



**Our City, Our Future..**

**...Help us  
decide**



**SUMMARY OF  
CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

**October 2010**

**Budget Consultation Results  
October 2010**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council has embarked on an ambitious and challenging consultation programme on budget issues. The public has been asked to look at local expenditure issues and the wider implications of reduced budgets for the city. This report summarises the process adopted and the salient results.

**2 Approach**

- 2.1 The consultation programme began in April 2010 to identify priorities for the Council and during September and October a number of public events have taken place to allow communities to express opinions on spending issues. These have been:
- six local neighbourhood summits;
  - the City Summit co-hosted with “The Scotsman” newspaper;
  - the Edinburgh Equality Network, and
  - the Edinburgh Youth Forum.
- 2.2 Additionally, comments have been sought through an online survey, feedback from the Council newspaper (Edinburgh Outlook) and a special budget consultation email address.
- 2.3 Around 1,700 people or organisations, representing a broad cross section of the city, have offered views on the financial pressures facing the Council or the city. About 900 responses came from the online survey. Around 300 residents attended the six local summits that were held across this city and around 100 attended the City Summit. A further 400 people responded via Outlook or by other means.

**3 Objectives**

- 3.1 The purpose of the consultation was to provide an opportunity for those with an interest in the future well being of Edinburgh to:
- better understand the challenges faced by the public sector;
  - appreciate the implications for the local expenditure and the whole city economy;
  - discuss the budget choices facing the Council and partners; and
  - help to inform the right strategic decisions for the city over the next 5 years.

**4 Consultation Themes**

- 4.1 Attendees at the local summits and respondents to the Outlook and online material were encouraged to consider eight themes and respond to a series of

questions, as well as offer views on spending issues focusing on Council services. The themes and questions are outlined below:

- **Savings and Efficiencies:** Do you think the Council is right to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?
- **Communities:** Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?
- **Delivering services differently:** Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?
- **Pressure on services to vulnerable groups:** Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?
- **Charging to cover costs:** Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?
- **Buildings:** Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?
- **Environment:** Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?
- **Council Tax:** Would you consider paying more if this was directed to essential, front line services?

4.2 Participants at the City Summit considered issues for the wider public sector, as well as the Council, and the implications for the city in general. The themes were:

- maintaining a robust and successful economy;
- working together;
- looking to the future; and
- charging for services.

## 5 Service priorities

5.1 In the Spring 2010 Residents Survey conducted for the Council by Ipsos Mori, 1,000 residents provided their opinion on the priorities for the city. The top five are:

1. Reducing crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and danger (74%);
2. A strong economy with high levels of employment (53%);
3. High quality schools and nurseries (50%);
4. More effective transport arrangements with well maintained roads and pavements (46%);
- 5= Protecting children from harm and abuse (45%);
- 5= Maintaining a clean and attractive city (45%).

5.2 While this list is familiar, it is notable that residents are placing more emphasis on the economy in spring 2010, than in recent times. In 2009 only 46% of residents felt this should be a top priority, making it about sixth in the rankings.

## 6 General responses

6.1 The results from the questions associated with eight themes are shown in the table below. These reflect the views of individuals who responded to the questions through the online and Edinburgh Outlook questionnaires but not at the local summits. The results from each of the local summits are shown in section 7.

Questions	Yes	No
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	80%	20%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	83%	17%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	54%	46%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	83%	17%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	56%	44%
Do you think they Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	86%	14%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	51%	49%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	68%	32%

- Base = 1289

6.2 The main issues arising from the response to the eight questions are as follows:

- the majority of respondents are in favour of savings being focused in back office services, however, improvements in processes would be preferred as reductions in back office may impact on the quality of front line services;
- the Council should focus on delivering services to the times when and where they are most needed. However, early intervention and joined up working with partners should also be considered;
- respondents are divided over the way services should be delivered. Many feel that doing things differently would be appropriate provided service standards are protected. However, others feel that services should not be provided by other organisations and had accountability concerns;
- the majority felt that the Council should prioritise service to those greatest in need, however, there are some services which should be protected;
- the majority of respondents agreed that the Council was right to achieve savings through better use of the Council's estate and more “creative thinking” was required;
- charges to cover costs should be introduced, however, tiered charging could be an option to protect some groups;

- respondents were divided on changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection. Some felt that this approach would increase recycling, while others were concerned about hygiene implications if the service was reduced; and
- an increase in Council Tax was deemed appropriate, provided this was a small increase and directed to front line services.

### **Comparisons between the Local Summit and other responses**

6.3 When comparing the results from all of the local summit with the results from other responses, some distinctions are apparent in the way people responded:

- both the local summit results and other responses showed the majority in favour of savings being focused on back office costs, before front line services, however, at the local summit meetings the proportion in favour was around 15 percentage points less;
- the majority of responses were in favour of directing services to the times when and where they are most needed at both the, however, at the local summit meetings a smaller proportion were in favour of this;
- the majority responding at the local summits did not support services being delivered through other organisations, elsewhere the majority were in favour; and
- at the local summits, the majority were against charging to cover costs, however, the results of all other methods show that a small majority did support this.

6.4 There was little differentiation in the results from either source or the following questions with:

- the vast majority of respondents agreeing that the Council was right to prioritise services to those in greatest need.
- a majority of respondents agreeing that the Council is right to look at how savings could be achieved through the estate;
- a small majority were in support of a change from a weekly to fortnightly waste collection service; and
- the majority would consider paying more Council Tax if it was clearly directed to frontline services.

6.5 A range of comments about savings options have been raised by respondents. The key themes/issues raised throughout the consultation are outlined in Appendix 1.

## **7 Local Summit Findings**

7.1 Six local summit meetings were held across the city and overall, around 300 people attended. The results of these along with key points from the discussion are outlined below.

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## Local Summit 1: South West (15 September 2010)

Questions	Yes	No	Declined to Respond
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	47.5%	17.5%	35.0%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	27.5%	15.0%	57.5%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	32.5%	7.5%	60.0%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	15.0%	37.5%	47.5%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	50.0%	12.5%	37.5%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	25.0%	40.0%	35.0%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	35.0%	17.5%	47.5%

Base = 40

### 7.2 Key points from the discussion:

- while the findings show that the majority of respondents are in favour of savings being focused on back office costs, improving processes to enhance services and reduce costs was also favoured;
- there were high abstention rates for this question, however, improving joined up working to reduce costs was considered worthwhile;
- opinion was divided on outsourcing, however, the importance of accurate service specification was highlighted;
- difficulty was apparent in agreeing service reductions;
- the appropriateness of some services was questioned, for example, stair cleaning;
- the majority agreed that savings achieved through Council properties and buildings could be used more creatively; and
- opinion was divided on increasing Council Tax. Although voting showed in favour, the majority of views expressed were opposed to an increase.

## Local Summit 2: West (22 September 2010)

Questions	Yes	No	Declined to Respond
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	61.2%	8.2%	30.6%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	36.7%	18.4%	44.9%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	No response recorded due to technical difficulty		
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	57.1%	10.2%	32.7%

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Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	26.5%	44.9%	28.6%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	53.1%	4.1%	42.9%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	55.1%	18.4%	26.5%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	44.9%	26.5%	28.6%

Base = 49

### 7.3 Key points from the discussion:

- there was a call for a wider review of the budget by the new Chief Executive;
- concern that incremental cuts would damage services;
- a majority was in favour of savings being focused on back office costs and, externalising Human Resources was suggested;
- the Council should consider more income generation, for example, environmental wardens could be more pro-active in fining;
- concern was raised over the reductions in funding to voluntary sector organisations;
- although the majority was against introducing charges to cover costs, introducing tiered charging was considered to be acceptable for some services; and
- the majority was in favour of using buildings to make savings, but there were mixed views on using schools to deliver other services.

### Local Summit 3: South (23 September 2010)

Questions	Yes	No	Declined to Respond
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	14.0%	44.0%	42.0%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	44.0%	20.0%	36.0%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	42.0%	28.0%	30.0%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	62.0%	6.0%	32.0%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	34.0%	24.0%	42.0%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	56.0%	10.0%	34.0%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	40.0%	40.0%	20.0%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	70.0%	20.0%	10.0%

Base = 50

**7.4 Key points from the discussion:**

- the majority was against savings being made in back office costs as it was felt reductions here would impact on front line services;
- although the majority believed that services should be directed to when and where they are most needed, it was also felt that long term objectives and prevention/early intervention may be more beneficial;
- although 42% were in favour of providing services differently, frustration was expressed that Council Tax would go to profit for the private sector;
- the majority agreed that the Council should prioritise services to those in greatest need, however, it was also felt that some services should be protected from cuts;
- 34% were in favour of increasing charges to cover costs, although some believed that this approach might lead people to stop using the service;
- opinion was divided on the introduction of a fortnightly collection. It was felt that the new approach may work if an education programme was also introduced; and
- the majority were in favour of an increase in Council Tax, but improvements in collection rates should be made prior to any increase.

**Local Summit 4: East (29 September 2010)**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Declined to Respond</b>
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	20.9%	11.6%	67.4%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	41.9%	9.3%	48.8%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	18.6%	72.1%	9.3%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	37.2%	2.3%	60.5%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	16.3%	48.8%	34.9%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	20.9%	18.6%	60.5%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	34.9%	30.2%	34.9%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	23.3%	32.6%	44.2%

Base = 43

**7.5 Key points from the discussion:**

- concern was raised that the suggested package of cuts commenced prior to consultation starting;
- concern was raised regarding the Council’s priorities with the Tram project progressing and service reductions being considered;

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- a high percentage chose not to respond to the question on back office savings. Of those who responded the majority favoured savings to be made here, however, it was also felt that this approach would affect front line services;
- the majority was against services being provided differently. However, it was felt that usage statistics could be examined and a skeleton service provided when appropriate;
- overall, the majority was against charging to cover costs. If this were to be introduced, it was felt that higher income groups should pay;
- 33% were against an increase in Council Tax, however, if this did occur, it was considered important to explain how this money was to be used; and
- concern was expressed on how older people will be supported during this period of service reductions.

### Local Summit 5: North (5 October 2010)

Questions	Yes	No	Declined to Respond
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	59.5%	16.2%	24.3%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	56.8%	21.6%	21.6%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	37.8%	37.8%	24.3%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	35.1%	35.1%	29.7%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	35.1%	43.2%	21.6%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	62.2%	8.1%	29.7%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	51.4%	37.8%	10.8%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	51.4%	24.3%	24.3%

Base = 37

### 7.6 Key points from the discussion:

- a majority was in favour of savings being made in back office costs. It was considered to be valuable to conduct a cost benefit analysis to see where cuts should be made;
- the Council should consider a reduction in management, as well as a reduction in pay to avoid redundancies;
- concern was raised as to the use of technology as this approach may exclude certain socio-economic groups;
- the majority was against charging to cover costs as it was felt that the less well off would be adversely affected; and

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- while 51% were in favour of a fortnightly waste collection, it was considered important that the service should function on public holidays.

### Local Summit 6: Centre (6 October 2010)

Questions	Yes	No	Declined to Respond
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	43.8%	20.3%	35.9%
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	26.6%	17.2%	56.3%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	26.6%	42.2%	31.3%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	14.1%	17.2%	68.8%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	20.3%	39.1%	40.6%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	48.4%	0.0%	51.6%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	23.4%	34.4%	42.2%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	59.4%	12.5%	28.1%

Base = 64

### 7.7 Key points from the discussion:

- the voluntary sector should be recognised and valued for the work that it does;
- of those that responded a majority felt that directing services to the when and where they are most needed is appropriate. Early intervention was also considered to be important;
- a minority was in favour of charging to cover costs. However, it was felt that if this were to be introduced then charges should be based on ability to pay;
- of those that responded, 48% felt that achieving savings through buildings was appropriate. However, if services were reduced then there was a need to ensure sufficient transport is available to access services elsewhere; and
- a majority was in favour of an increase in Council Tax. It was also considered appropriate to pass a levy onto restaurants and pubs in the city.

## 8 Youth Forum

- 8.1 Around 16 young people, aged between eleven and twenty-one, attended the Youth Forum at the City Chambers on the 11<sup>th</sup> October and discussed budget issues. The responses to the questions and key points from the discussion are outlined below:

Question	Yes	No
Do you think the Council is rights to focus savings on back office costs – wherever possible – before frontline services are considered?	33.3%	66.7%

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Question	Yes	No
Do you think the Council is right to consider directing these services to the times when and where they are most needed?	68.8%	31.3%
Would you support more Council services being delivered through other organisations, including the private sector?	75.0%	25.0%
Do you think the Council is right to prioritise services to those in greatest need?	71.4%	28.6%
Do you think the Council is right to consider introducing a charge for these types of services to cover costs?	8.3%	91.7%
Do you think the Council is right to look at how savings can be achieved through better use of its properties, reviewing opening hours, moving some services to nearby locations and sharing properties with public sector partners?	50.0%	50.0%
Would you support, for example, changing from a weekly to a fortnightly domestic waste collection service?	68.8%	31.3%
Would you consider paying more Council Tax if this was directed to essential, front line services?	60.0%	40.0%

\*Base = 16

### 8.2 Key points from the discussion:

- a majority was not in favour of savings being made in back office costs;
- the majority felt that directing services to when and where they are most needed would be appropriate. However, there were concerns about the service during off peak periods and a skeleton service operating at quieter times was considered appropriate;
- although the majority was in favour of delivering services differently, there were concerns over the quality and accountability of service provision.
- the majority was against charging to cover costs as there was a need to consider groups who cannot afford to pay extra. It was also felt that the Council should be more creative, so that money went further; and
- the majority was in favour of moving to a fortnightly collection. It was also felt that more recycling facilities should be provided in schools to encourage this activity. There was also concern regarding how communities and individuals would cope with the increase in the number of waste collection containers.

## 9 City Summit

9.1 In addition to the neighbourhood summits, a major consultation also took place at a city wide level. The City Summit was co hosted with Scotsman Publications on 15<sup>th</sup> October, with senior representatives from the Council, Lothian and Borders Police, Fire and Rescue, NHS Lothian and the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce answering questions in a “question time” style debate. Participants considered issues for the wider public sector, as well as the Council, and the implications for the city in general. Public, private and voluntary organisations joined the debate.

9.2 The format to this summit differed to the neighbourhood meetings, with the discussion focusing on four key themes. The key points from the discussion are outlined in the table below:

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Theme	Key themes/issues
<b>Maintaining a robust and successful economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEC should look to private sector approaches to limit redundancies. Examples include reduced working hours, unpaid leave and redeployment.</li> <li>• Festivals are an essential part of our economy and need to ensure that we continue to develop them and maintain our reputation. Also need to consider people who visit the city that are not wealthy – festivals need to stay affordable.</li> <li>• Introducing a tourist tax was considered to be appropriate, particularly if this was voluntary. However, it's attractive to tax people who don't vote and visitors face pressure from VAT and airport taxes.</li> <li>• Edinburgh needs to maintain high quality of life and economic growth, by focussing on the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental success.</li> <li>• Edinburgh also needs to diversify and maintain its skills base by investing more widely, including in renewable energy and creative industries. Concern was expressed about a lack of investment in apprenticeships.</li> <li>• While technology can provide efficiency savings, any change needs to be carefully managed to avoid increasing costs. Computer crime creates additional spending pressures.</li> <li>• Technology is important in supporting vulnerable people but a balance is needed between technology and the staff who respond.</li> <li>• The Council's role in economic development involves helping to create the conditions where businesses can prosper. This is addressed by working with business through mechanisms such as the Economic Action Resilience Network, identifying new sources of funding and efficiencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Working Together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has extensive experience of working with the private and voluntary sector, with its involvement with TIE and BT. Most social care for adults is provided by external suppliers. A view was expressed that the role of business leaders was to inform and advise, in conjunction with other bodies such as universities.</li> <li>• CEC currently has officers with private sector experience in economic development and transport. The Council listens to advice but decisions are ultimately political and made by elected members.</li> <li>• Partnership working is critical in areas such as child protection and youth activities. Examples of shared services from the Police include training, IT and forensics.</li> <li>• There was a recognition that the cuts will affect all organisations. The Council does not plan to implement cuts disproportionately to other organisations and will inform agencies to help them prepare .</li> </ul>
<b>Looking to the future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern expressed about the future, given that people with Learning Disabilities (LD) are currently waiting for service. The Council aims to protect vulnerable people and has increased funding to LD and other groups. However the Council has to face increasing needs and limits on money, and will balance arguments for spending to save and support the valuable work done by carers and preventative services.</li> <li>• Financial pressures can be a useful impetus to innovation, for example in the Fire Service, where greater emphasis is now placed on preventative work.</li> <li>• There was a call for the number of councillors to be reduced and for the Chief Executive and councillors to take a pay cut. These issues can only be addressed at a national level.</li> <li>• Communities are our greatest asset, they could be better utilised by learning to work together more effectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Paying for services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means testing for charges needs to be carefully managed, as people with incomes slightly above benefits can be worse off as they do not receive concessions.</li> <li>• Currently it is difficult to know how front line services will be affected. Savings are still short of target despite some unpalatable decisions. Tough decisions will be required when the budget is set in February.</li> <li>• The savings already agreed (£16m) are thought to be less controversial with the public as they affect back office staff, through initiatives such as management delayering.</li> <li>• Charges are difficult for those on benefits, for example the £20 cost of a "blue badge" renewal. People deserve more investment in services.</li> <li>• A pay freeze and pension reform will help protect services.</li> </ul>
<b>Open Session</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councils need to develop shared services arrangements to avoid solutions being imposed. However, a desire for local autonomy has meant limited progress.</li> <li>• There was discussion of the trams with some calling to halt the project. Others</li> </ul>

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Theme	Key themes/issues
	<p>pointed out increasing commuting, population and airport passengers. Overspend and reduced deliverables were key concerns. Contingency plans are in place for spending up to £600M but there would be an opportunity cost for using this money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The refurbishment of theatre venues in the city was considered to be necessary. Potentially if a contribution from tourists was collected, then this money could be ring-fenced to refurbish venues across the city.</li> <li>• The Council's use of resources was questioned, for example Tynecastle School has 900 places but only 600 pupils. A call was made for more community use of Council assets. The Council is amenable to community use of facilities, recognising its role of a custodian for the future.</li> <li>• There was a call for more meetings to create dialogue, as oppose to consultation. This would be particularly important when the details of cuts were clearer.</li> </ul>

### 10 Other feedback

10.1 A range of other consultations have been carried out by organisations across the city using the toolkit supplied by the Council. The results of the consultations held by Greener Leith, where 53 people responded, South Edinburgh Voluntary Sector Forum, where 22 people contributed, Queensferry and District Community Council, where 6 members contributed, the Edinburgh Equality Network, The Action Group and Fairmilehead Community Council have been received.

10.2 The main points from the consultation by Greener Leith are:

- a majority was in favour of a move to a fortnightly collection provided that a food waste recycling service was provided;
- a majority was also in favour of an increase to the Garden Aid service for private house holders;
- around three-quarters of respondents would be prepared to pay more Council Tax if this meant fewer reductions in services;
- a key theme that emerged related to the perceived inequity of the proposals, with some considering poorer people suffering most from the cuts; more
- more explanation and discussion was required.

10.3 The main points from the consultation held by the South Edinburgh Voluntary Sector Forum are:

- the questions were poorly phrased;
- the use of new technologies may provided barriers for some socio-economic groups;
- through savings and service reductions problems may be displaced;
- providing services differently is dependent on service standards being protected;
- significant increases to charges would be detrimental for many organisations;

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- opportunity for creative thinking in regards to Council buildings, however, libraries provided an essential service in the community;
- general support for fortnightly waste collection, however, need to consider the variety of household sizes and their needs; and
- provided this was directed to essential frontline services, there was a general support for an increase in Council Tax.

### 10.4 The main points from the consultation by the Queensferry and District Community Council (QDCC) are:

- the Council budget should focus on protecting frontline services and any cuts should focus on 'backroom' or support services;
- the Council should explore alternative models of public service delivery including sharing service delivery with the private sector and/or third sector;
- the Council should focus on delivery of statutory services and outsource non statutory services to the third sector or private sector;
- QDCC would be opposed to any introduction of charges or increase of existing charges;
- QDCC agree that buildings could be used to achieve savings, however, local circumstances need to be taken into account;
- QDCC would support a change to fortnightly collections, provided that the special uplift fee is waived for the first uplift, per household, per year; and
- QDCC do not support an increase in Council Tax as there are other saving opportunities that should be explored.

### 10.5 The Edinburgh Equality Network met on 9 September to consider the budget implications on equalities issues in the city. The main themes of their discussion were:

- the council needs to take a strategic view of cuts by equalities group i.e.. disabled people, to ascertain real impact;
- attempts to share more information about potential cuts were welcomed;
- EQIA is a tool that should be used through the difficult financial decisions that lay ahead to ensure decisions are as fair as possible and that negative impacts are mitigated where possible;
- the protection of services to the most vulnerable must be a key principle;
- early intervention strategies and policies should be to the fore; and
- the Council must continue to monitor impact on equalities groups as the savings are implemented.

10.6 The Action Group - Board of Directors and Trustees have offered the following comments:

- the public should be able to comment on whether pay rises for employees earning £20,000 is appropriate. Some people in the voluntary sector earn less than this and experience pay freezes/cuts;
- more information on the cost of Council services should be provided;
- further public meetings should be held for consultation on voluntary sector-specific proposals; and
- the Council must recognise the extent of budget reductions previously placed on voluntary organisations.

10.7 Fairmilehead Community Council have provided the following comments, primarily of the consultation process rather than the budget itself:

- insufficient financial material was provided and the local summit meetings were not adequate consultation;
- a lack of opportunity to provide comments when completing online survey; and
- the online survey susceptible to rigging.

10.8 The results of research conducted by The Guardian have also been collected. In addition, a number of written contributions have been provided which highlight a variety of opinions and suggestions relating to the survey themes.

10.9 The results of these were collected and analysed along with the responses gathered from the Council's consultation.

## 11 Conclusions

11.1 A significant number of residents and organisations have taken the opportunity to contribute to the budget debate. Despite criticism of the questions posed the results do provide some pointers to the views of residents in terms of support for broad budget issues.

11.2 While the budget consultation exercise has been described as "flawed" by some commentators and groups, the opportunity to contribute has been welcomed by many and has been applauded by some as a "brave attempt by the Council to openly tackle a difficult issue".

11.3 There was some evidence that residents felt the discussion at the local summits was somewhat dominated by trade union and Council employee concerns regarding budget issues. However, due to the variety of opportunities available, residents were able to contribute via another method.

11.4 There is also evidence that respondents felt frustrated by a lack of clear budget information on savings. However, the Council's budget planning is continuing in the face of uncertainty and this will not be clarified until the Government's budget announcement in November.

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- 11.5 Broadly, it is the view of residents that the Council needs to deliver greater operational and organisational efficiencies before cutting or withdrawing services. Introducing charges or increasing existing charges are not ruled out. Appropriate increases in Council Tax may be acceptable, provided the Council is clear that funding is directed to priority services.
- 11.6 While the majority of respondents were in favour of delivering services differently, there were concerns regarding service quality and accountability being maintained. In addition, opinion on reducing domestic waste collections was divided.

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## Appendix 1

A range of comments about savings options have been raised by respondents. The main comments are outlined below:

Theme	Key comments/issues
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The questions were inappropriate/loaded;</li> <li>• The savings attributable to the options presented should be available.</li> <li>• Concern was raised that the first stage of cuts were suggested prior to consultation commencing.</li> </ul>
<b>1. Savings and Efficiencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestion that Council should improve processes to enhance services and reduce costs;</li> <li>• Council should consider outsourcing HR;</li> <li>• Council should consider how services could be pooled with other local authorities/organisations</li> <li>• Concern was raised at to the short term nature of savings and how Edinburgh will look in the future;</li> <li>• Concern that if there are reductions in back office then this will impact on quality of front line services.</li> <li>• There should not be a heavy reliance on technology – as this can act as barrier to older people and certain socio-economic groups;</li> </ul>
<b>2. Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Intervention should be considered to reduce cost of providing services later;</li> <li>• Need to consider enforcement versus prevention and think of long term objectives;</li> <li>• Council should improve joined up working;</li> <li>• Concern that reductions may lead to problems/costs being displaced i.e. reductions in resources/services for antisocial behaviour may place additional pressure on police;</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Partnerships are not successful – need alternatives for engaging with public.</li> <li>• Examine usage statistics and provide a skeleton service where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Delivering services differently</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General support for doing things differently provided service standards are protected.</li> <li>• If use voluntary sector then need to consider resources/funding;</li> <li>• If privatise, need to consider quality, accountability and how services will be monitored;</li> <li>• Service specification would have to be accurate if Council were to privatise, in order not to incur additional charges;</li> <li>• Suggestion that privatisation could be more expensive in the long term;</li> <li>• Concern that private sector take advantage of public sector.</li> <li>• Work with other local authorities/organisation to provide services, particular in rural areas. For example, waste collection/road repairs.</li> <li>• Use external consultants to provide HR services.</li> <li>• The council should remain providing services at the lowest cost for the best service.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Pressure on services to vulnerable groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council should not salami slice all services. Need to ensure some services are protected;</li> <li>• Need to consider where to spend money to achieve maximum effect.</li> <li>• CEC should consider how vulnerable groups will be supported during this period of service reduction.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Charging to cover costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiered charging could be introduced;</li> <li>• Should not charge vulnerable groups for services as the money simply isn't there;</li> <li>• Concern that if increase charges then this may prevent people from using the service;</li> <li>• Charges are a concern as they are not always consistently applied, e.g. Council tenants paying for stair cleaning, owners needn't;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could fine people responsible for noise complaints;</li> <li>• Leith Academy successfully implemented income generation initiatives and has resulted in larger budget cuts than other schools;</li> <li>• Higher income groups should pay more than other users;</li> <li>• Charges are dependent on what the activity is and should not be used for profit;</li> <li>• The private sector should be charged for the use of resources and building, but community based projects should not;</li> <li>• Charge for inter-library loans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Buildings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same buildings used for different purposes;</li> <li>• If reduce the number of libraries, for example, need to ensure that there is sufficient transport available to reach nearest library;</li> <li>• Concern over the volume of free to use toilets in the city;</li> <li>• Mixed view over using schools to deliver library services, using Community Centres would be preferential;</li> <li>• PPP schools are not available for community use in the evening due to prohibitive costs.</li> <li>• Libraries could decrease their opening hours, provided that services are available at a variety of times over a week.</li> <li>• Closed buildings are a waste of valuable resources.</li> <li>• Turn off lights in early hours.</li> <li>• Agree with property rationalisation.</li> <li>• Should not sell valuable public assets for quick cash boost.</li> <li>• Profit could be made on buildings on high street/market street.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern over hygiene implications if move to fortnightly collections;</li> <li>• Concern that this approach could increase inequality in the city;</li> <li>• If move to a fortnightly collection then larger bins should be provided for families etc;</li> <li>• Fortnightly approach could work if appropriately championed.</li> <li>• Concern was raised about a black market appearing in waste collection if service reduced.</li> <li>• Need education/information initiative to encourage people to recycle and then fortnightly collection would work.</li> <li>• This approach would encourage recycling and therefore reduce landfill costs.</li> <li>• Consider having other local authorise collect waste in rural areas, do road repairs etc.</li> <li>• Provide more thorough road repair/pavement repairs to reduce frequency needed.</li> <li>• Turn off street lights during the early hours.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Council Tax</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General support for increase in council tax provided this was directed to frontline services.</li> <li>• If don't increase Council tax then there is a concern over limited service availability following cuts.</li> <li>• Important to state the uses to which extra tax will be put.</li> <li>• Council Tax collection should be improved before an increase is introduced;</li> <li>• Favour increase if more transparency/accountability is provided;</li> <li>• Could increase council tax for upper bands and alleviate burden on vulnerable;</li> <li>• If increase Council Tax, then who decides where it should be spent (i.e. not trams)?</li> <li>• Suggestion to freeze Council Tax (as some people are asset rich, but cash poor) and ensure more creative thinking takes place.</li> <li>• Concern over some people's ability to pay higher taxes.</li> <li>• Council should not ask for more money when they are suggesting reducing services. Council should be more creative.</li> <li>• Consider having option for residents to pay their Council Tax early and receiving small discount for paying up front.</li> <li>• A freeze should be considered for those genuinely struggling.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay more Council Tax as a last resort, only after all other opportunities have been exhausted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Open Session</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council should consider more creative methods for income generation. E.g. could taxes that affect tourists be introduced;</li> <li>• Unnecessary postage between Council buildings – only internal mail should be used;</li> <li>• Introduce self directed support (social care);</li> <li>• Establish a City of Edinburgh bank;</li> <li>• There should not be a heavy reliance on technology – as this can act as barrier to older people and certain socio-economic groups;</li> <li>• Concern over the Council’s priorities, statutory services being reduced while discretionary spending of Trams proceed without consultation;</li> <li>• Concern over reductions in Sport and Leisure when population becoming less healthy;</li> <li>• Ensure that Council Tax is collected from students who remain in Edinburgh after graduation;</li> <li>• Ensure that residents in care homes, or their advocates, are actively pursued for their contribution to their care home fees;</li> <li>• Stop the printing of Outlook;</li> <li>• Reduce the number of Councillors;</li> <li>• Consider lobbying local government to raise revenue and ask for a political response to the economic position;</li> <li>• Concern over how older people will be supported during period of increasing tax, reductions in pension payments and services, and increasing care need;</li> <li>• Ensure there are no double welfare benefits payments.</li> <li>• Charge wayleave rental to ‘statutory undertakers’;</li> <li>• Reduce unnecessary road signage;</li> <li>• Employee’s wages should be frozen or reduced to help avoid redundancies;</li> <li>• Integrate public and school libraries;</li> <li>• Re-instate free special uplifts to reduce fly tipping; and</li> <li>• Decrease money spent on expenses/catering.</li> </ul>