

2017-18 Budget Consultation

Findings and Report

20th January 2017

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Data tables of survey respondents

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Online and Paper Questionnaire

1. Executive Summary of Public Consultation

1.1 Background

The proposed budget which stakeholders have been asked to comment on through the budget consultation totals £397.13m which includes investment of £24m and a requirement for £35.34m savings, many of which are based on the final year of the Meeting the Challenge 2 – Together We Can programme (MTC2). The budget includes proposals for more money to invest in social workers and support for children in care including intensive recovery and intervention, investments in employment and transitions for people with learning disabilities, more mental health professionals, and prioritising the county's roads.

This budget also proposes a 1.99 per cent council tax increase and an adult social care levy of 2 per cent on top.

Consultation on the 2017-18 draft budget took place between the 19th December 2016 and 19th January 2017. The consultation comprised of a self selecting online survey which was also available in hard copy at all local libraries. Consultation also took place with stakeholder organisations, councillors, and trade unions. The minutes of the discussion with Trade Unions and Schools Forum appear further in this report.

As well as targeted stakeholder engagement, the council carried out a strong social media communications campaign, including paid for Facebook advertising to target hard to reach groups.

The consultation outlined our budget proposals and sought feedback on the council's priorities. Stakeholders were also encouraged to give us their general feedback on our draft budget through a link to the full Medium Term Financial Plan.

This report outlines the key findings from the consultation.

1.2 Key Findings

- There was strong endorsement that the council should continue to focus on the priorities outlined in the council's strategy.
- 79% generally agree with our budget proposals including the 1.99% increase in council tax and 2% national adult social care levy, with the majority of those (59%) either strongly agreeing or agreeing
- Overall the comments received supported the council's proposals to raise council tax particularly in order to invest in services for people who need them most. The main comments arising from the feedback were:

- Support for the most vulnerable: including services for the elderly, children and those with mental health issues
 - Invest more to improving Gloucestershire's roads and infrastructure
 - Agree with budget proposals including the increase to council tax and inclusion of national adult social care levy to support the elderly and most vulnerable
 - Agree with council priorities
- Additional areas highlighted for more investment included health and social care, people with disabilities, schools, children and families and preventative services.
 - There was a strong feeling that we should continue to challenge ourselves to ensure we are delivering the best value for money

2. Findings from the Public Consultation on the 2017-18 Budget

2.1 Survey Method

An online survey was launched and promoted to all key stakeholders, including District and Town and Parish councils, the LEP, the voluntary and community sector, Health, service users and Gloucestershire residents.

Paper surveys were also available to the public through local libraries and media coverage was achieved through press releases and a strong social media campaign. This included Facebook advertising over a two week period to target hard to reach groups and resulted in us reaching 41,615 Gloucestershire residents and over 783 click throughs to the online survey (not all click throughs resulted in completed surveys).

The consultation was promoted through the People's Panel who fully represent the geographical distribution of the population of Gloucestershire as well as the age, gender and ethnic diversity of the county.

In total, 1030 responses to the public consultation survey were received. This was a 9% increase in responses from 2016.

We received a good mix of respondents from a cross section of the community.

Profile questions on gender, age, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation were also included in the survey and the responses have been analysed to ensure that the equality objectives of the council have been adhered to.

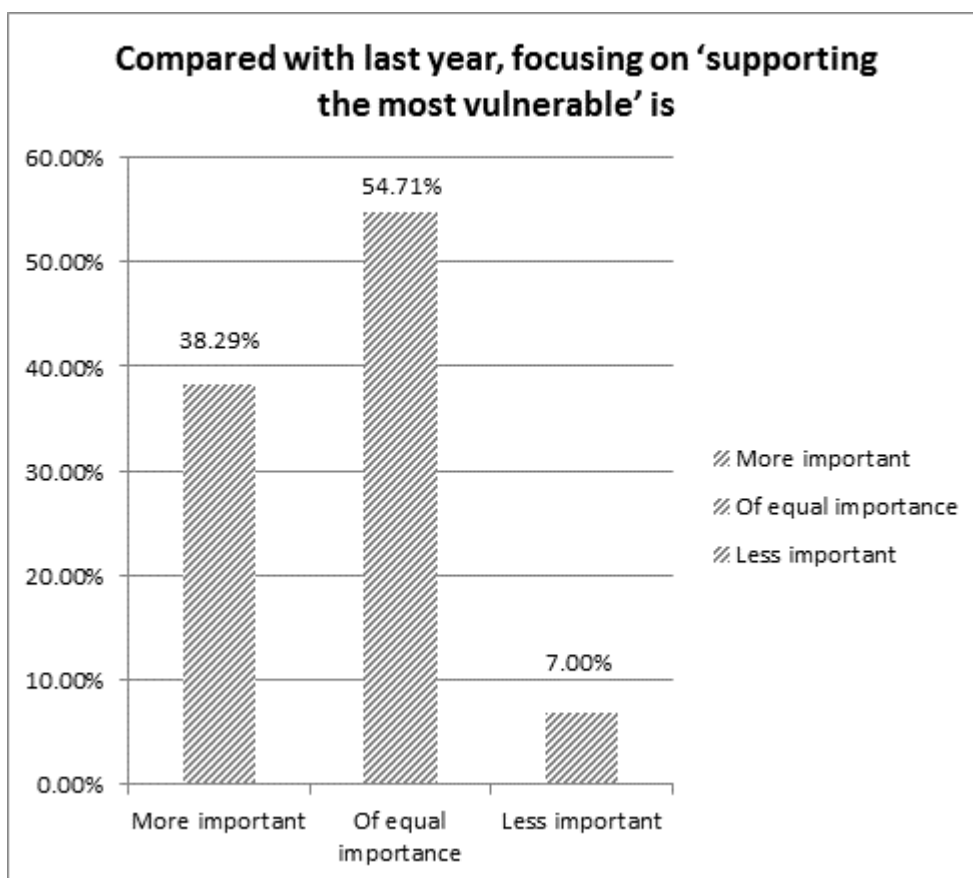
A copy of the online/paper questionnaire has been included in Appendix B.

2.2.1 Council Priorities

Supporting the most vulnerable

Question 1 asked respondents how important it is, compared with last year, to focus our budget on 'supporting the most vulnerable'

1029 people responded to this question. 93% feel that supporting the most vulnerable is more important or of equal importance.



On disaggregation of the data, there was some variation in responses amongst groups by ethnicity.

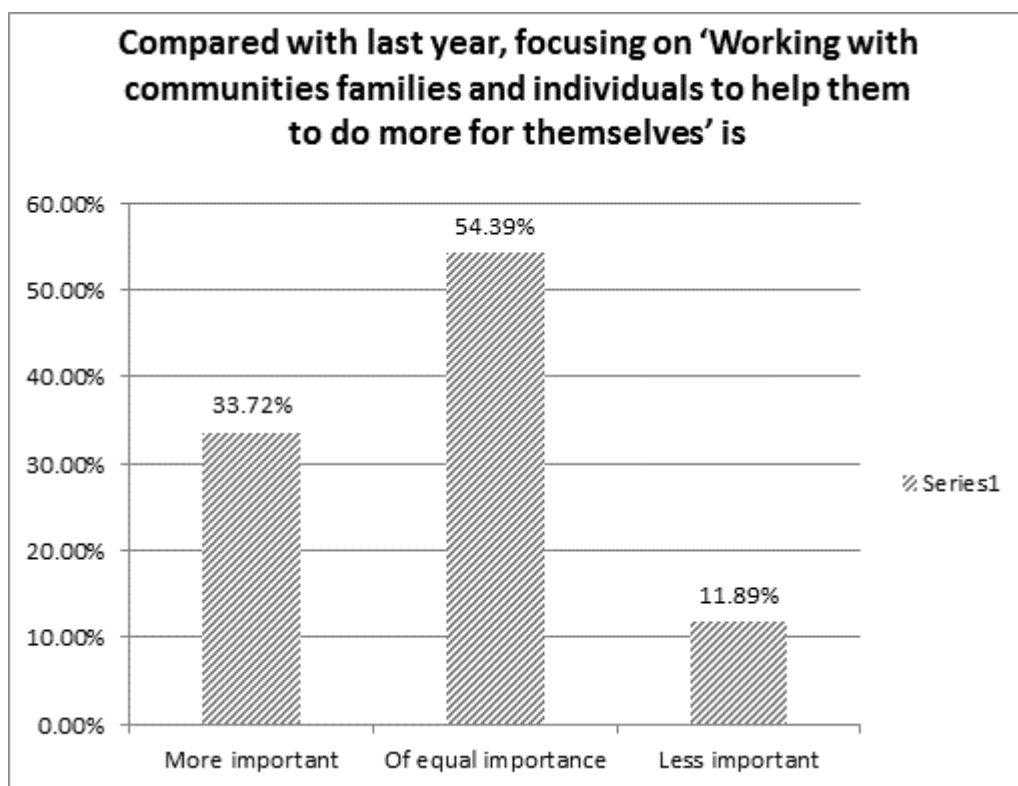
Respondents from the BME community felt that this priority was less important than those from the White community.

Ethnicity	More Important	Of equal importance	Less Important
White	39%	56%	6%
BME	50%	32%	18%

Working with communities families and individuals to help them to do more for themselves

Question 2 asked respondents how important it is, compared with last year, to focus our budget on 'Working with communities families and individuals to help them to do more for themselves'

1026 people responded to this question. 88% feel that working with communities families and individuals to help them to do more for themselves is more important or of equal importance.

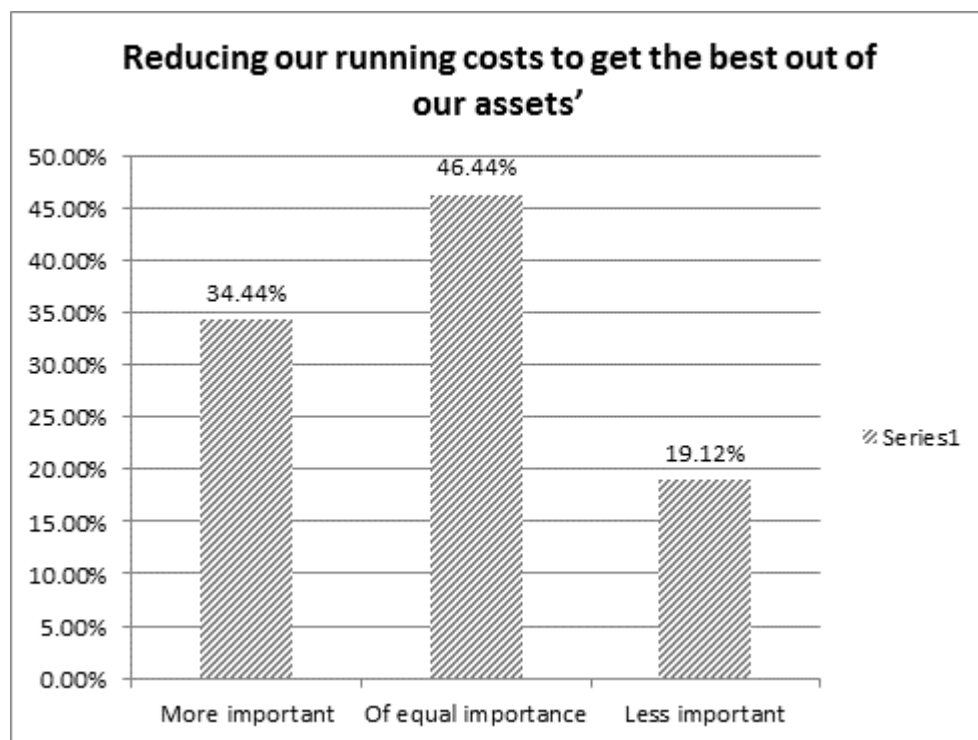


There was no variation in responses between the protected characteristic groups.

Reducing our running costs to get the best out of our assets

Question 3 asked respondents how important it is, compared with last year, to focus our budget on 'Reducing our running costs to get the best out of our assets'

1025 people responded to this question. 81% feel that reducing our running costs to get the best out of our assets is more important or of equal importance.

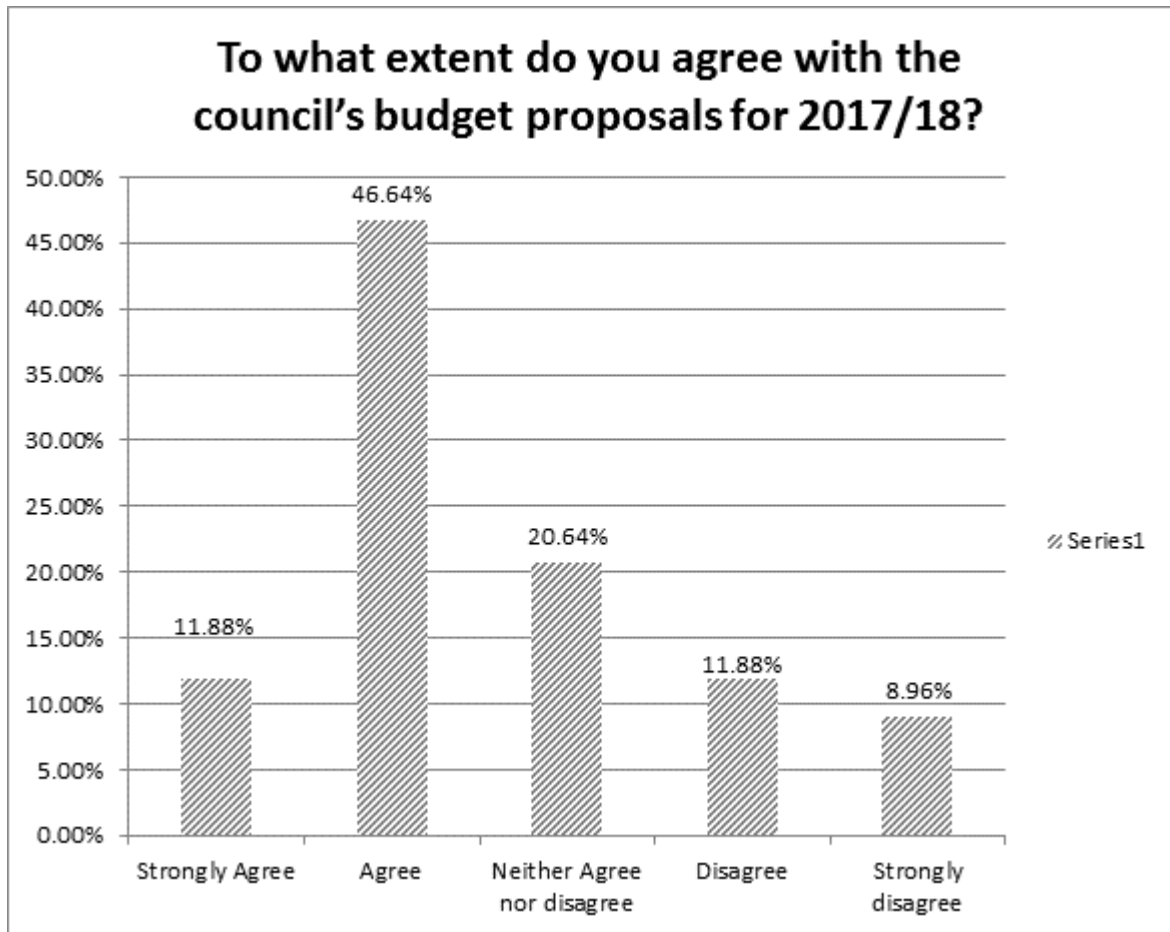


There was no variation in responses between the protected characteristic groups.

2.2.2 Council Budget

Question 4 asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the council's proposed budget. They were given information about the key areas to raise additional income to support the most vulnerable through a rise in council tax of 1.99% and an additional 2% levy to support vulnerable adults. They were also given information about proposed investment and were provided with a proposed budget breakdown.

79% generally agreed with our budget proposals, with the majority of those (59%) either strongly agreeing or agreeing.



There was no variation in responses between the protected characteristic groups.

2.2.3 Comments

Respondents were also asked whether they had any comments to make about the proposed budget for 2017/18.

819 comments were received. Overall the comments received supported the council's proposals to raise council tax particularly in order to invest in services for people who need them most.

Some disagreed with any rise in council tax and in particular noted the difficulties that some sections of the community would face in paying any increase.

The most common themes were:

- Support for the most vulnerable: including services for the elderly, children and those with mental health issues (112 comments)
- Invest more to improving Gloucestershire's roads and infrastructure (111 comments)
- Agree with budget proposals including the increase to council tax and inclusion of national adult social care levy to support the elderly and most vulnerable (88 comments)
- Agree with council priorities (64 comments)

Additional areas highlighted by respondents for more investment included health and social care, services for people with disabilities, schools, children and families and preventative services. There was also a strong feeling that we should continue to challenge ourselves to ensure we are delivering the best value for money, through areas such as contract management and efficiencies within our support/core services. Objections to austerity also featured as one of the recurring themes.

Table 1 below indicates those themes raised by seven or more people during the consultation

Table 1

The most common themes were:

1. Support for the most vulnerable: including services for the elderly and children and those with mental health (112 comments)
2. Invest in our infrastructure, in particular our roads (111 comments)
3. Agree with budget proposals including the increase to council tax and inclusion of national adult social care levy to support the elderly and most vulnerable (88 comments)
4 Agree with priorities (64 comments)
5. Cannot afford/objections to paying more council tax (63 comments)

Themes raised by seven or more people

6. Objections to austerity (47 comments)
7. Unable to make a judgement as don't understand the bigger picture (43 comments)

8. More money on health & social care (32 comments)
9. Did you get the best resources/value for money from the budget (23 comments)
10. Reduce spending on business support (17 comments)
11. More money to support people with disabilities including learning disabilities in the community (15 comments)
12. More money for schools (15 comments)
13. Support people in the community to help themselves more (14 comments)
14. Would be prepared for a bigger increase in council tax (12 comments)
15. Too much is invested nationally on supporting “vulnerable adults” (10 comments)
16. Improve partnership working (10 comments)
17. More money to children & families including developing social activities for young children (10 comments)
18. Maintain libraries as their role is multi faceted (8 comments)
19. Focus our budget more on the areas that need it the most (7 comments)
20. Money wasted by poor management of contracts (7 comments)
21. Money wasted by people cheating the system (7 comments)
22. Reduce spending on care/ Adult services (7 comments)
23. Too much spend on pension deficit (7 comments)
24. Early Prevention (7 comments)

3. Trade Unions and Professional Associations - Budget Consultation 2017/18

This meeting took place on Tuesday, 17 January 2017, when the following people attended:

Jayne Jackson UNISON

John Abbott UNISON

Andrew Steward ATL

John Pemberthy NUT

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of Gloucestershire County Council

Cllr Ray Theodoulou, Cabinet Member for Resources

Officers in support: Jo Walker, Director, Strategic Finance; Bridget Taylor, Interim Head of HR; Nick Lerry, Employer Relations Manager; Amy Davies, Senior Consultation Officer.

Union representatives attended a pre-meeting with officers at which Jo Walker provided an overview of the budget proposals. There was also the opportunity to discuss any particular aspects of the proposals and to ask any questions on technical detail.

By way of context, Jo Walker outlined that there was a significant reduction in funding from government (cash equivalent in excess of £11.5m) combined with the additional cost pressures e.g.

- Pressures in children's social care (e.g. increased children in care numbers in line with national trends)
- Demand for adult social care e.g. increase in older people (85+)
- Costs associated with people with disabilities between childrens and adults

In summary the budget totals £397.13m, including investment of £24m to cover cost pressures and a requirement for £35.34m savings, many of which are based on the final year of the Meeting the Challenge 2 – Together We Can programme (MTC2).

Among other things MTC2 has focussed on the promotion of demand management through initiatives such as 'active individuals' and 'active communities'.

There are ongoing issues and challenges to address around improving how we manage demand. A good example of this is the Intensive Intervention Service (IIS) in Children's Services within the draft budget, which ensures a more effective 'wrap around' of health and social care services, including the co-location of services (a similar approach has been introduced to good effect in North Yorkshire). This might therefore be seen as a good example of investing to manage demand.

In response to a query about whether ISS would be supported by additional grant funding, the subsequent reply was that the council is hoping that the Clinical Commissioning Group will become a partner for the project and there is £300k external capital grant.

It was also noted that accepting the social care precept would enable additional funding to be raised through council tax to support adult social care services, including costs of implementing the national living wage.

Q – How many Approved Mental Health Practitioners will be appointed from the additional funding (£500k)?

A – Commissioners are awaiting approval from Cabinet for the additional funding of £500k for the AMHPs service. Once approval of funding has been secured the options submitted to CoMT in November 2016 will need to be followed-up. Commissioners will then be in a clearer position to advise on the potential numbers of new AMHP appointments to address the rising demand for Mental Health Act Assessments. Depending on the options the number of AMHPS may be between 4 – 9 FTE, as well administration staff and management resources.

The Council will continue with the discretionary local Living Wage supplement for Gloucestershire County Council staff, providing a minimum rate of pay at £7.85 per hour.

Savings in Adults' Services will be generated from a mix of additional contract efficiencies and demand management projects.

The group was advised that Kim Forey has now been appointed as Head of Integration and reports directly into Linda Uren and Margaret Willcox. This role will take forward a range of developments in joint commissioning and partnership working arrangements.

Q – Reduction in historical schools' costs come generally from reduced capital investment; but are any of these costs attributable to PFI arrangements?

A - We have no PFI schools. The council's PFI in the Fire Service and Skillszone are the only two such arrangements that we have.

Q – Could we bring services back in house, such as social care?

A – We currently spend over 70% on outsourced services, but we could consider insourcing if there was an appropriate business case e.g. household recycling waste services were taken back from private sector in 2016 and are now undertaken by UBICO (a local authority 'teckal' company). We therefore consider such issues on a case-by-case basis, having regard to value for money, quality, what the market can provide against what could be delivered in-house etc.

Q – Is the Order of St John care services contract still with Gloucestershire County Council?

A - Yes, this is a long term contract, which still has a number of years to run.

Q – What is the value of dedicated schools grant (DSG) for 2017-18?

A – Reference was made to the Dedicated Schools Grant section in the MTFs and that there will be a further update in the final MTFs, following on from last week's Schools' Forum meeting.

Q – Where are the cuts likely to be in HR?

A – The budget reduction is mainly being achieved at the management level (on a voluntary basis) together with one HR Advisor vacancy that will not be filled. It is not

envisaged there will be any compulsory redundancies, and it is not considered that the resultant structural changes will adversely affect the service provided.

Q – Will there still be a Schools’ HR Team?

A – Yes, we will be retaining the Schools’ HR Team.

Cllrs Mark Hawthorne and Ray Theodolou joined the meeting at this point to provide their overview of the budget proposals and to invite any questions from the trade unions.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne outlined the context in which the budget proposals had been drafted, acknowledging that the council faces a challenging position, including the largest reduction to date in the Revenue Support Grant. Overall, cabinet wishes to protect frontline services as much as possible: prioritising adults’ and children’s services. The children and families’ budget has been separated into two ‘lines’ so that we can outline more clearly the changes to funding for schools’ services. Cabinet will publish a revised budget on Monday (23.01.2017), in respect of which there will be some room to ‘flex’ certain of the details that were published in December. It is hoped that this will provide the council with a little more room for manoeuvre in some areas.

As in previous years, there will continue to be a drive for savings and efficiencies across the organisation.

Looking forward, the council will move towards 100% business rate retention from around 2019-20.

We are also continuing to look at matters in respect of the National Funding Formula and hope that this may become more reflective of our current demographic pressures; it was noted that the existing formula is heavily out of date (dating from around 2010) and does not properly reflect the county’s current position.

It is proposed to increase council tax by 1.99%, also taking a 2% social care precept. In conclusion it was emphasised that next year’s budget will continue to be very challenging, particularly around adults’ services.

Q - Small rural schools provide an obvious potential area for rationalisation. Is this something the council intends to pursue?

A – It would probably be worth taking up that question with Cllr Paul McClain, who has previously advocated ‘clustering arrangements’ for small rural schools. However, the government is still committed to a programme of full academisation of maintained schools, so it should be noted that any ‘enforced’ clustering could push schools further down that route. However, this question would be better picked up through Schools Forum, and schools will need to make decisions on such matters in light of the New Funding Formula.

Q – With regard to adults’ social care, will the additional 2% be diverting service investment from existing services to different types of provision?

A- We need to build mechanisms to manage demand more effectively and some of that money can support this. We are now better at supporting people to remain in

their own homes longer, through re-enablement and related services. Also this will be very much about continuing to develop effective partnership working with the CCG, GP's and Hospitals' Trust, particularly with a view to reducing delayed discharges from care which we already benchmark well against other local authorities.

The investment is therefore primarily to underpin existing provision, which includes supporting contracted providers to implement increases in the statutory National Living Wage.

As previously mentioned, there are also issues to address regarding discharge from health services. There will also be support in respect of developments in learning disability services.

The council will continue to lobby national government, which will include maintaining a close involvement with the LGA. There appears to be some movement on this nationally, albeit not as much as we would like to see.

There were no further questions and Cllr Hawthorne concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance.

4. Schools Forum Consultation - Budget Consultation 2017/18

The Schools Forum met on 12th January 2017. Feedback for incorporation into the Budget Consultation is detailed below.

GCC Budget Consultation 2017/18

Feedback from Schools Forum – 12th January 2017

The Forum received a presentation which provided a summary of the draft budget for 2017/18, the budget cost pressures, plus the wider Children and Families commissioning intentions. Minutes of the meeting will provide a record of the discussion but a summary of the feedback from the meeting is as follows:-

Overall the Schools Forum is supportive of the budget proposals. During consideration of the presentation particular reference was made to:-

- The impact of education funding changes, especially the implications on the Council's budget as a result of the withdrawal of the Education Services Grant for 'general duties' from September 2017.
- The additional investment in the Children in Care Budget to mitigate against additional demand for services and inflationary pressures in Children's External Placement budgets.
- The additional investment to meet costs associated with the increased demand for fostering and adoption allowances and inflationary fee pressures.
- The second phase of the additional investment in social workers associated with reducing high caseloads and improving practice.

Appendix A – Data Tables – Respondent breakdown

Age

Total	1022
	99%
No response	8
	1%
16-24	53
	5%
25-34	171
	17%
35-44	198
	19%
45-54	223
	22%
55-64	163
	16%
65-74	138
	14%
75 +	49
	5%
Prefer not to say	27
	3%

Gender

Total	1017
	99%
No response	13
	1%
Male	433
	43%
Female	539
	53%
Rather not say	45
	4%

Disability

Total	1011
	98%
No response	19
	2%
With disability	74
	7%
Without disability	864
	85%
Prefer not to say	72
	7%

Ethnic Origin

Total	1011
	98%
No response	19
	2%
White	897
	89%
BME	22
	2%
Prefer not to say	92
	9%

Sexuality

Total	1007
	98%
No response	23
	2%
Heterosexual/Straight	830
	82%
Gay or Lesbian	37

	4%
Bisexual	15
	1%
Prefer not to say	120
	12%

Religion or Belief

Total	1018
	99%
No response	12
	1%
Christian	475
	47%
Buddhist	8
	1%
Jewish	0
	0%
Muslim	9
	1%
Sikh	1
	0%
No religion	417
	41%
Other	8
	1%
Prefer not to say	100
	10%

Budget 2017/18

Have your say



1 Background

We are currently in the process of developing our budget for 2017/18. As part of this process, we would like to hear your views.

We want to hear your views on how important our current priorities are to you as well as your views on our proposed budget.

We value residents' views and have set out some questions. Your answers will help us in deciding how to meet the financial challenge.

Our priorities

Question 1:

For the last two years you have told us that you believed we should continue to focus on:

- Supporting the most vulnerable
- Working with communities families and individuals to help them to do more for themselves, **and**
- Reduce our running costs to get the best out of our assets.

Looking ahead to how we spend your money in 2017/18, please tell us whether you feel these priorities are more important, of equal importance or less important to you.

Compared with last year, focusing on 'supporting the most vulnerable' is: (please select one answer)

More important Of equal importance Less important

Compared with last year, focusing on 'Working with communities families and individuals to help them to do more for themselves' is: (please select one answer)

More important Of equal importance Less important

Compared with last year, focusing on 'Reducing our running costs to get the best out of our assets' is: (please select one answer)

More important Of equal importance Less important



Our budget

Last year the council increased council tax for the first time in six years. The increase included a 2% national adult social care levy specifically to support vulnerable adults.

In order to continue to protect the most vulnerable people in society, we are proposing to increase council tax in 2017/18 by 1.99% plus an additional 2% national adult social care levy.

This would raise an additional £9.9 million of an overall proposed budget of £397.127 million.

We would use the national adult social care levy to:

- Appoint more Mental Health Professionals
- Invest in supporting those with Learning disabilities into employment
- Fund the requirements of the Care Act
- Fund the impact of the National Living wage

How the budget will be broken down

£132.326
million



Adult Services

This supports older people and vulnerable adults, including people with learning disabilities and mental health

New investment includes:

- Over £4 million to cover the cost of the increasing demand for support for vulnerable people
- £1.6 million to support people with learning disabilities

£86.654
million



Children and Families

(this supports vulnerable children and ensures children can access high quality education provision)

New investment includes:

- £2.5 million in additional social workers
- £1.4 million in an intensive support service aimed at keeping vulnerable families together
- £2 million for Children in Care
- £1.2 million in adoption and fostering services

£77.759
million



Communities & Infrastructure

(this includes highways, trading standards, libraries, fire service and waste)

New investment includes:

- An extra £0.5 million to protect and repair our roads

£24.912
million



Public Health

(this is a ring-fenced grant to fund services to improve health and wellbeing eg. health visiting, school nursing, suicide prevention, and self harm reduction)

The balance of £75 million covers Business Support services (£25 million); funding the cost of historical borrowing for road schemes and schools; insurance and the historical pensions deficit.

Question 2:

To what extent do you agree with the council's budget proposals for 2017/18?

- Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor disagree
 Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 3:

Please explain your answer below:

Question 4:

Our full 2017/18 budget proposals can be found by going to www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/mtfs

Do you have any other comments to make about our proposed 2017/18 budget?

Your details

As public bodies, Gloucestershire County Council has a duty to take into account the impact of their decisions on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

To help us make sure that we have taken account of views from all of these groups, we would be grateful if you would answer the questions below.

All of the questions are entirely optional, but we can confirm that any information that you provide will be held in confidence and in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

What is your age?

- Under 25 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54
 55 to 64 65 to 74 75 or over Prefer not to say

What is your gender?

- Male Female Prefer not to say

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- Heterosexual or Straight Gay or Lesbian Bisexual
 Other Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Your details continued ...

What is your ethnic group?

- White Mixed or multiple ethnic groups Asian or Asian British
 Black, African, Caribbean or Black British Any other ethnic group
 Prefer not to say

What is your religion?

- No religion Christian (all denominations) Buddhist Hindu
 Jewish Muslim Sikh Any other religion Prefer not to say



