies

nationally consistent approach to member remuneration. Individual Councils are not permitted to fix allowances outside the IRPW recommended scales.

Wrexham's senior management structure is one of the slimmest in Wales following recent senior management restructures. Reducing it further would present serious governance risks.

There was strong opposition to the staff reduction in the Internal Audit Service and consequently this was reconsidered and although the savings in Audit remain, they will now be achieved without the staffing reduction.

#### **We Did:**

Councillors' pay is fixed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales set up by the Welsh Government to ensure a



# **COUNCIL PLAN THEMES**

**We also asked if you had any other suggestions for ways in which we could save money or generate income within the Council plan themes of Economy, People, Place and Organisation.**

## **You Said:**

- The Council should be looking to cut councillor costs and expenses instead of making budget savings as well as reducing staff costs by reducing salaries and the number of managers within the Council
- The Council should remove the role of Mayor
- Share / merge services with other Councils and Organisations where possible
- Look at in house savings such as reducing staffing costs
- We should invest money into the town centre to encourage more businesses and therefore reduce the number of empty shops within the town centre

## **We Did:**

Councillors' pay is fixed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales set up by the Welsh Government to ensure a nationally consistent approach to member remuneration. Individual Councils are not permitted to fix allowances outside the IRPW recommended scales.

Wrexham's senior management structure is one of the slimmest in Wales following recent senior management restructures. Reducing it further would present serious governance risks.

Removing the role of mayor is not possible by law however the Council has been reducing overall expenditure in recent years and continues to take opportunities to achieve greater efficiencies in delivering this service.

Sharing services with other organisations has been and is being actively pursued in a number of service areas.

Staffing costs, the greatest single Council expenditure, continues to be a source of review to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Regeneration for Wrexham Town Centre is a key priority in the Council's Economic Prosperity Strategy with the development of the Master Plan and investments in projects such as Ty Pawb as a catalyst for further investment. We are also working with property owners in Wrexham Town Centre in attempt to improve properties and reduce the number of empty properties. There are now a number of schemes that can assist owners with improvements. In addition a number of town centre based events are planned throughout the year to attract people in to the town centre to increase footfall to help improve perception of Wrexham as an attractive destination.

Removing the role of mayor is not possible by law however the Council has been reducing overall expenditure in recent years and continues to take opportunities to achieve greater efficiencies in delivering this service.



# COUNCIL TAX

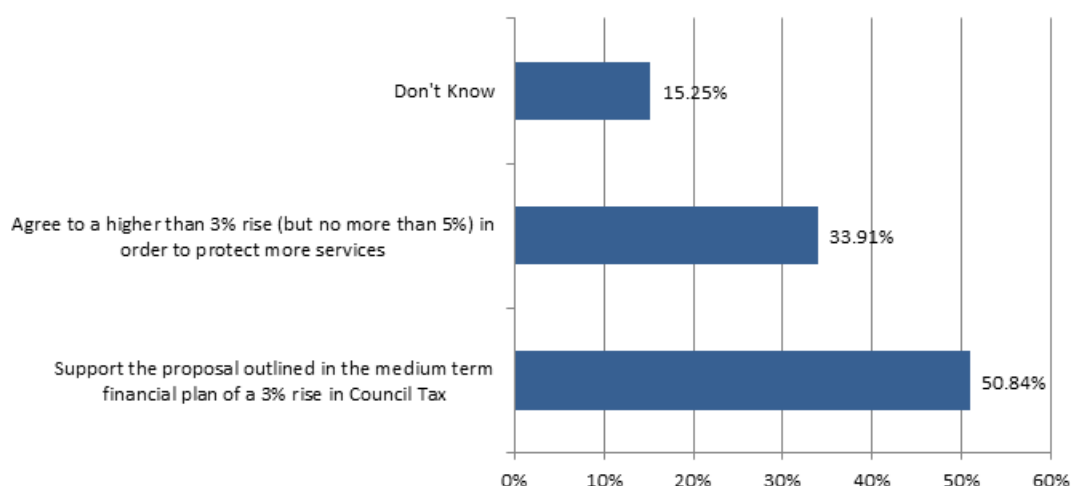
## **We proposed:**

**The Council's total budget for the 2017/18 financial year was £225 million, which was made up of £169 million from Welsh Government funding and £56 million from Council Tax.**

Given the continuing financial challenge we face, and the increasing requirement to make savings and review our services, we would once again like to know what you think about increasing Council Tax. Welsh Government say that Local Authorities are able raise Council Tax by a maximum of 5%, which in Wrexham would mean an increase of £52.60 per year (or £1.01 per week) for Band D properties.

Raising council tax by 5% (rather than the already planned 3%) would generate approximately £910k per annum in additional income (which would reduce the amount of money we need to save from other services).

## **Which of the following options would you prefer?**



## **You Said:**

- Council tax should not be increased and Council tax is too high already
- The increase should be in line with wage increases
- You agree to an increase and support paying more if it will result in protecting services
- There was concern about the affordability of an increase as this will place additional financial pressure on individuals and families
- You don't get value for money for your council tax and you are unhappy about existing services

## **We Did:**

The Council consulted on Council Tax increases at a higher level than its Medium Term Financial Plan – increase up to 5%. During the period of the consultation the Council Tax increase cap in England was increased to 6%. There are also many Councils in Wales that are increasing Council Tax at a higher level than 3%. The Council reviewed the proposal and has limited the increase to just less than half the difference between 3% and 5%. It has set the tax increase at 3.9%. Wrexham will remain one of the lowest tax authorities in England and Wales.



**The information in this booklet is available in other formats and other languages upon request.**

**To make a request for this document in another format or language please email: [telluswhatyouthink@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:telluswhatyouthink@wrexham.gov.uk)**

**or write to:**

**Tell us what you think  
3rd Floor Annex  
The Guildhall  
Wrexham  
LL11 1AY**

If you want to read all of the details about the proposals the Council made, and the results of the consultation, you will find a full report at [www.wrexham.gov.uk/budget](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/budget)

If you're interested in taking part in more consultations and letting Wrexham Council know what you think, why not sign up to Wrexham LSB's new engagement hub –

Your Voice Wrexham [www.yourvoicewrexham.net](http://www.yourvoicewrexham.net)

