East Herts Council Budget Consultation 2011

East Herts Council is committed to effective consultation when setting each year's budget. The consultation activity with regard to setting the 2012/13 budget is detailed below. The objectives of the exercise were to:

- Get a steer from the public on what we should, and shouldn't be, spending money on as a council
- Gain an understanding of which service areas should be prioritised over others
- Consider areas where higher savings could be made
- Convey how difficult it is to make the budget balance.

Project outline and implementation

East Herts Council engaged with the public on the budget through an online budget simulator ("Delib"). This was placed on our website and promoted through various channels e.g. website, press releases. It was available to all members of the public. It was also sent out to business contacts.

The simulator was live between December 2011 and January 2012. Participants were asked to comment on potential savings in the following areas:

- Planning: Discretionary Elements of the Service
- Planning: Building Control
- Minor Grants
- Home Improvement Agency
- PCSOs
- CDO: Bus Subsidies
- CDO: Car Parking, Increase 5% above our scheduled increase
- CDO: Car Parking introduce on street parking
- CDO: Car Parking introduce a Sunday charge
- CDO: Taxi Licence Fees

NB: CDO stands for Currently Discounted Options to demonstrate these are not the preferences of East Herts Council.

Online Budget Simulator

In total 103 responses were received. Over 50% of respondents did not enter their postcode so it is not possible to tell whether we had a good range of responses covering all major areas and age groups. The highest response rate was from Hertford at 25% (26). There were 15 (15%) responses from Bishop's Stortford. A breakdown of responses by area can be seen below:

Area	Total responses
Bishop's Stortford	15
Hertford	26
Sawbridgeworth	0
Ware	0
Buntingford	1
Rural areas	5
Blanks	56

The majority, at 60% (62), of respondents classified themselves as White British. 4% (4) classified themselves as White Other. 1% (1) classified themselves as Gypsy Irish Traveller, Black African and Mixed/multiple ethnic groups-Other Mixed/multiple ethnic background. 33% (34) did not state their ethnic category.

The majority of respondents who indicated their gender were male, 45% (46). 23 females responded, 22%. 2 (1.9%) respondents did not wish to say their gender and 32 (31%) left the section blank.

At 19% (20) the majority of respondents were aged between the 45- 54 age group. The lowest number of respondents was from the 18-24 and the under 18 age groups.

Age	Total responses
18-24	2
25 – 34	11
35 -44	15
45 – 54	20
55-64	16
65+	5

Planning: Discretionary Elements of the Service

Seven out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

73% (75) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 27% (28) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the highest preference at 12.6% (13) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 11.7% (12) supporting a 20% reduction, 10.7% (11) supporting a 30% & 50% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 40% reduction. 4.9% (5) supporting a 10%, 60%, 70%, and 80% reduction, and 1.9% (2) supporting a 90% reduction.

Planning: Building Control

Nine out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

89.3% (92) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 10.7% (11) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the highest preference at 48.5% (50) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 10.7% (11) supporting a 50% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 30% & 60% reduction, 4.9% (5) supporting an 80% reduction. 3.9% (4) supporting a 10% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 20% and a 40%, reduction, and 1.9% (2) supporting a 70% and a 90% reduction.

Minor Grants

Eight out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

76.7% (79) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 23.3% (24) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the highest preference at 26.2% (27) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 11.6% (12) supporting a 10% reduction, 10.7% (11) supporting a 50% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 30% reduction, 4.9% (5) supporting a 40% and an 80% reduction. 3.9% (4) supporting a 20% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 60%, 70% and a 90%, reduction.

Home Improvement Agency

Eight out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

76.7% (79) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 23.3% (24) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the highest preference at 19.4% (20) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 12.6% (13) supporting a 50% reduction, 7.8% (8) supporting a 10%, 30% and an 80% reduction, 6.8% (7) supporting a 70% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 20% reduction. 3.9% (4) supporting a 60%

reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 40% reduction and 1.9% (2) supporting a 90% reduction.

PCSOs

Seven out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

69% (71) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 31% (32) who wished to maintain spending in this area.

This was followed by 30.1% (31) supporting a 100% reduction, 8.8% (9) supporting a 50% reduction, 7.8% (8) supporting a 20% reduction, 5.8% supporting a 10% reduction, 3.9% (4) supporting a 40% and 80% reduction and 2.9% supporting a 30%, 60% and 70% reduction.

CDO: Bus Subsidies

Seven out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

69% (71) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 31% (32) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the next highest preference at 23.3% (24) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 11.6% (12) supporting a 50% reduction, 8.8% (9) supporting a 20% reduction, 6.8% (7) supporting a 10% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 30% reduction. 4.9% (5) supporting a 60% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 40% reduction 1.9% (2) supporting a 70% and a 90% reduction and 0.9% (1) supporting an 80% reduction.

CDO: Car Parking, Increase 5% above our scheduled increase

Seven out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

73.7% (76) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 26.2% (27) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the next highest preference at 23.3% (24) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 18.4% (19) supporting a 10% reduction, 9.7% (10) supporting a 50% reduction, 6.8% (7) supporting a 60% reduction. 4.9% (5) supporting a 20% reduction, 3.9% (4) supporting a 40% and an 80% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 30% reduction and 0.9% (1) supporting a 70% reduction.

CDO: Car Parking introduce on street parking

Five out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

51.4% (53) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 48.5% (50) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the next highest preference at 16.5% (17) was to see spending in this area reduced by 10%.

This was followed by 11.6% (12) supporting a 100% reduction, 6.8% (7) supporting a 40% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 20% reduction, 3.9% (4) supporting a 60% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 30% reduction, 1.9% (2) supporting a 70% reduction and 0.9% (1) supporting a 50% and an 80% reduction.

CDO: Car Parking introduce a Sunday charge

Six out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

58.2% (60) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 41.7% (43) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the next highest preference at 23.3% (24) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 18.4% (19) supporting a 10% reduction, 4.9% (5) supporting a 30% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 40% and 50% reduction, 1.9% (2) supporting a 20% reduction, and 0.9% (1) supporting a 60%, 70%, 80% and a 90% reduction.

CDO: Taxi Licence Fees

Nine out of ten respondents favoured cuts to this spending area.

85.4% (88) agreed that spending could be reduced compared with 14.6% (15) who wished to maintain spending in this area. However the level of reduction varied – the highest preference at 45.6% (47) was to see spending in this area reduced by 100%.

This was followed by 6.8% (7) supporting a 10%, 30% and a 50% reduction, 5.8% (6) supporting a 20% reduction, 4.9% (5) supporting a 60% reduction, 2.9% (3) supporting a 40% and an 80% reduction, 1.9% (2) supporting a 70% reduction and 0.9% (1) supporting a 90% reduction.