

# Reshaping Services Consultation

## Phase 2 – ‘Consulting on our draft budget proposals for 2014/15’

### KEY FINDINGS

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#### **Introduction**

Over the past few years the Council has looked for ways to improve services and make them more efficient and since 2010 has achieved annual ongoing savings of £18 million. However the Council is facing severe financial challenges over coming years as Central Government is significantly reducing funding to public bodies. It is estimated that the funding shortfall for the Council to deliver services over the next five years will total at least £45m.

The Council has put in place a five year programme to reshape services to meet the budget cuts, whilst prioritising support for the most vulnerable. There is not one single solution that will deliver the savings required, so this involves taking a package approach including reprioritising, reducing and ceasing services, streamlining and modernising services, considering different ways of delivering services, working more effectively with other organisations and eliminating waste. It is also about improving services as well as enabling delivery at a lower cost.

The Council is consulting with the public during this time of change, to increase public understanding of the scale of the challenge and why difficult decisions need to be made, and understand their views on the way forward. The Council has adopted a phased approach to this consultation with each phase tailored to the level of budget information the Council has available at the time:

- Phase 1 (May/June 2013) consulting on people’s high level views about how the Council could reduce expenditure, increase income and improve efficiency
- Phase 2 (November/December 2013) consulting on the draft budget proposals for the 2014/15 financial year
- Where necessary the Council is also consulting on specific service delivery proposals that might be adopted by the Council to achieve a financially sustainable position going forward

This report details the findings of the second phase of the consultation, which ran during November and December 2013 and focussed on the draft budget proposals for the 2014/15 financial year.

The report detailing the findings of the first phase of the consultation can be found on the following page of the Council’s website <http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/consultation>

## **Consultation**

In October the Welsh Government announced the provisional funding settlement for all public bodies in Wales for the 2014/15 financial year. The Council's funding settlement was expected to reduce by 3.5 percent, which along with inflation and projected increases in demand for services, created a funding shortfall of £13 million to deliver services next year.

The Council prepared a package of budget proposals to meet this funding shortfall, which were summarised and presented in a booklet called 'Reshaping Services – Consulting on our draft budget proposals for 2014/15'. The proposals outlined in this booklet are detailed in appendix 1.

The booklet was available online on the Council's website and paper copies were distributed to Contact Wrexham, Wrexham Library and the Guildhall reception. The consultation was publicised via the Council website, Young Wrexham website, social media, Connect magazine and local media. Staff and Members were made aware of the consultation via the Council intranet, Friday Bulletin, Update magazine, an Executive Board report on 12 November 2013 and Members briefing. The consultation was also sent directly to all LSB organisations, Town and Community Councils, the People's Voice Citizen's panel and the Diversity Forum. Focus groups were carried out with young people on the Senedd Yr Ifanc management group and at Ruabon Youth Club to complement the exercise.

People could feedback their views by completing an online or paper based feedback form, or writing in by email or letter. A total of 631 feedback forms were received - 87% from local residents, 28% from employees, 0.4% from Elected members, 3% from Town & Community Councillors, and 1.5% from Service Providers. A full breakdown of respondents completing feedback forms is detailed in appendix 2. Some 91 emails and letters about the draft budget proposals were also received, along with a further 70 letters relating specifically to any proposed reduction in funding to the Venture.

A number of petitions were also referenced in response to the consultation including petitions relating to the proposed review of the school music service (2844 signatures), the proposed cessation of subsidised bus services (336 signatures), the proposed review of leisure services, in particular the potential closure of Plas Madoc Leisure and Activity Centre (over 800 signatures), and the proposed review of library services in particular the potential closure of Rhos Library (439 signatures), Brymbo Library (16 signatures), and Gresford Library (9 signatures). Please note that the leisure and libraries petitions are still ongoing so the numbers of signatures listed were correct at the time of writing.

## Results - Summary

The feedback form accompanying the consultation booklet asked respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the draft budget proposals for 2014/15. Please see appendix 1 for the proposal summaries outlined in the consultation booklet. The results are shown in chart 1 and table 1 below:

Chart 1: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with each proposal

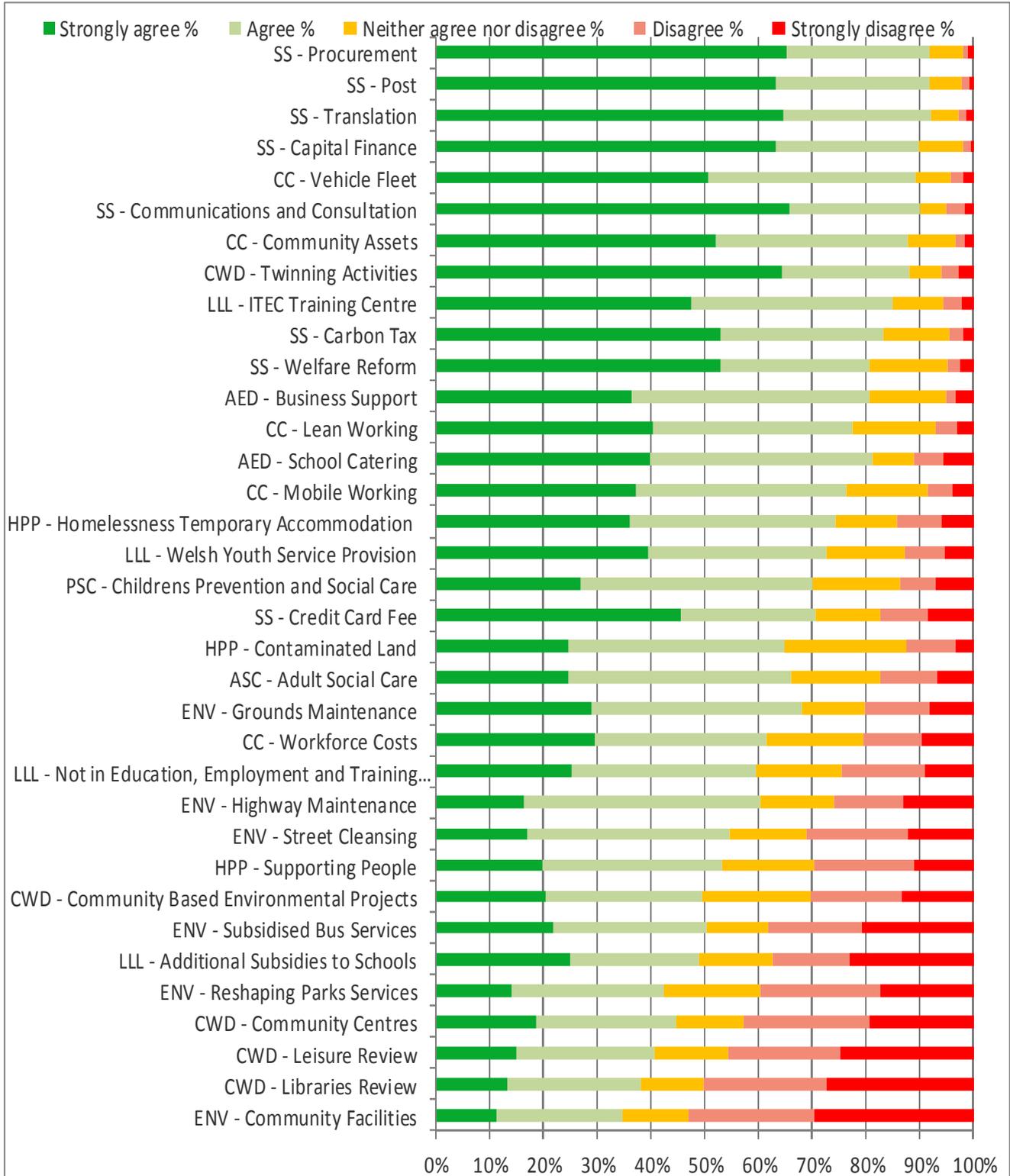


Table 1: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with each proposal

Proposal	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither agree/ disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Net
ENV - Community Facilities	11%	23%	12%	23%	30%	-18%
CWD - Libraries Review	13%	25%	12%	23%	27%	-12%
CWD - Leisure Review	15%	26%	14%	21%	25%	-5%
CWD - Community Centres	19%	26%	13%	23%	19%	2%
ENV - Reshaping Parks Services	14%	28%	18%	22%	17%	3%
LLL - Additional Subsidies to Schools	25%	24%	14%	14%	23%	12%
ENV - Subsidised Bus Services	22%	28%	12%	17%	21%	12%
CWD - Community Based Environmental Projects	20%	29%	21%	17%	13%	19%
HPP - Supporting People	20%	33%	17%	19%	11%	24%
ENV - Street Cleansing	17%	38%	14%	19%	12%	24%
ENV - Highway Maintenance	16%	44%	14%	13%	13%	34%
LLL - Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) Fund	25%	34%	16%	15%	9%	35%
CC - Workforce Costs	30%	32%	18%	11%	10%	41%
ENV - Grounds Maintenance	29%	39%	12%	12%	8%	48%
ASC - Adult Social Care	25%	41%	17%	11%	7%	49%
HPP - Contaminated Land	25%	40%	22%	9%	3%	52%
SS - Credit Card Fee	46%	25%	12%	9%	8%	53%
PSC - Children's Prevention and Social Care	27%	43%	16%	7%	7%	57%
LLL - Welsh Youth Service Provision	40%	33%	15%	7%	5%	60%
HPP - Homelessness Temporary Accommodation	36%	38%	12%	8%	6%	60%
CC - Mobile Working	37%	39%	15%	5%	4%	68%
AED - School Catering	40%	41%	8%	6%	6%	70%
CC - Lean Working	40%	37%	16%	4%	3%	70%
AED - Business Support	36%	44%	14%	2%	3%	76%
SS - Welfare Reform	53%	28%	14%	2%	2%	76%
SS - Carbon Tax	53%	30%	12%	3%	2%	79%
LLL - ITEC Training Centre	48%	37%	9%	4%	2%	79%
CWD - Twinning Activities	65%	24%	6%	3%	3%	82%
CC - Community Assets	52%	36%	9%	2%	2%	84%
SS - Communications and Consultation	66%	24%	5%	3%	2%	85%
CC - Vehicle Fleet	51%	38%	7%	2%	2%	85%
SS - Capital Finance	63%	27%	8%	2%	0%	88%
SS - Translation	65%	27%	5%	1%	1%	89%
SS - Post	63%	29%	6%	1%	1%	90%
SS - Procurement	65%	26%	6%	1%	1%	90%

The proposals receiving the highest levels of agreement overall were Procurement (92% agreed, 2% disagreed), Post (92% agreed, 2% disagreed), Translation (92% agreed, 3% disagreed), Capital Finance (90% agreed, 2% disagreed), Vehicle Fleet (89% agreed, 4% disagreed), Communications and Consultation (90% agreed, 5% disagreed), Community Assets (88% agreed, 3% disagreed) and Twinning (88% agreed and 6% disagreed).

The proposals receiving the lowest levels of agreement overall were Community Facilities (35% agreed, 53% disagreed), Libraries Review (38% agreed, 50% disagreed), Leisure Review (41% agreed, 46% disagreed), Community Centres (45% agreed, 43% disagreed), Reshaping Parks Services (42% agreed, 39% disagreed), Additional Subsidies to Schools (49% agreed, 37% disagreed), and Subsidised Bus Services (50% agreed, 38% disagreed).

## Results - Service Areas

The following section provides more insight into respondents views on the draft budget proposals for 2014/15 for each service area. A summary of the proposals outlined in the consultation booklet for each service area is given, followed by a synopsis of respondents' views.

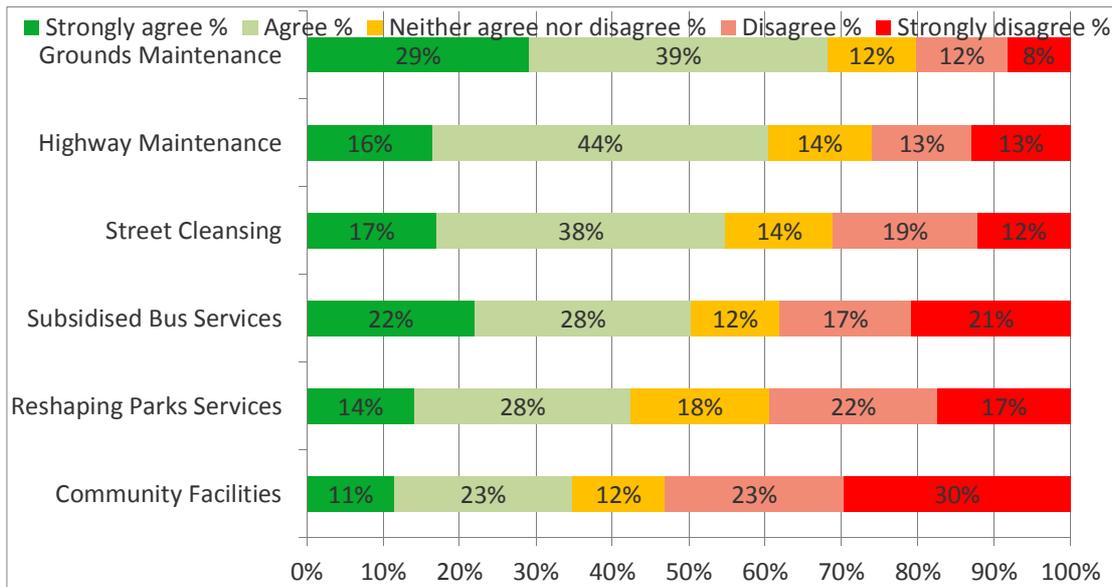
### Environment:

The 2014/15 draft budget proposals for Environment outlined in the consultation booklet were:

<p><b>Community Facilities</b> - The Council currently provides a number of discretionary community services across the County Borough including school crossing patrols, playgrounds and rural public conveniences. It is proposed to cease funding for these services, which may mean they need to close unless alternative arrangements are made such as transferring services to Community Councils. It is estimated that this could save £182,000.</p>
<p><b>Highway Maintenance</b> - It is proposed to reprioritise planned and reactive highway maintenance. Funding for future highway maintenance will be determined based upon the areas of greatest need and where investment will result in the greatest benefits in terms of ensuring the Council meets its statutory responsibilities and priorities. It is estimated that this could save £172,000.</p>
<p><b>Street Cleansing</b> - It is proposed to reduce the frequency of the street cleansing service currently provided across the County Borough. The service will be delivered on a more reactive basis and prioritised around those issues of greatest need. It is estimated that this could save £139,000.</p>
<p><b>Grounds Maintenance</b> - It is proposed to reduce the frequency of grass cutting substantially across the open spaces, verges and housing areas of the County Borough. The frequency of grass cutting in the majority of open spaces, verges and areas around housing will be reduced. This will also have biodiversity benefits for wildlife. It is estimated that this could save £256,000.</p>
<p><b>Reshaping Parks Services</b> - It is proposed to reduce maintenance and security, as well as the number of schools visits and events that are currently run in the parks. It is estimated that this could save £100,000.</p>
<p><b>Subsidised Bus Services</b> - It is proposed to withdraw subsidies the Council currently provides to commercial bus operators towards the cost of providing a small number of bus services across the County Borough. This may result in the number and frequency of these particular services reducing unless commercial bus operators can find alternative means of operating the services to minimise the impact. It is estimated that this could save £495,000.</p>

Chart 2 overleaf shows that the proposal receiving the highest level agreement was grounds maintenance (68% agreed, 20% disagreed) and the proposals receiving the lowest levels of agreement were community facilities (35% agreed, 53% disagreed), reshaping parks services (42% agreed, 39% disagreed), and subsidised bus services (50% agreed, 38% disagreed).

Chart 2: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Environment proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Environment proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

#### Community Facilities

- Many were concerned that removing school patrols would compromise safety and some felt risks should be assessed and mitigating actions put in place such as using volunteers, school staff, pelican crossings or traffic lights
- Playgrounds are important facilities enabling children and young people to play and socialise outdoors
- A few felt that there are not enough public conveniences in rural areas and they are important for tourism and helping keep streets clean
- Some thought Community Council's would need support to take over facilities and queried how precepts would be affected

#### Reshaping Parks Services

- Parks are important for improving access to the countryside and the outdoors benefiting both people's health and education
- A few were concerned reduced security could increase crime and vandalism in parks
- Some suggested mitigating actions such as schools or parents paying for educational visits, volunteers and communities helping to maintain parks, and introducing car park charges

#### Subsidised Bus Services

- A significant number expressed strong views that reducing bus subsidies will isolate communities in particular rural communities and have a detrimental effect on people who rely on buses as their main form of transport, including people who use buses to get to and from work, elderly people, young people, people with disabilities and lower income households
- A petition opposed to withdrawing bus subsidies with 336 signatures also supports those views

- Some suggested monitoring bus usage and providing services based on demand, prioritising journeys to and from work and ensuring fair provision across the County Borough

#### Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance

- Many suggested street cleansing and ground maintenance could be supported by volunteers and people on community service, and that communities should be encouraged to take care of their own environment
- Concerns that reduced street cleansing and ground maintenance would affect the appearance of the area, discouraging people from visiting Wrexham and encouraging more mess
- Some thought that reduced grounds maintenance would be more natural, encourage wildlife and biodiversity, and suggested planting low maintenance shrubs and wild flowers
- A small number felt street cleansing needs improving and were concerned about potential health risks of reducing services
- A few also suggested increasing fines, levies and penalties related to street cleansing

#### Highway maintenance

- Some thought the Council should resurface roads properly and plan and coordinate road maintenance to avoid roads being dug up several times
- A small number were concerned reduced road maintenance would present a health and safety risk and increase damage claims against the Council

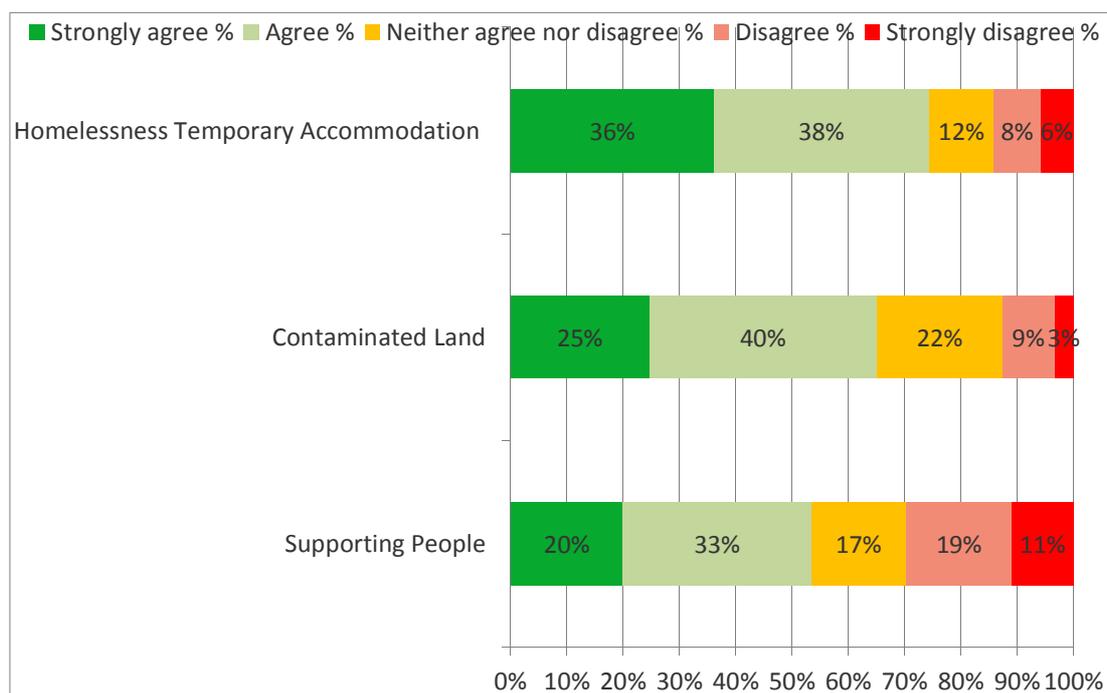
### **Housing and Public Protection:**

The 2014/15 draft budget proposals for Housing and Public Protection outlined in the consultation booklet were:

<p><b>Homelessness Temporary Accommodation</b> - It is proposed to focus more on preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfasts and private rented properties. It is estimated that this could save £100,000.</p>
<p><b>Contaminated Land</b> - It is proposed to reduce the scale of proactive site investigations and other work that the Council currently carries out as part of Wrexham's contaminated land strategy (such as former landfill and industrial sites). Reactive work will remain a priority as well as ensuring sites are remediated through the planning regime and that the Council's own land holdings comply with legal requirements. It is estimated that this could save us £105,000.</p>
<p><b>Supporting People</b> - The Council currently provides funding towards a range of services that support people to live in the community. It is proposed to review those funding arrangements to improve efficiency and ensure that services are targeting the most vulnerable. Reserve funds will be used to lessen any impact of these savings over the short term. It is estimated that this could save £300,000.</p>

Chart 3 overleaf shows that the proposal receiving the highest level of agreement was homelessness temporary accommodation (74% agreed, 14% disagreed) and the proposal receiving the lowest level of agreement was supporting people (53% agreed, 30% disagreed).

Chart 3: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Housing and Public Protection proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Housing and Public Protection proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

#### Supporting People

- Concerns that these services support vulnerable people and improve their quality of life so they need to be maintained
- Some thought the Council should be encouraging people to live independently in the community and that any reduction in these services would impact on other service providers
- Some suggested improving efficiency by focussing on frontline services, targeting services more effectively, ensuring the quality of outsourced services and involving service users and carers in service monitoring

#### Contaminated Land

- Very few chose to comment on this proposal, those that did supported a reactive approach to contaminated land, but felt that proactive checks should remain in place to avoid expensive corrective action

#### Homelessness Temporary Accommodation

- Concerns that homelessness services support vulnerable people and any reduction in services would put pressure on other service providers so should be maintained
- Some queried whether the cost of preventing homelessness would outweigh any savings made by reducing the demand for temporary accommodation
- Others suggested improving efficiency by effectively targeting services towards the most in need and using private rented or Council housing as temporary accommodation

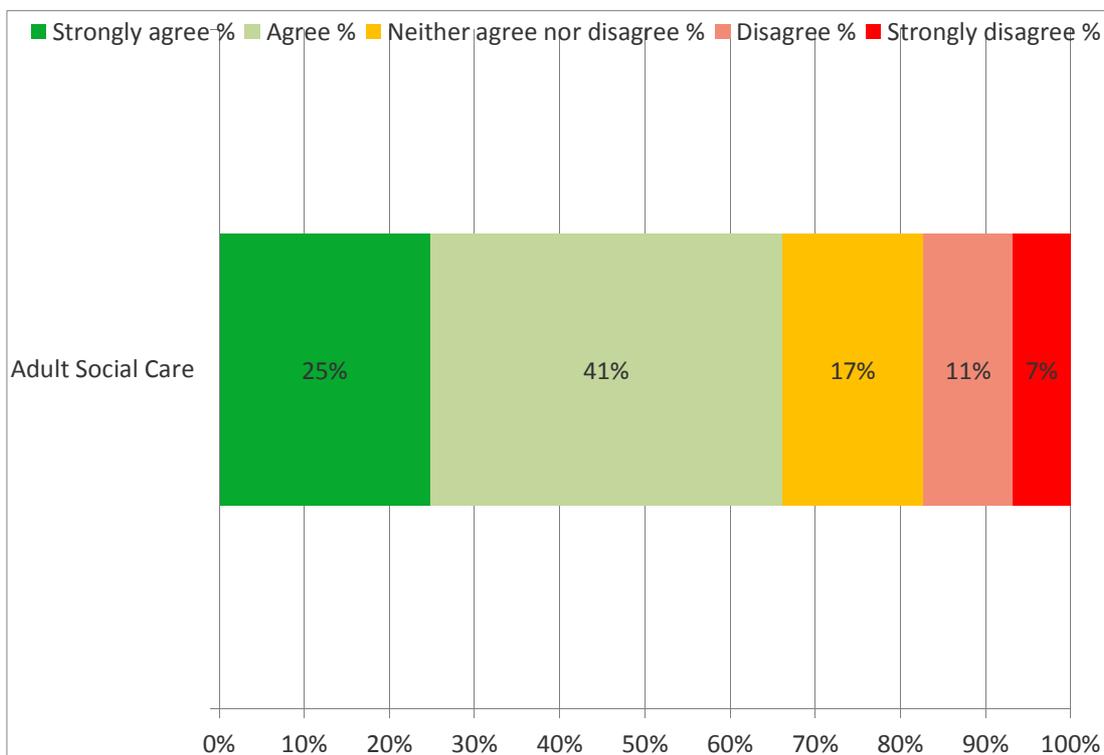
## Adult Social Care:

The Adult Social Care approach outlined in the consultation booklet was:

The Council will continue to prioritise services for the most vulnerable, but we will seek to make efficiencies in adult social care through a combination of improving value for money both within Council provided services and with external service providers. This will involve increasing our focus on reabling people who need support in order to help them to remain independent and ensuring that the support people are receiving is most appropriate for their needs and based on clear outcomes. There will be an increased focus on prevention and early support in order to help manage the demand for services and reduce the need for people requiring traditional services providing longer-term support. The service also works closely with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and wishes to move towards greater collaboration on services and budgets, particularly in the area of intermediate care, to prevent hospital admissions and to facilitate early discharge. Overall it is proposed to make efficiency savings in the region of £1.6 million across Adult Social Care in 2014/15.

Chart 4 below shows that 66% of respondents agreed with this approach and 17% disagreed, with a further 17% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Chart 4: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the Adult Social Care approach



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about the Adult Social Care approach can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

- Concerns that external care providers would be less cost effective and provide a poorer quality service compared to internal provision
- Some suggested improving commissioning plans to improve the quality and value for money of services as well as using the third sector more
- Support for an increased focus on preventative care, but concerns that there would still be a need for long term care, particularly with an aging population and therefore savings may not be realistic
- Some felt that as adult social care services support vulnerable people the focus should be on improving efficiency rather than reducing services
- Some thought that the efficiency savings outlined should be happening as a matter of course and that there was scope for further efficiency savings
- Collaboration between the Council, the health sector and the third sector could be improved and a few expressed concerns in relation to the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Some commented that the process for transforming adult social care services needed to be robust and transparent, and properly managed, risk assessed and consulted on

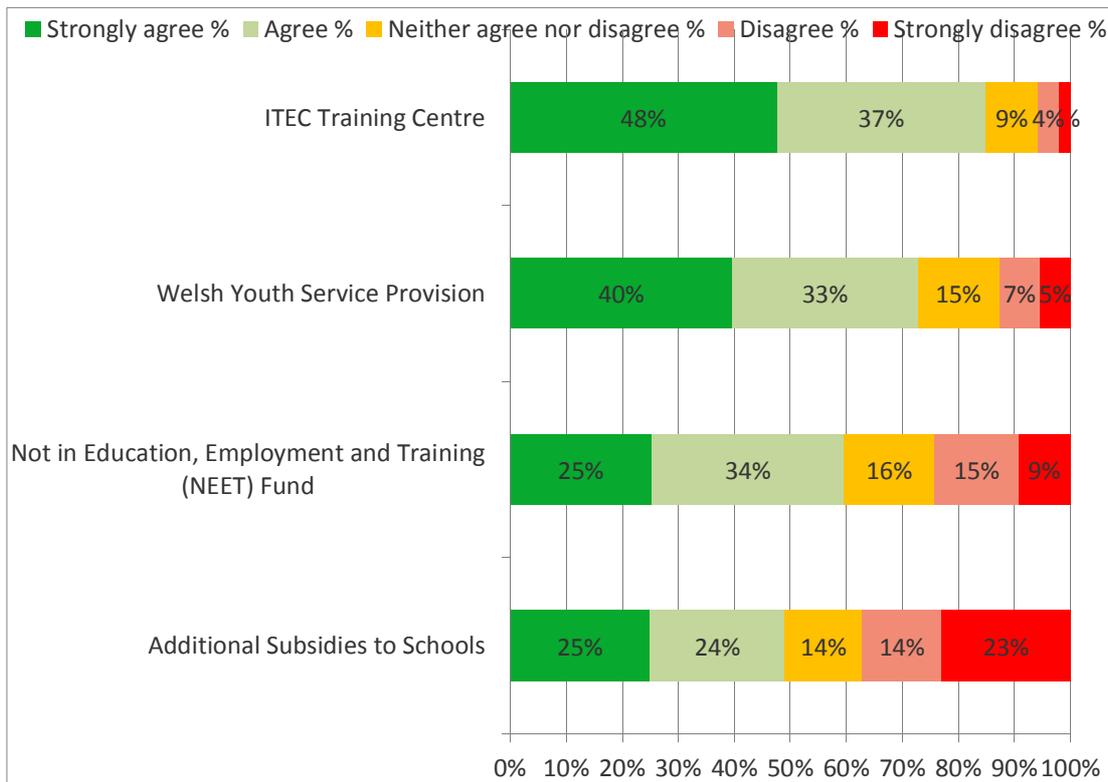
### **Lifelong Learning:**

The 2014/15 draft budget proposals for Lifelong Learning outlined in the consultation booklet were:

<p><b>ITEC Training Centre</b> - It is proposed to generate additional income for the Council's training centre by attracting new business and contracts. It is estimated that this could save £100,000.</p>
<p><b>Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) Fund</b> - It is proposed to remove a specialist fund set aside to start up new initiatives to help reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training, as these initiatives are now up and running. It is estimated that this could save £65,000.</p>
<p><b>Welsh Youth Service Provision</b> - It is proposed to provide youth services through the medium of Welsh in a more cost effective way. It is estimated that this could save £15,000.</p>
<p><b>Additional Subsidies to Schools</b> - In addition to the budget delegated to schools to provide statutory education, the Council currently provides additional funding to schools towards the cost of providing a range of discretionary services such as extra-curricular music, and school related redundancies. It is proposed to consult with schools about these reductions, as a result of which some schools may decide to meet some of these costs from their own budget. It is estimated that this could save £98,000.</p>

Chart 5 overleaf shows that the proposal receiving the highest level of agreement was ITEC training centre (85% agreed, 6% disagreed) and the proposal receiving the lowest level of agreement was additional subsidies to schools (49% agreed, 37% disagreed).

Chart 5: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Lifelong Learning proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Lifelong Learning proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicate:

#### Additional subsidies to schools

- Many expressed strong views that extra-curricular music promotes the development of music, confidence, social and education skills, and plays a vital role in learning so needs to be maintained
- Concerns that schools could not afford to meet any reduction in funding for extra-curricular music, so services would inevitably be reduced and only available to those who could afford to pay
- A petition opposed to reducing subsidies for extra-curricular music with 2884 signatures also supports those views
- Some suggested minimal charges or means testing for extra-curricular music, so as to avoid unfairly impacting on those who could not afford to pay

#### Not in Education, Employment and Training

- Some felt it was important to continue successful NEETs initiatives, however a small number queried whether the Council should be funding such initiatives

#### Welsh Youth Service Provision

- Mixed views with some feeling strongly that youth service provision in English and Welsh should be treated equally and others querying whether the Council should be providing youth services in Welsh based on local demand

### ITEC Training Centre

- Very few chose to comment on this proposal, those that did supported generating additional income through the ITEC training centre, but some felt the income target may be too optimistic

### Other

- Mixed views on education budgets with some feeling the focus on education should be increased rather than reduced and others suggesting further efficiency savings could be made in this service area

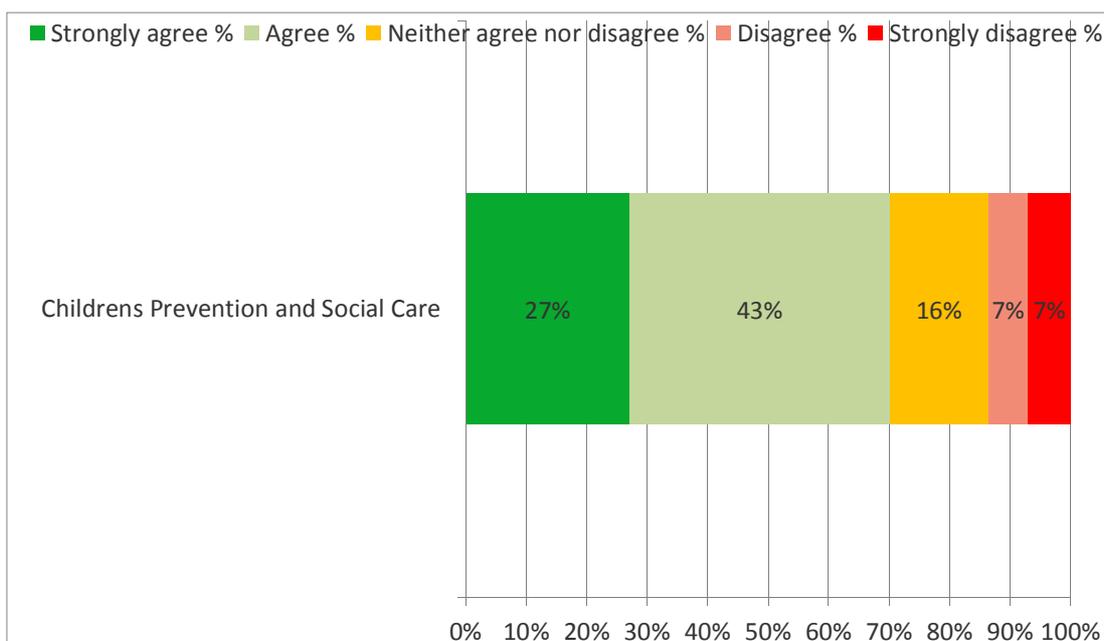
## **Children’s Prevention and Social Care:**

The Children’s Prevention and Social Care approach outlined in the consultation booklet was:

We will continue to prioritise Children’s Prevention and Social Care Services and therefore we are proposing the lowest savings in this area. We will seek to make efficiencies in this area through a combination of improving value for money both within Council provided services and with external service providers. In addition we will maximise grant funding to deliver services that support vulnerable families in developing skills to help them manage a range of everyday life events. This will also help manage the demand for our services and reduce the need for longer term support. It is estimated that this could save £141,000.

Chart 6 below shows that 70% of respondents agreed with this approach and 14% disagreed, with a further 16% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Chart 6: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the Children’s Prevention and Social Care approach



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about the Children's Prevention and Social Care approach can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

- Mixed views on prevention and social care budgets with some feeling that services protect vulnerable children so they should be maintained or even increased, and others suggesting further efficiency savings could be made in this area
- Support for increasing the focus on preventative services and suggestions that collaboration in relation to preventative services could be improved between the Council, the third sector and the faith sector
- Strong views against any reduction in funding towards the Venture, as it provides important preventative and support services, and for many young people and their families is the only place they can turn to
- 70 letters opposing any reduction in funding to the Venture also support those views

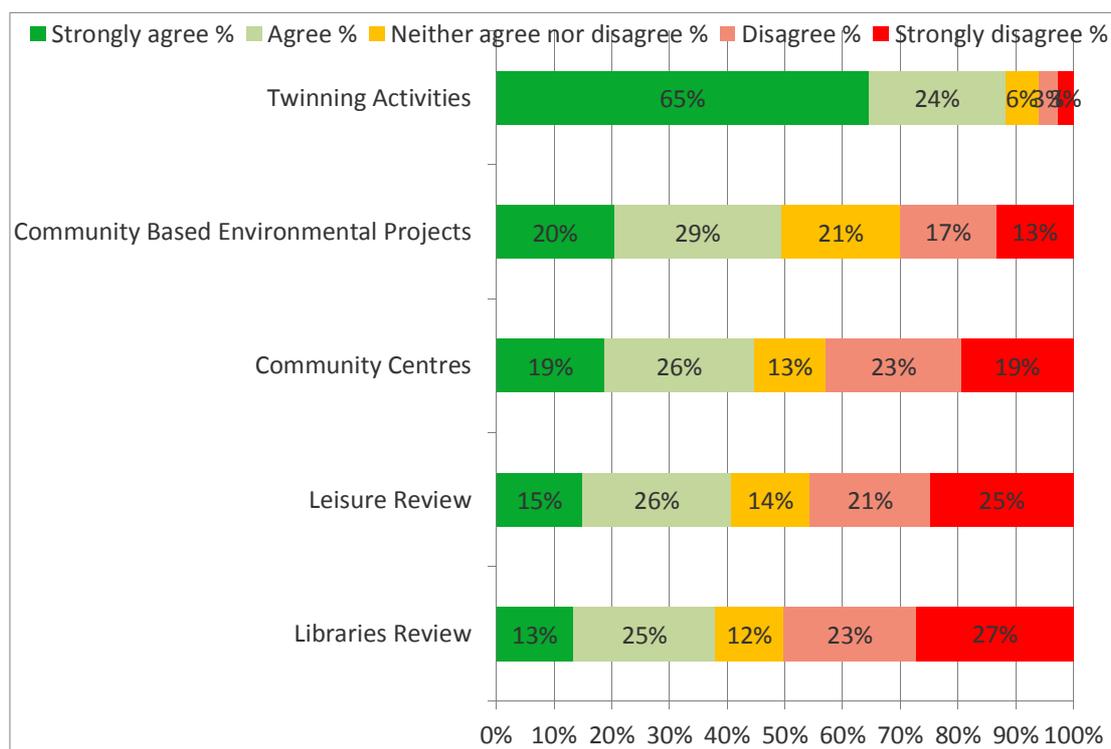
### **Community Wellbeing and Development:**

The 2014/15 draft budget proposals for Community Wellbeing and Development outlined in the consultation booklet were:

<p><b>Community Centres</b> - The Council currently manages a number of community centres across the County Borough. It is proposed to withdraw funding for these centres, which may mean they need to close, unless alternative arrangements are made such as transferring them to community councils or voluntary groups. It is estimated that this could save £57,000.</p>
<p><b>Leisure Review</b> - The Council is exploring alternative options for the management and operation of leisure services, to reduce the cost of providing these services, as well as reviewing the number of facilities that the Council operates, which may entail closures. It is estimated that this could save £400,000.</p>
<p><b>Libraries Review</b> - The Council currently provides 12 public libraries across the County Borough. It is proposed to explore options to reduce the cost of providing the library service including reduced opening hours and the closure of three public libraries. It is estimated that this could save £92,000.</p>
<p><b>Community Based Environmental Projects</b> - It is proposed to withdraw funding for community-based environmental works and education opportunities currently provided by Groundwork. It is estimated that this could save £57,000.</p>
<p><b>Twinning Activities</b> - It is proposed to stop funded visits to and from Wrexham's twin Counties, but still to maintain contact with them. It is estimated that this could save £9,000.</p>

Chart 7 overleaf shows that the proposal receiving the highest level of agreement was twinning activities (88% agreed, 6% disagreed) and the proposals receiving the lowest levels of agreement were libraries review (38% agreed, 50% disagreed), leisure review (41% agreed, 46% disagreed) and community centres (45% agreed, 43% disagreed).

Chart 7: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Community Wellbeing and Development proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Community Wellbeing and Development proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

#### Libraries Review

- Mixed views with almost as many people supporting a rationalisation in the number of libraries as those expressing concerns that libraries are important facilities promoting reading, learning and access to resources, so need to be maintained
- There are three ongoing petitions opposed to the close of Rhos (439 signatures to date), Brymbo (16 signatures to date) and Gresford library (9 signatures to date)
- Some suggested reducing opening hours across all libraries rather than closures, with access to Wrexham Library being particularly important, along with evening and weekend opening for people who work
- Others suggested mitigating actions such as a mobile library service, increasing grant funding and charges, and improving advertising and promotion to increase use

#### Leisure Review

- Many expressed strong views against the closure of Plas Madoc Leisure and Activity Centre
- An ongoing petition opposed to the closure of Plas Madoc Leisure and Activity centre with over 800 signatures to date also supports those views
- Concerns that leisure facilities help to improve health and tackle obesity so they need to be maintained to avoid increased health costs
- However some support for rationalising the number of leisure facilities

- Others suggested mitigating actions such as improving efficiency, reviewing charges, increasing promotion and advertising, and looking at alternative ways of commissioning leisure services

#### Community Centres

- Mixed views with some citing community centres as important focal points for communities that need to be maintained and others suggesting community centres could be rationalised based on use
- Some agreed that community centres could be run and managed by communities or volunteers, but others expressed concern about whether they would have the funding and skills to do so
- Others suggested mitigating actions such as reviewing charges and improving promotion and advertising to increase use

#### Community Based Environmental Projects

- Few chose to comment on this proposal, those that did felt the positive impacts on environmental education and community involvement were important and a few suggested other sources of grant funding could support the continuation of projects

#### Twinning Activities

- The majority of comments supported cuts to twinning activities and questioned the value of twinning

#### Other

- Many expressed concerns about the wider social impact within communities of closing facilities such as leisure centres, libraries and community centres
- Several suggested that locating community facilities within shared buildings in communities could help to mitigate the need for closures

### **Assets and Economic Development:**

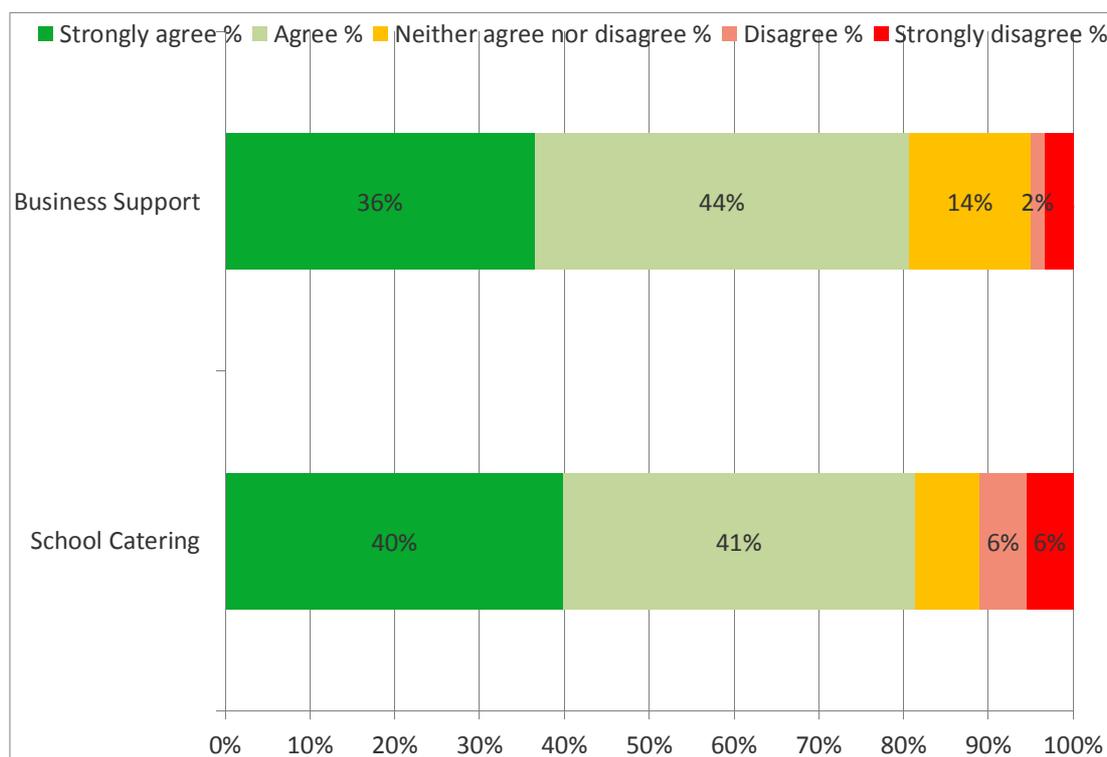
The 2014/15 draft budget proposals for Assets and Economic Development outlined in the consultation booklet were:

<p><b>School Catering</b> - It is proposed to reduce the cost of the catering service by reducing expenditure on food, reducing waste and being more efficient in the way the service is delivered. It is estimated that this could save £54,000.</p>
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<p><b>Business Support</b> - It is proposed to use income earned from the delivery of business support contracts to enable the Council to help local businesses start up and expand. It is estimated that this could save £68,000.</p>
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Chart 8 overleaf shows that the level of agreement with business support (81% agreed, 5% disagreed) and school catering (81% agreed, 11% disagreed) was very similar.

Chart 8: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Assets and Economic Development proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Assets and Economic Development proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

#### School Catering

- Concerns that the quality and standard of school meals should not be compromised as children need fresh, healthy food made from good quality ingredients, and school meals are vital for some children and families
- Some felt that reducing waste and improving the efficiency of services should be happening as a matter of course
- A few suggested that the way that supplies are procured and meals are subsidised and charged for could be reviewed

#### Business Support

- Some felt that supporting local businesses is important for the local economy and this is something the Council should be doing, in particular helping to regenerate the town centre
- A small number queried whether public money should be used to support the private sector

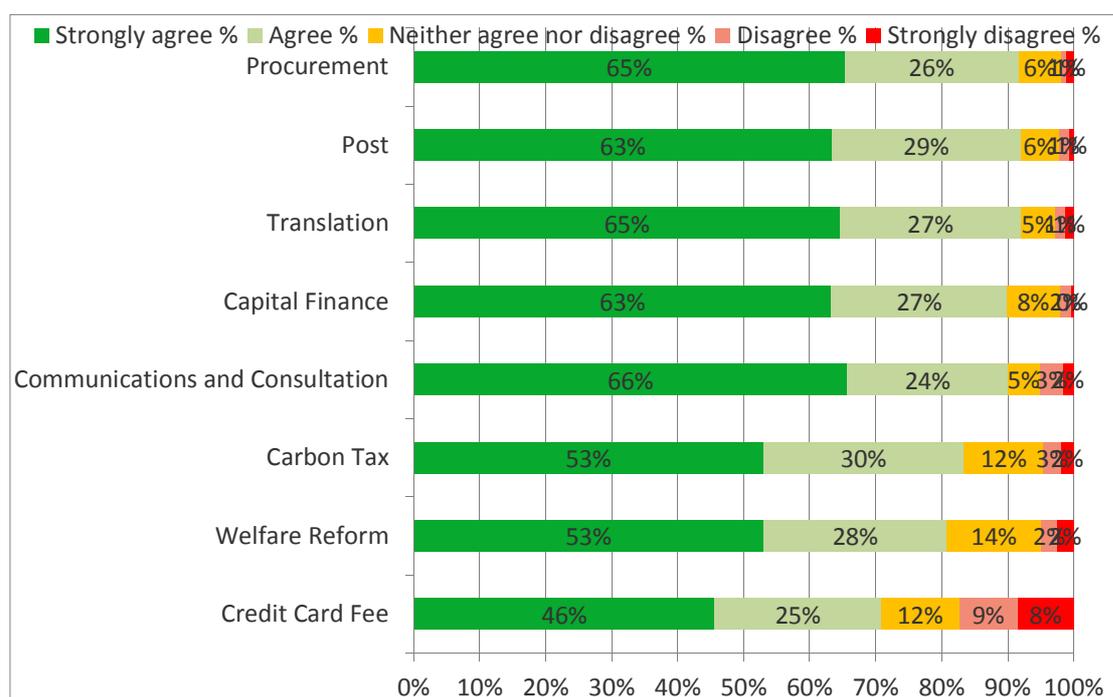
## **Support Services:**

The 2014/15 draft budget proposals for Support Services outlined in the consultation booklet were:

<b>Communications and Consultation</b> - It is proposed to make the Council Magazine 'Connect' available primarily online and significantly reduce the distribution of the magazine, as well as change the way we consult with the Council's Citizens Panel. It is estimated that this could save £26,000.
<b>Translation</b> - We will work in partnership with another North Wales Local Authority to provide all our external translation services. It is estimated that this could save £25,000.
<b>Post</b> - This proposal is about reducing and improving the efficiency of paper mail handling and processing across the organisation, and reducing the cost of sending external mail. It is estimated that this could save £20,000.
<b>Credit Card Fee</b> - It is proposed to pass the credit card provider fee of 2.5%, for payments made to the Council using a credit card, onto the customer. It is estimated that this could save £17,000.
<b>Procurement</b> - This proposal is about making improvements to the way in which the Council purchases and uses goods and services from external suppliers, to ensure better value for money. It is estimated that this could save £302,000.
<b>Carbon Tax</b> - This proposal involves the implementation of a range of initiatives to reduce our energy use and carbon emissions in line with the Council's Carbon Management Plan. It is estimated that this could save £50,000.
<b>Welfare Reform</b> - The Council set aside a specialist fund to support and implement changes in relation to welfare review, in particular the council tax reduction scheme. The Welsh Government is now providing funding towards the council tax reduction scheme and therefore this funding is no longer required in 2014/15. It is proposed to withdraw the Council's specialist fund for 2014/15. It is estimated this could save £900,000.
<b>Capital Finance</b> - It is proposed to make savings in relation to the Council's borrowing arrangements. It is estimated that this could save £500,000.

Chart 9 overleaf shows that the level of agreement was generally high across all support service proposals with over 90% of respondents agreeing with procurement (92% agreed, 2% disagreed), post (92% agreed, 2% disagreed), translation (92% agreed, 3% disagreed), capital finance (90% agreed, 2% disagreed), and communications and consultation (90% agreed, 5% disagreed). Over 80% of respondents agreed with carbon tax (83% agreed, 5% disagreed) and welfare reform (81% agreed, 5% disagreed) and 71% agreed with credit card fees (17% disagreed).

Chart 9: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Support Services proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Support Service proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

#### Credit Card Fee

- Mixed views with some agreeing with credit card charges as they are fairly common and other payment options are available, but slightly more disagreeing as the Council is encouraging residents to make payments online

#### Welfare Reform

- Very few chose to comment on this proposal and the small number that did suggested national welfare reforms needed to go further

#### Carbon Tax

- Very few chose to comment on this proposal and the small number that did suggested carbon reduction requires significant investment to make any savings

#### Communications and Consultation

- Queries raised about whether the publication of Connect magazine should be stopped altogether, with a few citing accessibility issues if the magazine is available online and suggesting copies need to be made available in public places
- However a small number felt it was important to communicate about the financial challenges and the difficult decisions being made

## Capital Finance

- Very few chose to comment on this proposal and the small number that did suggested savings related to capital finance should already be happening as a matter of course

## Translation

- Some queried whether bilingual translation could be reduced based on local demand
- Others suggested lower cost alternatives such as using Welsh speaking employees and schools, or a national translation service

## Post

- Some suggested electronic communication should be used more widely as the main communication method to increase savings related to post

## Procurement

- The Council's procurement processes need to be more efficient and effective and ensure best value for money as a matter of course
- A few felt that the cheapest option is not always the best option as quality can suffer with reduced costs
- Others suggested procurement processes should be carried out in partnership with other local authorities to achieve greater economies of scale and should help support the local economy

## **Cross Cutting:**

The cross cutting draft budget proposals outlined in the consultation booklet were:

**Workforce Costs** - As the majority of our spending is on employee related costs it will be necessary to reduce these costs in order to meet the budget cuts. It is proposed to reduce overall workforce costs in line with plans to reshape services through a combination of vacancy management, voluntary redundancy, voluntary early retirement, maximising grant funding for posts and restructures. It is estimated that this could save in the region of £2.8 million in 2014/15. Further savings will also be realised over the five year programme.

**Lean Working** - A review of all services across the whole organisation is proposed to identify more efficient ways of working and minimise all waste to improve value for money. Estimated savings for this project will be calculated over the first year of the programme.

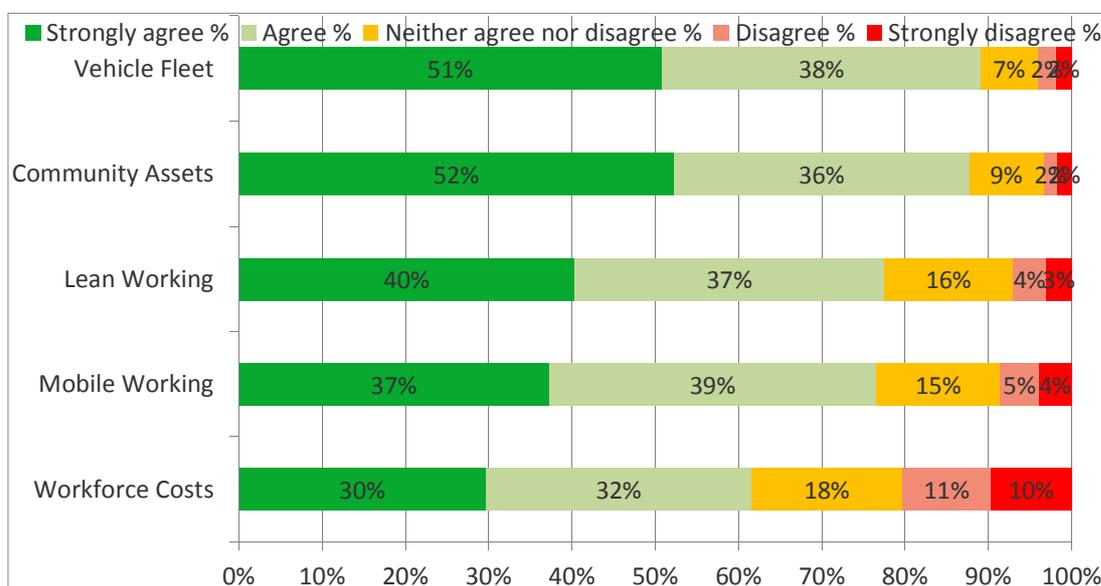
**Mobile Working** - This proposal involves looking at how many employees could work in a more mobile way, to reduce the pressure on office accommodation and enable us to vacate any surplus buildings no longer needed. Estimated savings for this project will be calculated over the first year of the programme.

**Vehicle Fleet** - The Council uses a variety of vehicles to carry out our day to day business. For example for housing repairs, road sweeping, refuse collection, grounds maintenance and social services. This proposal is about improving the efficiency of our vehicle fleet. It is estimated that this could save £200,000 in 2014/15.

**Community Assets** - This proposal involves looking at Council owned and non Council owned community buildings across the County Borough, to identify opportunities where buildings could be shared within communities for a whole range of activities, and enable any surplus or unsuitable buildings to be transferred, sold or demolished. It is estimated that this could save £660,000 over the five year programme.

Chart 10 below shows that the level of agreement was generally high across all cross cutting proposals with over three quarters of respondents agreeing with vehicle fleet (89% agreed, 4% disagreed), community assets (88% agreed, 3% disagreed), lean working (77% agreed, 7% disagreed) and mobile working (77% agreed, 9% disagreed). Slightly less, around two thirds of respondents, agreed with workforce costs (62% agreed, 20% disagreed).

Chart 10: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with Cross Cutting proposals



A detailed summary of all comments received from respondents about Cross Cutting proposals can be found in Appendix 3. Respondents' comments indicated:

#### Workforce Costs

- A significant number expressed strong views that the Council should be reducing senior management costs
- Concerns about the potential side effects of redundancies such as local unemployment, decreased service provision, loss of expertise and increased workloads for staff, and some suggested minimising compulsory redundancies
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce could be improved and some suggestions included better management, reducing working hours, expenses, flexitime, sick pay, proximity parking and freezing pay
- Some felt that the Council should reduce the use of consultants

### Mobile Working

- Some supported reducing office accommodation however others who felt that mobile working was not suitable for the entire workforce
- Having the right equipment and performance management arrangements in place were seen as critical to effective mobile working

### Lean Working

- Very few chose to comment on this proposal and the small number that did queried the cost of using lean working consultants and the level of savings that would be delivered

### Community Assets

- Surplus buildings should be sold or redeveloped rather than left standing empty, however a small number thought that sale of buildings should wait for the market value to improve
- Some were also concerned about the effect that the disposal and demolition of buildings could have on the appearance of Wrexham as well as the cost of rebuilding
- Some agreed that community buildings could be shared for a number of uses

### Vehicle Fleet

- Suggestions for improving the efficiency of the vehicle fleet included pooling with neighbouring authorities, avoiding outside contracts, vehicle advertising, using owner drivers, reducing the number of vehicles and encouraging the use of bikes

### **Other Themes:**

Other strong views that came through in the comments received were:

- The Council should reduce the number of Councillors and associated expenses
- The Council should reduce or remove the Mayoral role

Some of the comments received also suggested:

- The savings proposals do not protect the most vulnerable
- The Council needs to fundamentally review the services that it provides and funds
- More detailed information on proposals would have allowed a more informed response

## Results - Young People's Focus Groups

Focus groups were carried out with young people on the Senedd Yr Ifanc Management Group and at Ruabon Youth Club to find out young people's views on the proposals. During the session each proposal was explained to participants and they were asked to place the proposal on a value continuum from 'Good Idea' (Happy Face), through to Bad Idea 'Sad Face'. This enabled the proposals to be ranked as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Proposal ranking from the young people's focus groups (higher number = more support, lower number = less support)

Section	Proposal	Rank
CC	Lean Working	35
CC	Community Assets	34
LLL	ITEC Training Centre	33
CWD	Twinning Activities	32
AED	School Catering	31
PSC	Children's Prevention and Social Care	30
SS	Procurement	29
SS	Post	28
HPP	Contaminated Land	27
ASC	Adult Social Care	26
AED	Business Support	25
CC	Vehicle Fleet	24
SS	Carbon Tax	23
SS	Translation	22
LLL	Welsh Youth Service Provision	21
SS	Capital Finance	20
CC	Mobile Working	19
LLL	Additional Subsidies to Schools	18
CWD	Libraries Review	17
HPP	Supporting People	16
CC	Workforce Costs	15
ENV	Grounds Maintenance	14
ENV	Community Facilities	13
HPP	Homelessness Temporary Accommodation	12
CWD	Community Based Environmental Projects	11
SS	Welfare Reform	10
SS	Communications and Consultation	9
ENV	Highway Maintenance	8
CWB	Leisure Review	7
ENV	Reshaping Parks Services	6
SS	Credit Card Fee	5
CWD	Community Centres	4
LLL	Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) Fund	3
ENV	Street Cleansing	2
ENV	Subsidised Bus Services	1

The young people in the focus groups felt that the best ideas were lean working, community assets, ITEC training centre, twinning activities, school catering, children's prevention and social care and procurement.

Comments indicated that the young people involved thought:

- Lean working could reduce the time taken to do a better job
- Community assets could mean there would be fewer, but better, shared community buildings for activities such as youth clubs
- Increasing income through ITEC could improve training opportunities
- Twinning activities are not that much of a priority compared to other things
- Improving the efficiency of school catering should reduce food waste, enable schools to buy ingredients together, and encourage more packed lunches
- Children's prevention and social care should focus more on prevention to reduce the likelihood of problems occurring
- The council should get best value for money when they buy supplies and services

The young people in the focus group felt that the worst ideas were subsidised bus services, street cleansing, not in education employment and training fund, community centres, credit card fee, reshaping parks services and leisure review.

Comments indicated that the young people thought:

- Bus services are essential for young people to get around and all members of the group agreed reducing bus subsidies was a bad idea
- Streets are not clean enough as it is and if they become dirtier people won't want to come to Wrexham and it will encourage more mess
- NEET funding helps to get young people into education, employment and training and helps prevent people needing to claim benefits
- Community centres are important buildings for community activities, but buildings could be shared for different activities, so there would be fewer but better buildings
- Credit card fees should not be charged as people will have to pay more
- More needs to be invested in parks rather than less, they could be kept open rather than reducing security, and volunteers, communities or trusts could help to manage them
- Leisure centres are important to help people to stay healthy and we need more leisure facilities rather than less

## Appendix 1: Proposal summaries outlined in the consultation booklet

<b>(ENV) Environment</b>
<b>Community Facilities</b> - The Council currently provides a number of discretionary community services across the County Borough including school crossing patrols, playgrounds and rural public conveniences. It is proposed to cease funding for these services, which may mean they need to close unless alternative arrangements are made such as transferring services to Community Councils. It is estimated that this could save £182,000.
<b>Highway Maintenance</b> - It is proposed to reprioritise planned and reactive highway maintenance. Funding for future highway maintenance will be determined based upon the areas of greatest need and where investment will result in the greatest benefits in terms of ensuring the Council meets its statutory responsibilities and priorities. It is estimated that this could save £172,000.
<b>Street Cleansing</b> - It is proposed to reduce the frequency of the street cleansing service currently provided across the County Borough. The service will be delivered on a more reactive basis and prioritised around those issues of greatest need. It is estimated that this could save £139,000.
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b> - It is proposed to reduce the frequency of grass cutting substantially across the open spaces, verges and housing areas of the County Borough. The frequency of grass cutting in the majority of open spaces, verges and areas around housing will be reduced. This will also have biodiversity benefits for wildlife. It is estimated that this could save £256,000.
<b>Reshaping Parks Services</b> - It is proposed to reduce maintenance and security, as well as the number of schools visits and events that are currently run in the parks. It is estimated that this could save £100,000.
<b>Subsidised Bus Services</b> - It is proposed to withdraw subsidies the Council currently provides to commercial bus operators towards the cost of providing a small number of bus services across the County Borough. This may result in the number and frequency of these particular services reducing unless commercial bus operators can find alternative means of operating the services to minimise the impact. It is estimated that this could save £495,000.
<b>(HPP) Housing and Public Protection</b>
<b>Homelessness Temporary Accommodation</b> - It is proposed to focus more on preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation such as bed and breakfasts and private rented properties. It is estimated that this could save £100,000.
<b>Contaminated Land</b> - It is proposed to reduce the scale of proactive site investigations and other work that the Council currently carries out as part of Wrexham's contaminated land strategy (such as former landfill and industrial sites). Reactive work will remain a priority as well as ensuring sites are remediated through the planning regime and that the Council's own land holdings comply with legal requirements. It is estimated that this could save us £105,000.
<b>Supporting People</b> - The Council currently provides funding towards a range of services that support people to live in the community. It is proposed to review those funding arrangements to improve efficiency and ensure that services are targeting the most vulnerable. Reserve funds will be used to lessen any impact of these savings over the short term. It is estimated that this could save £300,000.
<b>(ASC) Adult Social Care</b>
The Council will continue to prioritise services for the most vulnerable, but we will seek to make efficiencies in this area through a combination of improving value for money both within Council provided services and with external service providers. This will involve increasing our focus on reabling people who need support in order to help them to remain independent and ensuring that the support people are receiving is most appropriate for their needs and based on clear outcomes. There will be an increased focus on prevention and early support in order to help manage the demand for services and reduce the need for people requiring traditional services providing longer-term support. The service also works closely with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and wishes to move towards greater collaboration on services and budgets, particularly in the area of intermediate care, to prevent hospital admissions and to facilitate early discharge. Overall it is proposed to make efficiency savings in the region of £1.6 million across Adult Social Care in 14/15.
<b>(LLL) Lifelong Learning</b>

<b>ITEC Training Centre</b> - It is proposed to generate additional income for the Council's training centre by attracting new business and contracts. It is estimated that this could save £100,000.
<b>Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) Fund</b> - It is proposed to remove a specialist fund set aside to start up new initiatives to help reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training, as these initiatives are now up and running. It is estimated that this could save £65,000.
<b>Welsh Youth Service Provision</b> - It is proposed to provide youth services through the medium of Welsh in a more cost effective way. It is estimated that this could save £15,000.
<b>Additional Subsidies to Schools</b> - In addition to the budget delegated to schools to provide statutory education, the Council currently provides additional funding to schools towards the cost of providing a range of discretionary services such as extra-curricular music, and school related redundancies. It is proposed to consult with schools about these reductions, as a result of which some schools may decide to meet some of these costs from their own budget. It is estimated that this could save £98,000.
<b>(PSC) Children's Prevention and Social Care</b>
We will continue to prioritise Children's Prevention and Social Care Services and therefore we are proposing the lowest savings in this area. We will seek to make efficiencies in this area through a combination of improving value for money both within Council provided services and with external service providers. In addition we will maximise grant funding to deliver services that support vulnerable families in developing skills to help them manage a range of everyday life events. This will also help manage the demand for our services and reduce the need for longer term support. It is estimated that this could save £141,000.
<b>(CWD) Community Wellbeing and Development</b>
<b>Community Centres</b> - The Council currently manages a number of community centres across the County Borough. It is proposed to withdraw funding for these centres, which may mean they need to close, unless alternative arrangements are made such as transferring them to community councils or voluntary groups. It is estimated that this could save £57,000.
<b>Leisure Review</b> - The Council is exploring alternative options for the management and operation of leisure services, to reduce the cost of providing these services, as well as reviewing the number of facilities that the Council operates, which may entail closures. It is estimated that this could save £400,000.
<b>Libraries Review</b> - The Council currently provides 12 public libraries across the County Borough. It is proposed to explore options to reduce the cost of providing the library service including reduced opening hours and the closure of three public libraries. It is estimated that this could save £92,000.
<b>Community Based Environmental Projects</b> - It is proposed to withdraw funding for community-based environmental works and education opportunities currently provided by Groundwork. It is estimated that this could save £57,000.
<b>Twinning Activities</b> - It is proposed to stop funded visits to and from Wrexham's twin Counties, but still to maintain contact with them. It is estimated that this could save £9,000.
<b>(AED) Assets and Economic Development</b>
<b>School Catering</b> - It is proposed to reduce the cost of the catering service by reducing expenditure on food, reducing waste and being more efficient in the way the service is delivered. It is estimated that this could save £54,000.
<b>Business Support</b> - It is proposed to use income earned from the delivery of business support contracts to enable the Council to help local businesses start up and expand. It is estimated that this could save £68,000.
<b>(SS) Support Services</b>
<b>Communications and Consultation</b> - It is proposed to make the Council Magazine 'Connect' available primarily online and significantly reduce the distribution of the magazine, as well as change the way we consult with the Council's Citizens Panel. It is estimated that this could save £26,000.
<b>Translation</b> - We will work in partnership with another North Wales Local Authority to provide all our external translation services. It is estimated that this could save £25,000.

<p><b>Post</b> - This proposal is about reducing and improving the efficiency of paper mail handling and processing across the organisation, and reducing the cost of sending external mail. It is estimated that this could save £20,000.</p>
<p><b>Credit Card Fee</b> - It is proposed to pass the credit card provider fee of 2.5%, for payments made to the Council using a credit card, onto the customer. It is estimated that this could save £17,000.</p>
<p><b>Procurement</b> - This proposal is about making improvements to the way in which the Council purchases and uses goods and services from external suppliers, to ensure better value for money. It is estimated that this could save £302,000.</p>
<p><b>Carbon Tax</b> - This proposal involves the implementation of a range of initiatives to reduce our energy use and carbon emissions in line with the Council's Carbon Management Plan. It is estimated that this could save £50,000.</p>
<p><b>Welfare Reform</b> - The Council set aside a specialist fund to support and implement changes in relation to welfare review, in particular the council tax reduction scheme. The Welsh Government is now providing funding towards the council tax reduction scheme and therefore this funding is no longer required in 2014/15. It is proposed to withdraw the Council's specialist fund for 2014/15. It is estimated this could save £900,000.</p>
<p><b>Capital Finance</b> - It is proposed to make savings in relation to the Council's borrowing arrangements. It is estimated that this could save £500,000.</p>
<p><b>(CC) Cross Cutting</b></p>
<p><b>Workforce Costs</b> - As the majority of our spending is on employee related costs it will be necessary to reduce these costs in order to meet the budget cuts. It is proposed to reduce overall workforce costs in line with plans to reshape services through a combination of vacancy management, voluntary redundancy, voluntary early retirement, maximising grant funding for posts and restructures. It is estimated that this could save in the region of £2.8 million in 2014/15. Further savings will also be realised over the five year programme.</p>
<p><b>Lean Working</b> - A review of all services across the whole organisation is proposed to identify more efficient ways of working and minimise all waste to improve value for money. Estimated savings for this project will be calculated over the first year of the programme.</p>
<p><b>Mobile Working</b> - This proposal involves looking at how many employees could work in a more mobile way, to reduce the pressure on office accommodation and enable us to vacate any surplus buildings no longer needed. Estimated savings for this project will be calculated over the first year of the programme.</p>
<p><b>Vehicle Fleet</b> - The Council uses a variety of vehicles to carry out our day to day business. For example for housing repairs, road sweeping, refuse collection, grounds maintenance and social services. This proposal is about improving the efficiency of our vehicle fleet. It is estimated that this could save £200,000 in 2014/15.</p>
<p><b>Community Assets</b> - This proposal involves looking at Council owned and non Council owned community buildings across the County Borough, to identify opportunities where buildings could be shared within communities for a whole range of activities, and enable any surplus or unsuitable buildings to be transferred, sold or demolished. It is estimated that this could save £660,000 over the five year programme.</p>

## Appendix 2: Breakdown of respondents

If you are responding on behalf of a group, organisation or club please state the name and postcode in the box below.

8

Are you...

Answer Options	Percent	Count
A Local Resident	86.8%	460
An Employee of Wrexham County Borough Council	27.7%	147
An Elected Member of Wrexham County Borough Council	0.4%	2
An Elected Town or Community Councillor in Wrexham County Borough	3.0%	16
A Service Provider	1.5%	8
Other (please specify)	1.3%	7
<i>answered question</i>		530

What is your age?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Under 16	0.0%	0
16 - 24	5.1%	27
25 - 34	16.7%	89
35 - 44	21.4%	114
45 - 54	52.2%	134
55 - 64	18.6%	99
65 - 74	11.8%	63
75+	1.1%	6
<i>answered question</i>		532

What is your gender?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Male	47.7%	253
Female	52.3%	277
Other	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		530

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

Answer Options	Percent	Count
Yes	8.8%	46
No	85.0%	446
Prefer not to say	6.3%	33
<i>answered question</i>		525

What is your ethnic group? (Please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background).

Answer Options	Percent	Count
White	93.6%	498
Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	0.6%	3
Asian / Asian British	0.2%	1
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	0.0%	0
Other ethnic group	0.0%	0
Prefer not to say	5.6%	30
<i>answered question</i>		532

### Appendix 3: Summary analysis of comments received

Please find below a table summarising all the comments received in response to the consultation.

Please note that reference copies of all the comments received have been placed in the Members Lounge, along with copies of the letters received about the Venture and copies of the petitions relating to the School Music Service, Subsidised Bus Services, Plas Madoc Leisure and Activity Centre and Rhos, Brymbo and Gresford libraries.

<b>Environment</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
<b>Community Facilities</b>	
School crossing patrols are important and concerns about children's safety if school crossing patrols are removed	22
To reduce risks of removing school crossing patrols, risk assess each crossing, retain where necessary, use volunteers, school staff, or put in pelican crossings or traffic lights	9
There are too few public conveniences in rural areas, they are needed for tourism and removing them will reduce street cleanliness	5
Playgrounds are important for children and young people providing opportunities for safe outdoor play and socialising	12
Community councils can take responsibility for community facilities but need support to ensure standards maintained	3
Concerns about how Community Council's will pay for additional responsibilities and how precepts will be affected	4
Other	2
<b>Highway Maintenance</b>	
The Council should resurface roads properly and plan and coordinate road maintenance to avoid roads being dug up several times	11
Concerns reducing road maintenance will increase health and safety risks and lead to increased damage claims against the Council	3
Other	4
<b>Street Cleansing and Ground Maintenance</b>	
Street cleansing and ground maintenance could be provided by volunteers and people on community service and communities should be encouraged to take care of their own environment	19
Reduced street cleansing and ground maintenance will affect the appearance of Wrexham, which will discourage people from visiting the area and encourage more mess	11
Reduced street cleansing could increase health risks	4
Street cleansing needs improving rather than reducing	3
Fines, penalties and levies related to street cleansing should be increased	4
Reduced grass cutting would be more natural and encourage wildlife and biodiversity	8
Planting low maintenance shrubs and wild flowers would reduce the need for grounds maintenance	4
Concerns reducing grounds maintenance could affect road safety, reduce visibility leading to crime hotspots, reduce access to the	4

countryside and make it more difficult to pick up dog foul	
Other	7
<b>Reshaping Parks Services</b>	
Parks are important to give people access to the countryside and outdoors - bringing both health and education benefits	8
Schools or parents could pay for schools trips to parks and families could take children outside of school	4
Reduced security in parks could reduce public safety and increase crime and vandalism	3
Volunteers, trusts and community councils could help maintain parks	2
Income could be increased by charging for car parking at country parks	3
<b>Subsidised Bus Services</b>	
Reducing bus subsidies will isolate communities in particular rural communities and have a detrimental effect on people who rely on them as their main form of transport, in particular people who uses buses to get to and from work, elderly people, young people, people with disabilities and lower income households	92
Buses reduce traffic on the roads so bus use should be encouraged	4
Monitor bus usage and provide services based on demand, prioritising journeys to and from work, and ensuring fair provision across the County Borough	11
Other	6
<b>Other Environment Comments</b>	
Any reduction in environment services should be evenly distributed across Wrexham	4
Reducing street lighting would reduce expenditure in this area	4
Increasing car parking charges will have a detrimental effect on the town centre	2
Other	6
More information about environment proposals would have allowed a more informed response	6

<b>Housing and Public Protection</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
<b>Homelessness Temporary Accommodation</b>	
Concerns homelessness services support vulnerable people so need to be maintained and that any reduction in support would put pressure on other local service providers	9
Questions about whether the cost of preventing homelessness would outweigh any savings made	6
Questions about whether the Council should be responsible for supporting people who are homeless	3
Suggestions alternative temporary homelessness accommodation should be explored such as private rented and Council properties	4
Ensure temporary homeless accommodation effectively targets the most vulnerable and in need	4
<b>Contaminated Land</b>	
Contaminated land services becoming more reactive is sensible but checks need to remain in place	3

Other	1
<b>Supporting People</b>	
Services support vulnerable people and improve people's quality of life so need to be maintained	11
Reducing services will negatively impact on other service areas and providers	6
Vulnerable people need to be effectively identified and targeted for support	4
The Council should support people to live independently in the community	3
Improve the efficiency of services by focusing on frontline services, ensuring the quality of outsourced services and using people in the community to monitor services	5
<b>Other Housing and Public Protection Comments</b>	
Other	10
More information about housing and public protection proposals would have allowed a more informed response	8

<b>Adult Social Care</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Concerns external care providers may be less cost effective and services may be poorer quality than in-house provision - ensure commissioning plans are effective and consider using the third sector	10
Concerns savings may not be realistic as people in need of adult social care services still need to receive them	6
Concerns increased workloads for staff will compromise the quality of services received	2
Process for changing services needs to be robust, transparent, risk assessed, consulted on and managed properly	8
There is scope for further efficiency savings across Adult Social Care	11
Support increased focus on preventative care but concerned this costs more and may not be realistic with an ageing population	4
Efficiency savings outlined should already have been made as a matter of course	4
Adult Social Services protect vulnerable people so the focus should be on improving efficiency not reducing services	3
Improve partnership working between the Council, health and the third sector on adult social care	12
Concerns related to the performance of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	5
<b>Other Adult Social Care Comments</b>	
Other	17
More information about the adult social care approach would have allowed a more informed response	31

<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
<b>ITEC Training Centre</b>	
ITEC should be increasing training contracts already however some concerns that income targets may be too optimistic	2
Other	8
<b>Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)s fund</b>	
Schemes to support NEETs should be continued if successful	12
Questions about whether the Council should be funding NEETs schemes	2
<b>Welsh Youth Service Provision</b>	
Questions about whether the Council should be providing Youth Services in Welsh based on local demand	11
Welsh youth service provision should be treated equally to English youth service provision and should not be reduced	9
<b>Additional Subsidies to Schools</b>	
Extra-curricular music promotes music, education, confidence ,and social skills and is a vital part of the learning experience	17
Schools cannot afford to meet any reduction in funding for extracurricular music, meaning services will be reduced	10
Reducing funding for extra-curricular music will discriminate against poorer students	13
Extra-curricular music should be available for minimal charges or on a means tested basis	8
<b>Other Lifelong Learning Comments</b>	
Efficiencies and savings need to be made across lifelong learning and schools	8
Schools need to be responsible for education budgets in particular school related redundancies	6
Education should be a prioritised and developed not cut	11
Other	9
More information about lifelong learning proposals would have allowed a more informed response	9

<b>Children's Prevention and Social Care</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Further savings and efficiencies could be made in Children's Prevention and Social Care	11
Children's Prevention and Social Care services protect vulnerable children so the budget should not be reduced	11
Children's Prevention and Social Care services protect vulnerable children so the budget should be increased rather than reduced	5
Preventative support for families and parents having difficulties bringing up children is important	4
Improve collaboration with the third and faith sector to provide preventative services for children and their families	9

Funding for the Venture should not be cut	12
Other Prevention and Social Care Comments	4
More information about the prevention and social care approach would have allowed a more informed response	7

<b>Community Wellbeing and Development</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
<b>Community Centres</b>	
Community centres should not be closed - they are important meeting points for communities and provide a range of beneficial local activities	12
Improve efficiency, advertising and promotion of community centres and review hire fees to increase use	6
Community centres need to be rationalised based on usage and where possible closed and/or sold	8
Community centres should be run and managed by communities	9
Concerns that voluntary groups and community councils may not have the funding or skills needed to manage community centres	7
<b>Leisure Review</b>	
Leisure centres should not be closed as they help improve physical and mental health and tackle obesity, therefore closing them could lead to greater costs in the long term	16
Already a shortage of affordable leisure facilities	1
Review charges for leisure services, improve efficiency and advertise and promote facilities to increase use	14
Rationalise the number of leisure facilities	7
Look at alternative ways of delivering leisure facilities such as private companies and social enterprises	3
Plas Madoc Leisure and Activity Centre should not be closed	25
Other	8
<b>Libraries Review</b>	
Rationalise the number of libraries	14
Consider closing the least used libraries, but ensure other library facilities are accessible via public transport or a mobile library service	7
Libraries should not be closed - they are important facilities for communities for reading, learning and accessing resources	17
Reduce opening hours across all libraries rather than close libraries, but ensure some evening and weekend so that they are accessible for people who are working	12
Look at other ways of funding libraries such as increased charges and grant funding, improve efficiency and advertise and promote facilities to increase usage	14
<b>Community Based Environmental Projects</b>	
Other funding sources could be used for community based environmental projects	2
Community environmental projects should not be cut as they impact on education and community involvement	6
<b>Twining Activities</b>	
Twining activities should be cut as they do not add value	14
Other	2

Other Community Wellbeing and Development Comments	
Where community facilities are at risk such as community centres and libraries they could share buildings to reduce costs	9
Libraries, Leisure Centres and Community Centres should not be cut as they are vital community facilities and closing them would have wide social impacts within communities	17
More information about community and wellbeing proposals would have allowed a more informed response	8

Assets and Economic Development	
Theme	Number of comments
<b>School Catering</b>	
The quality and standard of school meals should not be compromised if savings are made from the school catering budget	12
School meals are a valuable service and are vital for some families and children, to ensure a healthy, balanced, hot meal	6
Reducing waste and improving efficiency of school catering should already be happening as a matter of course.	7
Review the way in which supplies for school meals are procured and the meals are subsidised and charged for	6
Children need good quality healthy food and school meals should go back to basics using freshly cooked, good quality ingredients	6
<b>Business Support</b>	
Business support is important as it generates income and brings money and jobs into the local economy	6
The Council should support local businesses to help regenerate the town centre	4
The Council should already be supporting local businesses	4
The Council should not be using public sector money to support private sector businesses	2
<b>Other Assets and Economic Development Comments</b>	
Other	7
More information about assets and economic development proposals would have allowed a more informed response	4

Support Services	
Theme	Number of comments
<b>Communications and Consultation</b>	
Making Connect magazine primarily online will make it inaccessible for people with limited internet access, but copies could be made available in public places	7
Consider stopping the publication of Connect altogether	18
Communication and access to information is important given the financial challenges and decision being made	3
<b>Translation</b>	
Bilingual translation should be reduced based on local demand	6
Suggestions for other low cost translation options such as using Welsh speaking employees and schools or a national translation service	7

<b>Post</b>	
Electronic communication should be used more widely as the primary communication method to make further savings related to post	8
<b>Credit Card Fee</b>	
Agree with the credit card fee as there are other payment options, it is a choice to pay by credit card, and other organisations charge credit card fees	4
Disagree with the credit card fee as the Council is encouraging residents to pay online and Council transactions are with residents rather than customers	6
Other	1
<b>Procurement</b>	
The cheapest option is not always the best option and often quality suffers if costs are reduced	4
Procurement should be carried out in partnership with other local authorities and partners to achieve greater economies of scale	4
Procurement processes need to be more efficient and effective and ensure best value for money is achieved	10
The Council's procurement processes should support the local economy	4
Other	4
Improvements to procurement should already be happening as a matter of course	4
<b>Carbon Tax</b>	
Reducing carbon emissions requires significant investment before any savings can be achieved	2
<b>Welfare Reform</b>	
National initiatives related to welfare reform need to go further	2
<b>Capital Finance</b>	
Savings related to capital finance should already be happening as a matter of course	3
<b>Other Support Services Comments</b>	
Savings related to support services savings should already be happening as a matter of course	8
More information support services proposals would have allowed a more informed response	5

<b>Cross Cutting</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
<b>Workforce Costs</b>	
Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce	20
Reduce senior management costs	46
Concerns about the side effects of redundancies including increased local unemployment, decreased service provision, loss of expertise, increased workloads for staff as well as low morale	23
Suggestions to reduce workforce costs through a range of other measures including pay freezes, reducing working hours, reducing expenses and reviewing flexitime, reducing sick pay and proximity parking	14

Focus on voluntary redundancy and voluntary early retirement to minimise compulsory redundancies	5
Reduce the use of consultants	10
<b>Lean Working</b>	
Lean working should not be to the detriment of frontline services	1
Questioning the cost of lean working consultants	3
Lean working savings will be minimal	2
<b>Mobile Working</b>	
Reduce and vacate office accommodation	5
Mobile working is not suitable for all areas of the Council	4
Having the right equipment and performance management arrangements in place will be key to effective mobile working.	11
<b>Vehicle Fleet</b>	
A number of suggestions for improving the efficiency of the vehicle fleet such as pooling with neighbouring authorities, not using outside contracts, vehicle advertising, using owner drivers, reducing the number of vehicles, encouraging the use of bikes	12
<b>Community Assets</b>	
Sell or redevelop assets no longer needed rather than leave them to stand empty	11
Sell community assets when the market value improves	2
Community buildings could be multiuse shared assets	6
Concerns about the disposal/demolition of assets such as the effect on the appearance of Wrexham and the costs associated with rebuilding	5
<b>Other Cross Cutting Comments</b>	
Cross cutting proposals will improve efficiency	3
Cross cutting proposals should have been done as a matter of course to improve efficiency and reduce waste	9
Cross cutting proposals are the most difficult to implement but generate the most savings – can they be achieved?	2

<b>Other Comments</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Reduce the number of Councillor and associated expenses	40
Reduce or remove the Mayoral role	29
The savings proposals do not protect the most vulnerable people	4
The council needs to take a fundamental review of services it provides and funds	4
Comments about the Council's approach to meeting the budget cuts	8
Other	19