

**Norwich City Council**  
**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Item 7**

**REPORT for meeting to be held on 3 November 2011**

**Future priorities and shape of the council**

**Summary:**

The enclosed report to cabinet on 9 November 2011 sets out the further work undertaken and the results of the consultation on the future priorities and shape of the council and asks cabinet to agree the next steps.

This report, therefore, provides scrutiny with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise the report to cabinet and make recommendations to cabinet on the approach.

**Conclusions:**

The report should enable the scrutiny committee to determine any recommendations they would wish to make to cabinet on the approach to the future priorities and shape of the council.

**Recommendation:**

To consider the report to cabinet on the 9 November 2011 on the future priorities and shape of the council and agree any recommendations to cabinet on the approach.

**Contact Officer:**

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## **Report for Resolution**

<b>Report to</b>	Cabinet 9 November 2011
<b>Report of</b>	Chief executive
<b>Subject</b>	Future priorities and shape of the council

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### **Purpose**

To consider the further work undertaken and the results of the consultation on the future priorities and shape of the council and agree the next steps.

### **Recommendation**

1. To agree that the five draft priorities for the council form the basis for the new corporate plan 2012-2015 that will be proposed to Council in February 2012.
2. To agree that the package of efficiency, back office and strategic service savings for 2012/13 (annex C) is taken forward and that staffing consultations (where appropriate) and preparation for implementation is undertaken
3. To agree that further work is carried out on a small package of savings for 2012/13 (annex D) focused on external funding and that discussions are commenced with the potentially affected organisations in line with the commissioning framework
4. To agree a package of savings 2012/13 (annex E) that will affect frontline services is taken forward following the consultation and that preparation for implementation is undertaken.
5. To agree that the savings options for 2012/13 (annex F) are not taken forward following the consultation.
6. To agreed that further work is carried out on a package of specific savings (annex G) including dialogue with affected groups and further targeted consultation (where appropriate).
7. To agree the approach to the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee on the commissioning framework and delegate authority to the Chief executive officer in liaison with the Leader of the council to agree the final version taking into account the responses received and recent guidance.

### **Financial Consequences**

The report helps the Council to achieve an overall package of £4.6 million of savings for 2012/13 to meet its budgetary requirement.

### **Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities**

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Aiming for excellence – ensuring the Council is efficient in its use of resources, is effective in delivering its plans, is a good employer and communicates effectively with its customers, staff and

partners”

**Cabinet Member:**

Councillor Arthur: Culture, sport, adult services, partnerships and strategy

Councillor Waters: Resources and governance

**Ward:** All Wards

**Back ground Papers**

Report to Cabinet 13 July 2011 Future Priorities and Shape of the Council

**Contact Officers**

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## **Background**

1. On the 13 July 2011 Cabinet agreed an approach to developing the future priorities and shape of the organisation to meet the council's savings requirements.
2. This report updates Cabinet on work undertaken to finalise a package of £4.6million savings to meet the budget gap for 2012/13 through efficiencies and savings that won't directly affect the public wherever possible. It reports back the results of the consultation and asks for approval to progress the next steps.

## **Consultation and impact assessments**

3. A 12 week consultation was carried out on the future priorities for the council, those savings options that would directly impact service levels to the public and the council's commissioning framework. The consultation ended on the 12 October.
4. Annex A sets out how the consultation was carried out and the results.
5. Work has also been carried out to fully assess the impact of the savings options through the completion of integrated impact assessments. These can be found at annex B.

## **Future priorities for the council**

6. The results of the consultation showed significant support for all five of the draft priorities for the council. It is, therefore, recommended that these five priorities form the basis for the council's next corporate plan that will be proposed to Council in February 2012. These priorities are:

Making Norwich a:

- **Safe and Clean City**
- **City of Character and Culture**
- **Prosperous City**
- **City With Decent Housing For All**

Ensuring the Council provides:

- **Value For Money Services**

7. Work will now be undertaken to finalise the key performance measures and programmes that will support those priorities and draft service plans will be developed accordingly.

8. The information from the consultation on the relative support for each of the five priorities will be used to help to inform the identification of future savings options.

### **Efficiency, back office and strategic service savings for 2012/13**

9. Further work has been completed on a package of efficiency, back office and strategic service savings for 2012/13. These savings will not directly affect services to the public. These savings can be found at annex C. It is recommended that taking into account the impact assessments carried out that these savings are taken forward and that staffing consultations (where appropriate) and preparation for implementation is undertaken. These savings total £3,531,730.

### **Specific savings for 2012/13 focused on external funding**

10. Work has also been carried out on a package of specific potential savings for 2012/13 focused on external funding. These savings can be found at annex D. It is recommended that taking into account the impact assessments that further work is carried out on these savings and that discussions are commenced with the potentially affected organisations in line with the commissioning framework. These potential savings total £209,800.

### **Savings for 2012/13 that will affect service levels to the public**

11. Based on the results of the consultation and taking into account the impact assessments carried out it is recommended that those savings included in annex E are taken forward. These savings total £625,000.
12. Consequently, it is recommended that based on the results of the consultation and the impact assessments that the savings options set out in annex F are not progressed. These savings total £276,900
13. Finally it is recommended that further work is carried out a package of specific savings set out in annex G, including dialogue with affected groups and further targeted consultation (where appropriate). These potential savings total £340,600.

### **Commissioning framework**

14. Based of the results of the consultation (annex H) and recent guidance it is suggested that a number of refinements are made to the wording of the draft commissioning framework to improve and clarify the meaning of certain elements.
15. The commissioning framework was also considered by Scrutiny Committee and a number specific recommendations were made which can also be found in (annex H).

16. Cabinet are, therefore, asked to agree the approach to the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee on the commissioning framework and delegate authority to the Chief executive officer in liaison with the Leader of the council to agree the final version of the commissioning framework taking into account the responses received and recent guidance.

## **Annex A – Consultation results**

### ***Methodology***

Following a report to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011 the consultation focused on:

- the future priorities of the council
- those savings options that will involve changes in the level of service or the way we provide a service to the public
- a new commissioning framework for the council (the results of this can be found in Annex H).

The consultation process was based on the following key principles:

- proportional – the time and resources put into the consultation should be in line with the purpose and impact. Given that the main purpose of this consultation was to help the council determine how to reshape itself to realise significant savings then it would be inappropriate to commit large amounts of expenditure to the consultation exercise itself
- inclusive – the consultation should be fully inclusive and provide different methods of access to ensure those people who want to take part are able to
- genuine – the results of the consultation should be statistically valid and used to fully inform the decision making process
- consistent – given that different methods of consultation will be employed, it will be important to ensure consistency in approach.

Utilising an existing contract the Council engaged the help of a specialist research company to support the consultation to give it independence and rigour and make use of the current Citizens' Panel.

To ensure that a consistent approach was taken throughout the process a core consultation document (survey) was developed, with the help of the research company, which acted as the basis for the different consultation methods.

The amount of savings consulted upon was deliberately greater than the amount actually required. This was to ensure that people were given genuine choice.

Scrutiny Committee considered both the consultation process and the core consultation document and made recommendations to Cabinet which helped to inform the overall approach taken.

The consultation was undertaken through the following methods

- Postal survey of the Citizens' Panel (the panel consists of approximately 1,000 residents broadly representative of the make up of the city)

- Online web survey open to all (including staff)
- Printing and distribution of additional paper copies of the core consultation document for self completion
- A range of workshops and forums including four neighbourhood forums, a Third Sector Forum, Equality Forum, Older People's Forum and specific work with younger people
- Specific comments and views were also sent in by members of the public and organisations

The consultation was publicised through a large range of different methods including the Citizen magazine which is sent to all households in Norwich, the council's website, a series of press articles, leafleting of areas to encourage people to attend the neighbourhood workshops, strap lines on emails etc.

The whole consultation process ran for 12 weeks and ended on the 12 October 2011.

### ***Response rates***

We received approximately the following number of responses:

- 550 Citizens' Panel members
- 800 online surveys (including 50 staff and 11 organisational responses)<sup>1</sup>
- 80 additional paper copy responses
- 80 delegates attended the Third Sector Forum
- 55 attendees at neighbourhood events (including 15 councillors)
- 20 attendees at an equalities forum event
- 40 young people at two events and a small number of older people at an Older People's Forum event
- A handful of (under a dozen) written or emailed specific comments including two petitions

We would like to thank everyone who got involved in the consultation for taking the time to express their views. Where people have given us contact details they will be sent a summary of the consultation results and the decisions taken by Cabinet with a letter thanking them for their involvement.

The first part of this document will focus on the results of the survey and the subsequent section will deal with the qualitative feedback received at the different events and workshops.

### ***Responses to the survey***

Very generally, when compared to the overall population of Norwich, responses were disproportionately received from people aged 45-64 and over 65. There were other areas of disproportionate response, but these were by

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<sup>1</sup> The few staff and organisational responses have been incorporated into the overall set of online results along with the 80 self selected paper copies of the survey. The impact of including these staff and organisational responses is minimal on overall mean scores



far the largest and most likely to affect responses to questions<sup>2</sup>. Based on the advice of the research company the results in this report have been weighted by age to mitigate the impact of these response rates. Whilst other variations exist age was the most significant. Key results have also been looked at to detect any significant variation in responses based upon, for example, age or disability. These will be discussed under each of the proposals as appropriate.

The unweighted response rates across some of the broad population factors<sup>3</sup> were:

	Response rate	Norwich population
White British	95%	89%
Disabled	16%	19%
Aged 16 to 25	2%	19%
Aged 65+	25%	14%
Owner occupiers	68%	51%
Council tenants	11%	25%
Private tenants	9%	16%

Whilst there are therefore some variations in responses compared to the overall population, with age being the most significant, the number of responses does enable us to consider broad perspectives of the population as a whole.

## **Data Analysis**

In several places the survey asked residents to rank preferences from either 1 to 5 or 1 to 20. One of the ways of understanding preferences is therefore to consider the average score of the responses<sup>4</sup>. This is the primary method by which overall preferences have been expressed in this report.

In order to do this it should, wherever possible, mean that questions have a similar number of responses from which to calculate that number. Failure to do this would mean that different questions would effectively be ranked based upon different criteria. Where the majority of respondents completed these questions in this way no problems exist. However a minority either ranked some options equally or only ranked some of the full range of options. After discussion with the research company the following approach was agreed:

- Where respondents did not rank all of the options, those left blank would all be given equal rank based upon the mid point of the remaining unused scores
- Where options were equally ranked each option would be scored at the mid point of the range covered by the equal ranking

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<sup>2</sup> Where there are lower numbers of responses or the general population it may be more difficult to extrapolate significant variations based upon personal factors

<sup>3</sup> These are broad headlines with rounded figures. Estimated [population data](#) is available online

<sup>4</sup> As “most supported” ranks 1 in all questions then the lower the mean the more support there is for an option or proposal

For example, if 15 of 20 options were ranked the remaining 5 would all receive a rank of 18 (mid point of the remaining ranks 16 to 20). If three options were equally ranked as 1 these would all be recalculated as 2 (they take the first three choices giving a mid point of 2). This prevents affording undue weight to those questions answered where others have been ignored<sup>5</sup>.

## ***Interpretation***

As well as calculating mean scores it is also important to understand the spread of responses and the relative support or opposition. One way of doing this is to group rankings into quintiles and then considering responses based upon the following rankings:

- 1-4 Strong support
- 5-8 Mild support
- 9-12 Neither support nor opposition
- 13-16 Mild opposition
- 17-20 Strong opposition

Whilst this is not exactly the same as the wording of the question it does enable relative strength of feeling to be considered. These grouped ranks can then be colour coded along a spectrum. Overall strength of feeling can also be considered by looking at “net support”, which can be calculated as the difference between all the broadly positive and all the broadly negative scores. Alternatively scores can be considered as the net difference between those ranking 1 to 10 and those ranking 11 to 20:

1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20		
<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Mild Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Mild Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>	<b>Net Support</b>	<b>50:50 Split</b>

These additional data will help illustrate, for example, the relative levels of opposition to as well as support for the decisions to be made.

A consultation of this nature is not an exact science. It can only ever test views of those people who choose to respond at a certain time in a certain way. Consequently there are many ways to interpret the data. It is felt however that the combination of these methods of considering the data should convey a degree of the complexity of the feedback to support members in making decisions.

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<sup>5</sup> Results from the Citizens' Panel, which were the first to be analysed, were considered on both this approach and by simply counting the ranks as given by respondents. Overall preferences did not move very much but around the middle favoured savings options some preferences did swap places by a place or two

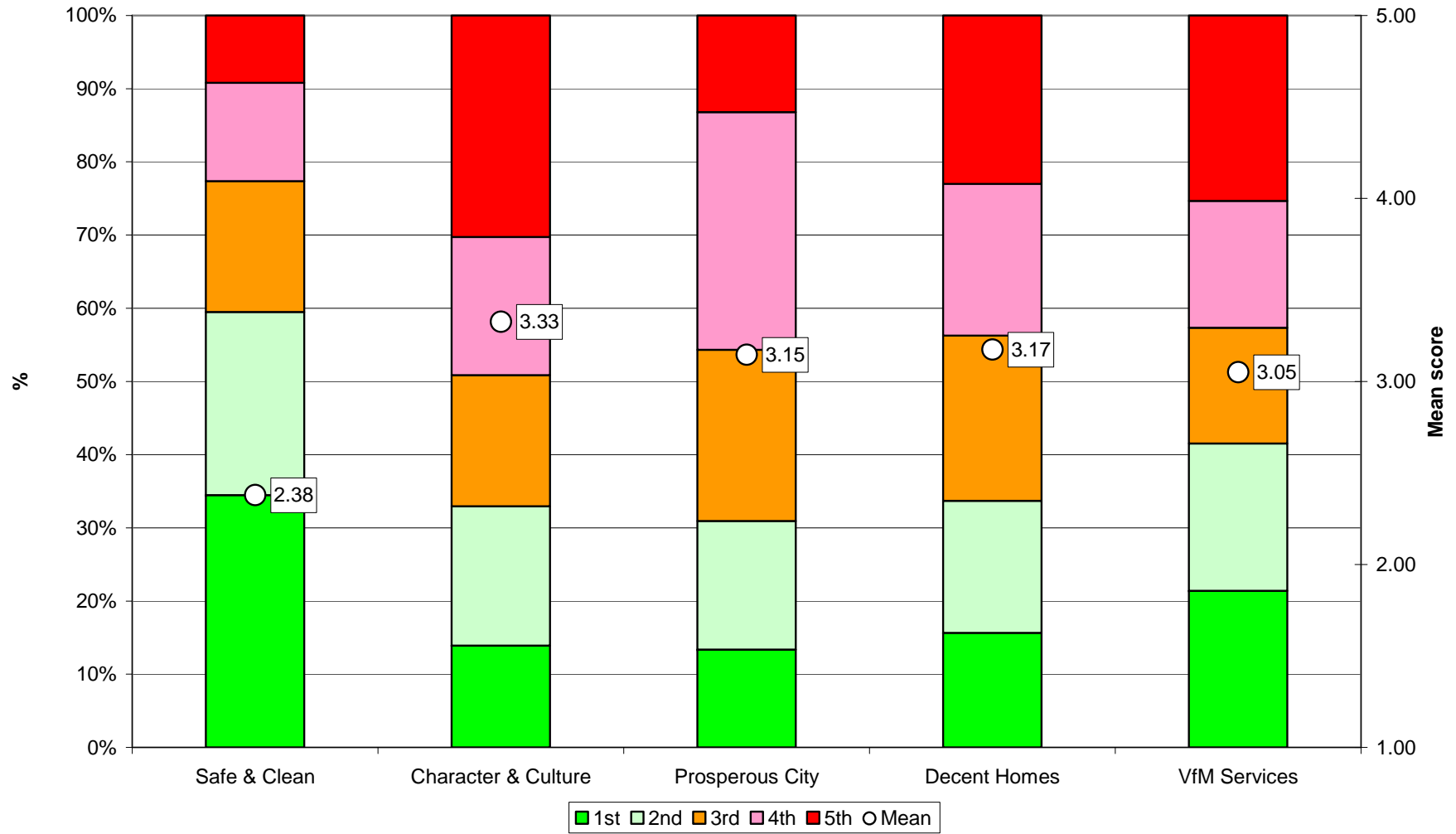
## Priorities

	Overall rank 1 <sup>st</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> based on survey responses
<b>Making Norwich a safe and clean city</b> - such as waste collection and recycling, street cleanliness e.g. reducing graffiti and litter.	1
<b>Making Norwich a city of character and culture</b> - such as effective planning services, heritage and tourism, city events, parks and open spaces.	5
<b>Making Norwich a prosperous city</b> – such as providing the right environment for local business growth, effective debt advice and housing and council tax benefit services.	3
<b>Providing Norwich with decent housing for all</b> – such as helping to prevent homelessness, enabling the building of new affordable homes and providing good services to our housing tenants.	4
<b>Ensuring the council provides value for money services</b> - such as continuing to make our services as efficient and effective as possible.	2

Priority	1	2	3	4	5	Mean		1	2	3	4	5
Safe & Clean	449	326	233	175	120	2.38	36.84	34.46%	25.02%	17.88%	13.43%	9.21%
Character & Culture	181	248	233	246	394	3.33	-16.21	13.90%	19.05%	17.90%	18.89%	30.26%
Prosperous City	174	229	304	423	172	3.15	-14.75	13.36%	17.59%	23.35%	32.49%	13.21%
Decent Homes	204	235	294	270	300	3.17	-10.05	15.66%	18.04%	22.56%	20.72%	23.02%
VfM Services	279	262	206	226	330	3.05	-1.15	21.41%	20.11%	15.81%	17.34%	25.33%

The chart below shows the average (mean) score as well as the distribution of rankings. For example it shows that whilst “prosperous city” and “decent homes” have similar mean scores the variation in rankings between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> choice is markedly different.

Ranking of possible priorities



## ***Savings options***

	<b>Estimated saving per year</b>	<b>Overall rank based on responses</b>
Charge the full cost for planning applications	£150,000	1
Plant new trees in conservation areas only and reduce overall expenditure on trees	£125,000	16
Reduce the number of toilets and litter bins in parks	£117,000	20
Only clean streets every month except for a small number of city centre areas such as Prince of Wales Road	£110,000	19
Charge for car parking in parks	£40,000	17
Charge for replacement household refuse bins	£40,000	13
Cut some grass verges less frequently	£40,000	4
Remove the participatory budgeting programme. This is money given as a small grant to local groups and allows local people to get involved in how it's spent (this has been on hold for one year)	£40,000	7
Increase the cost of a burial. This would mean an increase from approximately £715 to £860 to purchase a plot and from £518 to £630 for a burial	£38,000	14
Charge the full cost for pest control services. This would be increased from an average of £22 to approximately £90 per treatment	£30,000	15
Charge for planning advice to those groups which currently get this for free (this includes households, small businesses and charitable organisations)	£27,000	12
Reduce the budget for new economic development initiatives	£25,000	11
Take a different approach to the yacht station on the river including exploring ways to generate income or selling or closing it	£20,000	2
Close public toilets that are not well used (St Saviours and Tombland)	£20,000	8
Reduce the amount of Christmas lights in the city centre by one third	£20,000	5
Reduce the amount of floodlighting for certain city centre buildings eg City Hall and St Andrews Hall	£20,000	3
Stop planting new bedding around the city and move to sustainable planting	£20,000	6
Increase the cost of an allotment for 2013 onwards. This would go up from a current average of £40 to about £70 per year	£20,000	9
Reduce the level of consultation on planning applications to the legal minimum (for example only putting up notices rather than sending letters)	£13,000	10
Reduce the number of litter bins on the highway	£9,900	18

This table shows both the mean scores and spread of results across the five broad categories of support previously outlined. The “running total” column shows the accumulated savings were these responses implemented in this order of preference. As explained above it also considers the difference between supportive and opposition ranks and the difference between those ranking 1 to 10 and those ranking 11 to 20

Option	Mean	Value	Running Total		Strong Support	Mild Support	Neither	Mild Opposition	Strong Opposition	Net Support	50:50 Split
Plan Charges	5.85	£150,000	£150,000		53.98%	15.78%	15.62%	9.36%	5.26%	55.14	57.62
Yacht	8.17	£20,000	£170,000		28.92%	29.39%	19.26%	14.69%	7.73%	35.89	37.82
Floodlighting	8.27	£20,000	£190,000		30.68%	27.05%	16.00%	18.39%	7.88%	31.45	33.54
Grass Cutting	8.96	£40,000	£230,000		25.37%	21.73%	26.30%	18.10%	8.51%	20.49	23.59
Xmas Lights	9.05	£20,000	£250,000		29.13%	21.48%	16.07%	20.63%	12.67%	17.31	17.31
Bedding	9.43	£20,000	£270,000		22.27%	24.83%	21.42%	20.26%	11.21%	15.62	16.16
PB	9.51	£40,000	£310,000		21.96%	24.13%	21.11%	20.65%	12.14%	13.30	12.92
Toilets	9.78	£20,000	£330,000		23.14%	21.59%	19.74%	19.43%	16.10%	9.21	8.20
Allotments	10.25	£20,000	£350,000		19.98%	21.91%	20.60%	20.45%	17.05%	4.40	4.32
Plan Consult	10.73	£13,000	£363,000		16.99%	20.93%	21.16%	22.86%	18.07%	-3.01	-4.56
Ec Dev	10.76	£25,000	£388,000		12.22%	25.68%	23.36%	21.66%	17.09%	-0.85	1.01
Planning Advice	10.89	£27,000	£415,000		12.83%	21.56%	23.42%	26.51%	15.69%	-7.81	-7.42
Pay for Bins	11.12	£40,000	£455,000		15.22%	18.78%	20.94%	25.12%	19.94%	-11.05	-10.51
Burial	11.39	£38,000	£493,000		14.63%	20.28%	19.97%	20.36%	24.77%	-10.22	-9.13
Pests	11.73	£30,000	£523,000		9.91%	21.67%	21.36%	23.92%	23.14%	-15.48	-16.25
Trees	11.89	£125,000	£648,000		16.23%	11.28%	21.95%	25.66%	24.88%	-23.03	-25.19
Parking in Parks	12.21	£40,000	£688,000		16.14%	13.98%	17.37%	21.24%	31.27%	-22.39	-25.56
Litter Bins	12.76	£9,900	£697,900		7.41%	12.36%	23.17%	29.42%	27.64%	-37.30	-40.54
Street Cleaning	13.26	£110,000	£807,900		10.45%	12.07%	17.11%	22.68%	37.69%	-37.85	-39.01
Park Toilets/Bins	14.54	£117,000	£924,900		7.03%	8.11%	11.98%	27.59%	45.29%	-57.73	-61.21

### Summary of savings options

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Charge the full cost of planning applications</b>			
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>54%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£150,000</b>	Mean Score:	5.85	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>55%</b>			<b>1</b>

#### Consultation results:

Stronger opposition is likely to be from women rather than men, those aged 45 or over compared to 25 to 44 and council tenants compared to owner occupiers. Of all responses on the proposal 560 ranked this option as first or second most favoured and over half ranked it within the “strong support” limits (ranks 1 to 4).

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Plant trees in conservation areas only and reduce expenditure overall</b>			
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>16%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£125,000</b>	Mean Score:	11.89	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-23%</b>			<b>4</b>

#### Consultation results:

Stronger opposition is more likely to come from non disabled rather than disabled, or those aged 25 to 44 compared to those over 65 and less likely from council tenants. Half of responses fall within a broad opposition category whilst one in five are fairly neutral.

Some of the individual comments received queried why conservation areas were to be given what was perceived as preferential treatment. There are certain obligations to tree planting within these areas and therefore the proposals would be to do only our

required minimum across the city. Another comment received queried whether planting could still be across the city but at wider distances apart.

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Reduce the number of toilets and litter bins in parks</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>45%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£117,00</b>	Mean Score:	14.54	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-58%</b>			<b>5</b>

#### Consultation results:

This was also the most heavily opposed proposal based upon these results. Each of the least favoured ranks (17 to 20) received over 100 weighted votes

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Clean streets every month except for a small number of city centre areas</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>10%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>38%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£110,000</b>	Mean Score:	13.26	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-39%</b>			<b>5</b>

#### Consultation results:

Those living in the most deprived 20% of the city<sup>6</sup> were more opposed compared to those in the middle 20%. Ranks 19 and 20 scored 358 weighted responses. The specific proposal would have reduced the cleaning on a relatively small number of streets

<sup>6</sup> This relates to the area in which a person lives based upon Indices of Multiple Deprivation rather than that persons own personal circumstances. Areas have been grouped into quintiles / groups of 20% of the city



which are currently cleaned more often than most other residential area. However there is a clear level of opposition to reductions in street cleaning as a concept.

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Charge for car parking in parks</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>31%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£40,000</b>	Mean Score:	12.21	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-22%</b>			<b>5</b>

#### Consultation results:

Opposition is more likely to come from women rather than men, those aged 25-44 compared to those aged 65+ along with residents in the West neighbourhoods compared to the East and from council tenants. Half of all responses rank this at 13 or lower i.e. within the defined opposition ranks

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Charge for replacement household refuse bins</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>15%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£40,000</b>	Mean Score:	11.12	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-11%</b>			<b>4</b>

#### Consultation results:

Those most likely to oppose this option are aged 16-24 or 45-64 rather than 65+ and not be disabled. Residents in the West area are more likely to be opposed than those in the South. Those renting from the council or a private landlord are more opposed than owner occupiers

Some of the individual responses considered there should be exclusions for theft of bins. This is specifically within the proposal

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Cut some grass verges less frequently</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>25%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£40,000</b>	Mean Score:	8.96	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>20%</b>			<b>1</b>

#### Consultation results:

Residents aged 65+ are more likely to be against this than any other ages along with those West area compared to those in the East and owner occupiers compared to private tenants

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Remove the participatory budgeting programme</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>22%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>12%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£40,000</b>	Mean Score:	9.51	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>13%</b>			<b>2</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by women compared to men and those in the lowest 20% of deprived areas than those in the second 20% most and second 20% least deprived areas

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Increase the cost of a burial</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>15%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£38,000</b>	Mean Score:	11.39	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-10%</b>			<b>4</b>

#### Consultation results:

Opposition is more likely to come from women compared to men or those living in the most deprived 20% and middle deprived 20% of areas comparative to the second least deprived 20%. Residents in the East are more likely to oppose than those in the South. Of those responding 106 weight responses ranked this as 20 (i.e. least popular)

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Charge the full cost for pest control services</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>10%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£30,000</b>	Mean Score:	11.73	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-15%</b>			<b>4</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by women or those aged 65+ as well as council tenants

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Charge for planning advice to groups which currently get this for free</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>13%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>16%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£27,000</b>	Mean Score:	10.89	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-8%</b>			<b>3</b>

#### Consultation results:

Those most likely to oppose this are aged 25-44 rather than 45+ or women rather than men. It is also more opposed by owner occupiers and private tenants, those in the South area and those in the second least deprived 20% of areas

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Reduce the budget for new economic development initiatives</b>
------------------	---

<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>12%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£25,000</b>	Mean Score:	10.76	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-1%</b>			<b>3</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is most likely to be opposed by those aged 25-44, those in the second most deprived and the least 20% compared to the most deprived 20% or those in the South rather than the West

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Take a different approach to the yacht station on the river</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>8%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£20,000</b>	Mean Score:	8.17	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>36%</b>			<b>1</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by those aged 65+ than any other age group, men rather than women and those who are disabled

One consultation response was received about the possible tourism and economic effects of closing this could have on the city

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Close public toilets that are not well used (St Saviours and Tombland)</b>
------------------	---

<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£20,000</b>	Mean Score:	9.78	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>9%</b>			<b>2</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by men than women, all ages over 25 and those who are disabled

A petition was received from local residents and businesses around Tombland opposing this and highlighting the possible increase in public fouling at night. However that particular toilet is not open in the evening.

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Reduce the amount of Christmas lights in the city centre by one third</b>
------------------	--

<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>29%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>13%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£20,000</b>	Mean Score:	9.05	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>17%</b>			<b>2</b>

#### Consultation results:

Opposition is most likely from the second most deprived 20% of areas than the least deprived 20% as well as disabled people

One response considered the possibility of businesses supporting these and other Christmas activities, although this is in part already happening

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Reduce the amount of floodlighting for certain city centre buildings</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>31%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>8%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£20,000</b>	Mean Score:	8.27	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>31%</b>			<b>1</b>

#### Consultation results:

Opposition is likely to be stronger amongst men than women. Nearly 60% of responses ranked this as 8 or higher (i.e. broadly in support)

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Stop planting new bedding and move to sustainable planting</b>
------------------	---

<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>22%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>11%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£20,000</b>	Mean Score:	9.43	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>16%</b>			<b>2</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by those in the second most deprived 20% of areas than the most deprived 20%, men or those with a disability

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Increase the cost of an allotment for 2013 onwards</b>
------------------	---

<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£20,000</b>	Mean Score:	10.25	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>4%</b>			<b>3</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by those aged 45-64 than 25-44 and owner occupiers compared to private tenants

There was a specific response suggesting that car parking charges should be increased rather than these and a petition from one group of allotment holders about the proposed level of increase in one go

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Reduce the level of consultation on planning applications</b>
------------------	--

<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>18%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£13,000</b>	Mean Score:	10.7	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-3%</b>			<b>3</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by men than women, those in the South when compared to the East and West, owner occupiers and those in the least deprived 20% of areas when compared to all other areas.

<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Reduce the number of litter bins on the highway</b>
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<b>Strong Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Strong Opposition</b>
<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>

Estimated Saving:	<b>£9,900</b>	Mean Score:	12.76	<b>Quintile</b>
Net Support:	<b>-37%</b>			<b>5</b>

#### Consultation results:

This is more likely to be opposed by men than women and all those over 25 compared to those 16-24.



## Significant variations

The research company have looked at the some of the variations in response based upon, for example, age, gender, location and tenure. Tests are then run to see if there appear to be differences in response which are likely to correlate to some of those variations. For example are particular answers more likely to come from men than women. These tests look for statistically valid variations and not simply the widest difference in percentage terms. It takes into account a minimum of 30 responses **and** compares one variable to another and not just the variation from the overall score. Therefore there may be a chance that answers in one neighbourhood appear to vary significantly from one other neighbourhood but not from the other two.

From these tests it is possible to speculate that a person answering in a particular way is likely to have certain characteristics. The reverse however is not necessarily true (i.e. that a person with particular characteristics will answer in a certain way). Where it is suggested that opposition to, or lower level of support for, is more likely from one group compared to another this does not mean that a majority or even significant minority of that group necessarily opposes it. Simply it means that those opposing it are more likely to be drawn from that group rather than another.

## ***Future ways of contacting the council***

If a small percentage of people changed the way they got in touch with the council it could save around £150,000 per year. Of the different ways to get in touch as listed below, please rank those you would be willing to use most. In brackets are estimated costs for each type of contact per customer transaction.)

Method	Estimated cost per contact	Rank 1 <sup>st</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup> based upon responses
Through the council's website	17p	1
By email	37p	2
By phone	£4.56	3
In person at City Hall	£7.65	4
In person at a neighbourhood office	£16.74	5

Respondents were asked to rank which methods of contact they would be prepared to use / move toward. As a general rule those responding online were, perhaps unsurprisingly, more likely to favour online contact methods. Across all response methods support for face to face contact was relatively low and overall those ranking this as option 4 or 5 far outweighed those ranking it as 1 or 2. Online responses were far less likely to use these methods and across both groups use of neighbourhood offices was very low. Overall around 10% of responses ranked this choice as either 1 or 2 whilst nearly 70% ranked it as 5.

Channel	1	2	3	4	5	Mean		1	2	3	4	5
Web	637	216	184	128	156	2.21	43.07	48.22%	16.35%	13.93%	9.69%	11.81%
Email	210	674	196	164	78	2.41	48.56	15.89%	50.98%	14.83%	12.41%	5.90%
Phone	277	218	670	124	33	2.56	25.57	20.95%	16.49%	50.68%	9.38%	2.50%
City Hall	122	133	136	785	144	3.53	-51.06	9.24%	10.08%	10.30%	59.47%	10.91%
Neighbourhood	64	73	99	181	904	4.35	-71.76	4.84%	5.53%	7.49%	13.70%	68.43%

Questions were also asked about least likely times to contact the council specifically at City Hall. As this report recommends further work be undertaken to consider office and other customer access choices the full results are not published here. However in very general terms, apart from Monday mornings and Friday afternoons, the least favoured contact times appear to be Wednesday afternoon and Thursday afternoon. There are variations based upon for example age and employment status which also impact in some cases responses to the questions about future use of web services for specific activities. Again very generally those responding online to the survey appear more likely to be prepared to move toward online services and generally residents appear to be favourable toward telling us about things and requesting things rather than paying or applying for things. There are of course exceptions to this as the final tables suggest.

This information, along with actual usage figures, will enable us to consider the options to move contact to electronic means where it is best suited whilst also understanding where this may not be a suitable option.

### Current ways of contacting us:

	Pay				Tell				Request				Apply			
	Online	Phone	Person	N/A	Online	Phone	Person	N/A	Online	Phone	Person	N/A	Online	Phone	Person	N/A
<b>Weighted</b>	18.9%	20.8%	11.2%	53.3%	11.8%	23.8%	3.3%	62.1%	5.6%	14.9%	2.1%	72.3%	3.6%	8.4%	8.4%	73.4%

### Future use of online services:

Activities willing to carry out online			
<b>Pay</b>	Council tax	658	48.7%
	Council rents	374	27.7%
	Parking fine	768	56.8%
	Allotment	441	32.6%
	Events ticket	922	68.2%
<b>Tell</b>	Council house repair	446	33.0%
	Missed bin	920	68.0%
	Fly tipping / enviro crime etc	948	70.1%
	Noise nuisance	751	55.5%
	ASB	729	53.9%
	Broken street light	976	72.2%
	Pothole	966	71.4%
	Comment on planning / licence	832	61.5%
<b>Request</b>	Replacement bin	925	68.4%
	Council Tax discount	646	47.8%
	Pest control	701	51.8%
	Bulky waste	820	60.7%
	Appointment request	721	53.3%
<b>Apply</b>	Benefits	522	38.6%
	Taxi licence	377	27.9%
	Council garage	461	34.1%
	Allotment	528	39.1%
	Resident's parking permit	725	53.6%
<b>None</b>		110	8.1%

## ***Feedback from forums and other methods***

### ***Third Sector Forum***

This was the first face to face event of the consultation and attracted about 80 delegates and representatives from a variety of organisations; some statutory but mostly voluntary or community.

### **Political priorities**

Groups of delegates working on tables were asked to rank the five proposed priorities. These scores were then aggregated to give an overall rank:

1. Decent housing for all
2. Prosperous city
3. Safe and clean city
4. City of character and culture
5. Value for money services

A number of comments were also made across the tables. It is difficult to represent individual comments without seeming to give more weight to some than others. However some common recurring themes include:

- Housing is central to ability to access and benefit from all the other services and improvements as well as health and welfare
- A prosperous city should bring money into the city for its residents as well as create a better environment in which to live
- VfM services should be a “given” anyway and needs also to reflect quality as well as cost
- Need to reflect the needs of children and young people as well as skills and education

### **Access to services**

Considering the proposals to change opening times and methods of contacting the council groups were also asked to consider implications of and limitations to proposed changes. Some common recurring themes included:

- Making use of existing partners or other organisations to support people accessing and using services
- Don't disregard the needs of vulnerable people who may require more intensive or personal means of contact and support
- Consider out of hours access to services beyond message services
- Good information and signposting, including to services not provided by Norwich City Council

### ***Older People's Forum***

As part of a wider event eleven people approached a stand to talk about the budget proposals. People were asked to identify any of the 20 proposals which they supported rather than rank them and invited to submit their own more detailed survey responses. This was to speed up the process on the day

and maintain interest. Three proposals were supported by five or more people:

- 1 – Fewer floodlights on city centre buildings
- 2 – Fewer Christmas lights
- 3 – Stop planting new bedding

### ***Young people's events***

Facilitated by Futures Projects, seven young people attended a session with councillors at City Hall and then a facilitated discussion at the Future offices. These discussions helped explain what the city council does (and doesn't) do as well as the difference between councillors and MPs.

When asked about accessing services this particular group was not in favour of using methods such as social media (this was seen as a leisure activity), there was a preference for face to face contact and a distrust of electronic bill paying.

The top four most favoured savings, receiving six or more votes, were:

- 1 – cut grass verges less often
- 2= - spend less on tree planting **and** charge full costs of planning applications **and** reduce floodlighting on city buildings

Work with Momentum also engaged a further 29 young people to discuss the consultation and matters arising from it. Whilst there was a wide mix of views on the political priorities, "decent housing" was generally the most popular one and, contrary to the wider results, "safe and clean" was a strong third with "character and culture" and "prosperous city" the least popular.

### ***Equalities Forum***

18 people met to consider the proposals, with most people being from the black and minority ethnic population and / or were people with disabilities. The discussion was based around finding out what people like or disliked about their community, barriers to accessing services and finally consideration of the twenty savings ideas. Individuals were also invited to complete their own survey, either online or on paper.

As with the neighbourhood events the local community questions were not directly related to the budget consultation and covered a wide range of responses, some common positive themes included:

- Green spaces
- Clean streets
- Range of events and activities

Some of the negative views included:

- Specific transport and service and access issues relating to deafness

- Lack of suitable housing for variety of household sizes and incomes
- Parking, environmental pollution, traffic

Accessing services included concerns as follows:

- Waiting times on telephones
- Need for a variety of methods, especially when face to face aids understanding or where language issues may not support electronic methods
- Need to train and support staff to enable better communication across a range of needs

The top seven supported budget reductions (receiving eight or more of the 18 votes) were:

- 1 - Stop new planting in bedding
- 2= - Close yacht station **and** charge for planning advice where currently free
- 4= - Cut grass verges less frequently **and** close the two toilets
- 6= - Minimum planning notices **and** increase allotment charges

### ***Neighbourhood forums***

Four events were held at various locations and times during the period. Approximately 55 people attended in total (including approximately 13 city councillors). Unsurprisingly comments on the proposals were influenced by where people lived. These will be shared direct with Heads of Service where they may relate to specific matters or general service delivery. Consequently it was difficult to summarise a consistent set of view. However some common recurring themes which came up included:

- Protecting low income households from increased charges
- Considering sponsorship / business support for things such as Christmas lights, floodlighting, bedding plants and litter picking (e.g. fast food refuse)
- Offer some initial free planning advice and then charge
- Look at tree planting across the city as a whole and not just conservation areas, including types of tree, spacing between them
- Car parking in parks should be free or at reduced rates for certain groups or have an initial free period. Perhaps consider charging for specific events?
- Lack of support for reducing the number of toilets or bins in parks

### ***Individual responses***

Fewer than a dozen individual letters or emails were received making comment about the process and / or the proposals. A couple of comments criticised the approach whilst another supported it. A petition from 27 residents and / or businesses was received about the proposed closure of the toilets in Tombland and the potential negative impact this may have on the area with increased public defecation. A petition from 28 allotment holders on

Mousehold South allotments was also received opposing the level of proposed increase in allotment charges. Other suggestions included:

- concreting grass verges to save money
- not discriminating in tree planting based upon conservation area but overall area need
- increasing parking permit charges rather than allotment charges
- not cutting tree planting at all,
- capping allotment increases for low income households
- not charging for wheelie bin replacements when these had been stolen ( this is actually part of the proposal)
- not closing the yacht station and to consider the possible tourism and wider income implications

### ***Staff and organisational responses***

Organisations and staff were invited to submit online responses. A total of 11 were received from organisations and 53 from staff (and a further 50 responses where this was not stated, but likely to be from residents).

There was one written submission highlighting the need to ensure the needs of older people were fully considered.

Annex E: Package of savings for 2012/13 that will affect service levels to the public that are recommended to be taken forward

No	Service	Description of Savings / Income Measure	Lead Officer	Savings
48	City Development Services	Withdrawal of yacht station subsidy and transfer to a third party	A Watt	20000
49	City Development Services	Reduction in economic initiatives budget	A Watt	25000
50	Property Services	Reduction of festive lighting	C Rayner	20000
51	Property Services	Closure of St Saviours toilets.	C Rayner	15000
52	Property Services	Closure of Tombland toilets	C Rayner	15000
53	Planning	Reduce consultation on planning applications to statutory minimum	G Nelson	13000
54	Planning	Stop the provision of any free advice to planning applicants	G Nelson	27000
55	Planning	Recovery of full development management costs for all services to applicant subject to necessary legislation	G Nelson	150000
56	Citywide Services	Suspend tree planting programme except in conservation areas where tress would continue to be replaced as this is a statutory obligation	A Akester	60000
57	Citywide Services	Reduction in council contribution to highway tree expenditure.	A Akester	65000
58	Citywide Services	Increase in allotment rental prices for 2013 from an average of £40 to £70 per year.	A Akester	19000



59	Citywide Services	Increase in burial prices from approximately £715 to £860 to purchase a plot and from £518 to £630 for a burial.	A Akester	30000
60	Citywide Services	Charging for replacement bins	A Akester	40000
61	Citywide Services	Reduce grass verge cutting to highways agency agreement - once a fortnight to once a month	A Akester	40000
62	Citywide Services	Stop providing bedding plants and move to sustainable planting. However, every effort will be made to maintain the attractiveness of the sites.	A Akester	20000
63	Neighbourhood services	To end the participatory budgeting programme	B Cronk	40000
64	Citywide Services	Stop charity bank collections for clothes (these are clothes left for charities such as Oxfam, Salvation Army which they charge us for even though they collect and sell the clothes and retain the income)	A Akester	6000
65	City Development Services	Increased income through higher fees for HMO landlord licences in line with new toolkit from the government (approved by Cabinet July 2011)	A Watt	20000

**625000**

Annex F: Package of savings for 2012/13 that will affect service levels to the public that are not recommended to be taken forward

No	Service	Description of Savings / Income Measure	Lead Officer	Savings
66	Citywide Services	Remove litter bins from parks	A Akester	50000
67	Citywide Services	Closure of toilets in parks	A Akester	67000
68	Citywide Services	Charge for parking in parks	A Akester	40000
69	Citywide Services	Reduce street cleansing for those areas currently on weekly clean to monthly	A Akester	110000
70	Citywide Services	Suspend programme of replacing damaged litter bins on the highway	A Akester	9900
				<b>276,900</b>

## **Annex H: Summary of consultation responses to the draft commissioning framework**

The draft commissioning framework was open for consultation for twelve weeks, ending 12<sup>th</sup> October. This document provides a summary of the process and feedback received.

### Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny committee received a presentation on the commissioning framework on 21<sup>st</sup> July in order:

- To gain an overview of the newly proposed commissioning framework so that Scrutiny committee can assess the effectiveness of the commissioning framework, later on in the year once the framework has been fully developed.
- To make any initial recommendations on the further development and refinement of the commissioning framework that will be considered by Cabinet as part of the responses to the wider consultation

Scrutiny made the following specific recommendations to Cabinet:

- the use of ward members be considered for the process of area based commissioning exercises
- a hierarchy of options for commissioning be considered to be used that included consideration of internal provision, local sector provision and co-operatives
- voluntary organisations and the third sector in general may have an increasingly important role to play in partnership with the council towards achieving the aims of the authority.

### **Cabinet are asked to agree the approach to the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee on the commissioning framework**

### The Third sector forum annual conference

The conference on July 21<sup>st</sup> provided opportunity to launch the framework and consultation with third sector organisations. Over 80 participants worked in groups to feed back comments on the framework and ways in which the third sector could and should be involved in the commissioning process. The sector provided a strong message that they have a valuable role at all stages of the commissioning cycle, particularly in needs assessment and service design and in involving service users. The sector asked “for *real involvement not a token gesture*” and to be considered as “*a partner to the process not just a deliverer of services*”. Amongst a number of suggestions for innovative approaches, it suggested

- Commissioning should be joined up with other commissioning agents
- Competition can / should drive innovation
- Decision makers should experience how third sector organisations work and deliver services - via visits, ‘back to the floor’, shadowing

### Equalities Forum

18 people plus three interpreters attended the Forum and provided comments.

- Services are being designed that do not meet the needs – we need to make sure the services meet the needs
- People who use services should shape them: Co-production
- Ensure everyone knows how to apply: advertise to reach everyone
- Criteria about funding needs to be clear and specific
- Make application form as simple as possible
- Support new groups, not old groups who have experience already
- There is a general lack of confidence in understanding what monitoring and evaluation means

In addition, there were five written responses to the framework consultation.

These responses varied greatly in depth and they provided a number of areas where the wording of the framework, application form and guidance notes can be improved and meaning clarified through refinements.

Guidance has also recently been published by the Department of Communities and Local Government directly relating to this area of work.

**It is, therefore, recommended that Cabinet delegate authority to the Chief executive officer in liaison with the Leader of the council to agree the final version of the commissioning framework taking into account the responses received and recent guidance.**

Key points from the responses are summarised below:

- **Notification schedule** – one respondent particularly emphasised the importance of ensuring that the current grant recipients were communicated with directly about the framework. In this case the implementation plan had set out that assuming Cabinet approves the framework, communication of the new process will be made directly to those organisations currently in receipt of grants and web pages will be updated for wider communication.

Points were also made which stressed the importance of information on the availability of grant aid being available in good time as completing the draft application, finding and consulting an advisor takes some time for organisations where English is a second language

- **Duration of grants:** It was stated by one respondent that it would be helpful if all grant awards could be for longer than one year, subject to adequate monitoring of achievement of outcomes, in order to reduce uncertainty and help to achieve more efficient planning of service delivery.

The framework currently states at 3.4: *‘ We are committed to working in partnership with providers, where appropriate, to achieve innovation and develop new services. This means establishing long-term*

*relationships, based on trust and mutual support, encouraging continued investment in Norwich's services'.*

- **Involvement throughout the commissioning cycle:** A number of organisations stressed the valuable inputs the sector can provide throughout the whole commissioning process, particularly in assessing need and designing services. It was also welcomed that the Council formally recognises the benefits of consulting with voluntary organisations as part of the needs assessment. However another respondent encouraged the council to *"exploit expert resources to inform their view of need"* and in choosing delivery routes and that *"it is not clear from the information provided, how the Council would decide, or a third sector organisation would respond to, which services are procured and which are grant aided. Further, it is not clear whether the provider would have any role in advising the Council as to which is the best route."* These are valid points reinforced by the exercise at the third sector forum conference and the equalities forum about how the sector can be involved at all stages of the commissioning process.

The framework does provide a broad commitment to involving the third sector on assessing needs, without the detail of how this will be achieved. Section 4.4 states *"Engaging with service users can be difficult and Norwich City Council recognises the important role of the voluntary and community sector as intermediaries. We will draw upon their advocacy role (speaking for the groups they represent) and on their specialist knowledge (of the barriers faced by, difficulties for, and capabilities of, the groups they represent)."*

Similarly the framework provides a broad commitment to involving the third sector in agreeing outcomes. Sections 4.10-11 states that the council will *"weigh up the following factors and come to a balanced view: needs assessment, local political drive, legislation, value for money and proposals from the public, private and voluntary organisations."*

However, the draft framework does not currently specifically refer to involving the third sector in the part of the commissioning process that agrees the best route and design of services. The framework states that this process *"will be guided by the council's 'lean blue print' (target operating model) which acts as a framework for all service redesign work within the council. To help officers in this process a matrix has been developed to assess each option against criteria to establish the method that is likely to deliver best value."* The process of formally determining the most appropriate route would generally be made by the council based on the outcome that council wishes to achieve. However, this would be informed by information about the state of market and achieving best value

- **Procurement versus grant – an open process:** One respondent also highlighted that that procurement, tendering process and contractual

agreement would not be appropriate in relation to the services they currently provide.

- **Service Level agreements:** There were some specific responses about the discontinued use of Service Level agreements generated by 4.14 of framework which states : *The council will no longer hold service level agreements (SLA) in relation to externally sourced services. An SLA is a document that would outline the terms and conditions, and obligations of all parties involved in a commissioned service. Contracts, grant agreements and grant award letters, will all contain agreements on expected levels of service or outcomes to be delivered by the organisation commissioned and the responsibilities of each party. This negates the requirement for a separate SLA.*

The framework adopted this approach according to National Audit Office advice and because there is always a risk that an SLAs could be inadvertently written in such a way that they could constitute legally binding contracts. It was, therefore decided to clarify language and status by referring only to contracts and grant agreements and grant award letters. A grant agreement might look very much like an existing SLA but clearly distinguishes it as not legally binding.

There was also concern about the ability to recover VAT if a SLA is not in place. However, a third sector organisation can recover VAT when commissioned to provide services, this might be through procurement or grant making arrangements. However, recovery of VAT is not permitted where grant in aid is provided – a general contribution to core costs or overall activities of the organisation. This is the key distinction; recovery of VAT is not dependent on the set up of a service level agreement.

- **Decommissioning:** One respondent commented that “*de-commissioning at any point (perhaps when outcomes have yet to be achieved ....Because of .... longer term outcomes) puts significant risk on providers. This could put off many excellent smaller providers and prevent them from tendering for the provision of high quality services. Thought needs to be given with regard to this, some outcomes are long term and if third sector organisations are to commit to delivery of long term projects with long term outcomes, a payment schedule and decommissioning policy would need to support those organisations to be able to take part.*”

The framework sets out at 3.41-3. 42 that decommissioning can happen at any point in the commissioning cycle but the most common time for decommissioning occurs when the existing agreement comes to an end and the service or project is evaluated. Consideration will be given to impact of arrangement/ service ceasing and legal requirement. Where long term outcomes are agreed, the monitoring framework will identify milestones or outputs and payment schedule will relate to this.

- **Consortium:** One respondent suggested some amendments to the application form to ease completion by consortia or partnerships. Furthermore some other amendments to the framework were suggested that recognise and encourage commissioning via consortia- as it is believed that the third sector are shaping themselves for this approach in future as it is increasing adopted by other commissioning organisations.

In addition to the above, some informal comments made directly to officers indicated that the framework has been received positively.