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Final Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Cambridge City Council (“the Council”) is facing a major challenge. Like other local authorities it has got to cut back on the services it delivers because it receives less money from the Government each year, at a time when its costs are rising because of an increasing demand for services from a growing local population. This means that the Council is having to prioritise more, deliver its services in a different way and stop doing some things altogether. The Council is clear in that it wants to protect services that local residents and businesses value and to deliver services to those who are most vulnerable.

The Council has carried out a budget consultation exercise annually since 2002. In 2014 local residents had the opportunity to use an online budget simulator called You Choose\(^1\) to prioritise council service areas and to help identify savings.

One of the findings from the You Choose budget consultation showed that local residents expressed a preference for taking larger savings from some council services than others. The five key areas for the larger savings were:

- Street and open spaces
- Planning services
- Community development services
- Environmental health
- Waste and recycling services

It was felt that for the next budget consultation exercise in 2015 it would be helpful for the Council to look in greater depth at the reasons why people had identified these services and to try and test the appropriateness of any changes in services. BMG Research, an independent research agency, was commissioned to conduct deliberative workshops with local residents and managers of local businesses to explore their views about the key service areas in more depth. BMG Research ran three workshops involving a representative sample of residents and local businesses in August and early September 2015. Participants were asked to:

- Indicate how they perceived the Council and the services it provides.
- Give their initial views on a long-list of services (23) that make-up the five key service areas.
- Talk about their experiences of using the services (23).
- Discuss how they valued the services, and whether there were opportunities for doing things in a different way.
- Vote on the importance of services where ideas for savings had been put forward.
- Give their initial views on the savings ideas.
- Consider the ideas for savings in a bit more depth.

\(^1\) You Choose is an online budget simulator that encourages members of the public to consider where council budget cuts should fall, where efficiencies might be made, and where income might be generated.
This report sets out the key findings from the research. The research will be used by the Council’s Executive members to help inform the way they set budgets for the services they are responsible for. Senior managers will also use the research when reviewing services. A full methodology can be found in Appendix A.

It should be noted that Cambridge City is a two tier local authority area, which means that there are two local authorities, Cambridge City Council (operating at a district level) and Cambridgeshire County Council, each responsible for delivering a different range of services in the locality. In some cases participants in workshops were uncertain about the services that each local authority is responsible for, such as the condition of public paths and cycle lanes on “highways” and social care services for people with learning difficulties, which are county council responsibilities, and wrongly ascribed responsibility for them. In some instances the City Council is constrained with legislative frameworks about what it can and can’t do, such as around planning law and guidance and providing social housing.

Areas of concern, like alleviating congestion, are wider issues that require multi-agency cooperation to resolve and the Council is presently working in partnership through the City Deal body to bring about change.
2 Key findings

The following section highlights the key findings from participants across the workshops, outlining any key similarities or differences between residents and businesses.

2.1 Perceptions and use of services

- Participants mostly believe that the Council and the services it provides are both important and necessary. They felt the services offered were important to their day to day lives, such as waste collection and street cleansing. Businesses were more likely to be positive about the Council than residents.

- The services that residents and businesses felt were more important were parks maintenance and waste and recycling services. Participants felt that as a tourist destination it is important to keep Cambridge’s parks and open spaces well maintained, to uphold its current image. This was particularly important to businesses, who saw tourists as valued clientele.

- Planning services were also seen as important to businesses and residents (even if they do not use the service) as they are aware of the growth of the city and how it can and could impacts on the wider environment and communities in Cambridge.

- Recycling services were seen as particularly improved, with many businesses and residents saying that they believed they received a very good service and that this was much better than the service offered in other areas. However, some businesses did feel that the Council’s commercial waste service should widen the recycling options available to include difficult to dispose of items, like batteries.

- Issues that were of broader concern to participants were:
  - Ensuring walkways in housing estates are accessible for all and free of tripping hazards;
  - That planning decisions increase the supply of affordable housing for local people;
  - Traffic congestion is relieved (sometimes the result of construction projects), and;
  - The behaviour of cyclists is improved and cycle-ways used rather than pavements.

2.2 Views on cost savings suggestions

- The most important service for businesses was ensuring all bins were collected during the weeks bank holidays fell. Businesses felt the additional rounds on Saturdays were important to them as bank holidays created lots of excess waste. They believed this waste needed to be collected promptly to ensure local areas continue to look presentable. In addition fly-tipping was a problem for some businesses. It was felt that delayed collections for residents may encourage this.
• Community centres were the most important service for residents. Most believed this service was crucial for vulnerable families, children, those with disabilities, and the elderly.

• Both residents and businesses shared the same views on what they thought were the least important services. These were the “Out of Hours environmental health service” and providing public toilets. Participants did not use these at all or as frequently as other services.

• The clearest consensus was reached in support of the following suggestions: “the council should collect green bins once a month rather than fortnightly during the winter”, and “the Out of Hours environmental health service should be reduced”. Participants were mostly in support of these suggestions because they felt very few households would be affected by restricting green bin collections in the winter and that if they were affected by noise nuisance the police would be there first point of contact, out of hours.

• Participants were less supportive of the suggestions relating to planning including “being more reactive in protecting and promoting the historic environment”, and “reducing negotiation time with developers”. The main reasons for this was that participants felt it is important to protect Cambridge’s heritage, plan for growth and ensure Cambridge remains attractive to tourists.

• Importantly, across all the ideas for savings, residents and businesses felt they needed more information to be able to say more. For example, they wanted to know the specific community centres that might be affected by any changes but appreciated that they were only considering ideas for savings and that no “in-depth” work had yet been carried out.
3 Initial perceptions and value of services

3.1 Perceptions of the Council and the services it provides

In order to ascertain participant’s perceptions of the Council, participants took part in a short projective exercise. Participants were provided with a word grid (Appendix B: stimulus 2) where they were asked to circle the adjectives or phrases they would use to describe the services provided by the Council overall.

The most common adjectives used to describe the Council’s services across all groups were important and necessary. For both residents and businesses the words necessary and important were used interchangeably due to what were seen as fundamental requirements for the provision of different services across the city and their specific neighbourhoods (waste management, and parks and open spaces were mentioned frequently). Some also suggested it is necessary for the Council to provide high quality design and environmental safeguards in new developments as well as protecting and promoting the historic environment of Cambridge.

“Well, some of their services are really necessary, like bins. We need our bins collecting. I’m coming from a business point of view. I can’t see how that would work any other way.” (Business)

“I think the planning is also necessary otherwise people would just build whatever they like, wherever they like. I also think environmental health, working in catering, is necessary. Even more than necessary, indispensable.” (Business)

On the other hand, despite being perceived as necessary, certain service areas were perceived to have deteriorated over time, such as the maintenance of pathways and waste collection services.

“I mean, it’s necessary and useful, but sadly, a lot of their services have deteriorated and become inefficient, and that’s only in certain parts of those groups.” (Resident)

Overall, businesses were generally more positive in describing the Council’s services using words such as ‘useful’, ‘well-maintained’, and ‘safe’ (Figure 1).
Some businesses also suggested the services are merely adequate, particularly citing the maintenance of parks in this context. Although planning was considered necessary by most, one business expressed their concern about the way the city is changing following the increased number of planned developments.

“One thing I fear, I think Cambridgeshire could very well end up looking like Hertfordshire, covered in concrete if they just carry on building ad nauseam like they are doing. I mean, the 30-odd years I’ve lived here, it’s just changed beyond recognition and it’s not for the better.” (Business)

Although residents also felt the services are necessary and important, they were more varied in the words they used, with some describing the services as ‘dangerous’, ‘inadequate’ and ‘inefficient’ (Figure 2). Others did also refer to ‘useful’ and ‘improved’. The adjective ‘dangerous’ was used by a few in the context of the pavements and tree planting within the streets of Cambridge. Cambridge City Council is not responsible for public footpaths along the highway but one resident mentioned witnessing an individual falling over on a path in a council housing estate, which is the responsibility of the Council.

“I put ‘dangerous’ as well, because in my view, with a disabled partner, pavements to me, that’s a hazard really as well, and there’s not enough being done. We were promised things and then the money’s not there now. So really, they’ve given us an agreement, and then it’s taken away.” (Resident)

Interestingly, some residents used the word ‘improved’ as they felt the Council is moving in the right direction but should have a greater focus on services such as community centres and resolving congestion issues, which mattered to them.
“I feel in some sections they have improved and they’re moving in the right direction, but slowly, very slowly, the overall Council is out of proportion of what they actually need to be doing. They’re so focussed in the wrong place.” (Resident)

Figure 2: Adjectives described by residents

3.2 Initial views on the long-list of services (23) that make-up the five key service areas

The following sections set out the findings from residents and businesses in relation to their usage and perceptions of the key five services under discussion in the workshops.

In the first session, participants were placed in groups and were provided with a long-list of services that covered the five key service areas, and were asked to discuss their use of the services, the value of these services to them and the impact of any changes in the delivery of them. A summary of the views for each service is shown below. It is interesting to note that several participants wanted to find out more about spending in some of the areas that were not itemised, as they wondered where the additional savings the Council needed to make were coming from.

3.2.1 Key Service Area: Streets and Open Spaces

Parks maintenance and management – The majority of participants felt this service was important in presenting a positive image of the city and attracting tourists. Most said they regularly visit parks and open spaces within their area and were very positive about them.

“I’m generally satisfied with the parks maintenance and stuff. Cambridge is beautiful” (Business)
Environmental improvement programme – Participants raised some concerns about cycling arrangements that have been put in place. Some were in favour of cycling lanes while others suggested felt they had little impact as cyclists continue to use the roads.

Street cleansing – Some respondents conveyed their dissatisfaction with the cleanliness of the streets for example, too much litter and dog fouling.

A few business owners thought more could be done to support street cleansing such as making links with offender schemes to provide community payback in the form of litter picking in the town centre.

Planned tree works – There was some dissatisfaction expressed amongst residents about planned tree works within the city. Some said that a lot of maintenance work over the past few years has been unfinished. There was concern for those with a disability or elderly people walking along the streets where maintenance work on tree roots is yet to be carried out.

“I’d say there is the issue of footpath maintenance....some of them are, and especially in the more outlying areas, not that great. Not just for wheelchair users or pushchair users, but also, for, you know, able-bodied people as well. So there are a number of potential trip hazards.” (Resident)

Environmental crime – Fly-tipping was a concern for businesses who felt people dumped rubbish in their recycling bins.

“The fly tipping’s an issue for me, I have a lot of problems with fly tipping in our area.” (Business)

Maintaining public toilets – Participants (both businesses and residents) raised concerns about a short fall of accessible public toilets in the city. Businesses representatives were concerned about the number of people who come in to their premises to use their toilets because of the limited provision. There were mixed views regarding the quality of the maintenance of the toilets, with some thinking some were better than others depending on location and type.

“I think they’re pretty good at the moment, you know.....Especially in the town. Not on the common, because they have to lock them up because they always get smashed or something, especially the gents. The ladies, they don’t seem to bother with them. You know, in some of the areas that I’ve been in, in the ladies, they’re immaculate and that, you know.” (Resident)

Several residents also commented that they did not use the public toilets regularly so they were not sure how well they were maintained.

Some employers also suggested implementing a small fee for toilet usage to pay for maintenance and to discourage vandalism. It was felt this would be accepted by residents given this is becoming an increasingly common practice abroad and in places like train stations.

“Certainly when I’ve been on holiday...it’s where you have to pay to use the toilets. Fine, because you know that money’s going towards a clean toilet.” (Business)
3.2.2 Key Service Area: Planning Services

Dealing with all types of planning applications – Participants were surprised by the level of funding allocated to dealing with planning applications and the general consensus amongst businesses was that planning applications, including negotiations, should be at a zero-cost to the Council and that a charge should be introduced for developers to cover any extensive negotiations with them. Residents were less aware of the planning services and some did not see them as services that they regularly came into contact with.

“Planning services aren’t used in daily life, are they, really, so much?” (Resident)

However, residents still believed these services to be important as they cited several instances of building and construction work in their local areas and want to ensure they know what is happening and that it is being planned appropriately.

“Cambridge is going to grow and grow and grow and grow and grow, I think it is important to keep [planning] so they to maintain some standards, you know, it’s not a free for all.” (Resident)

New neighbourhoods – Some residents raised concerns about the number of new flats and other smaller accommodation being allocated to students and others raised concerns about the high cost of new homes being built. Several residents felt there was only a limited availability of appropriate accommodation for local people who wanted to buy a home.

3.2.3 Key Service Area: Community Development Services

Providing activities and events for children and families – This was considered important to both residents and businesses who wanted to ensure a wide range of activities were available for families, especially during the summer period. Some participants noted that the level of activities and services varied depending on the area, and one participant from a more outlying part of Cambridge noted that many of the community activities were organised by local volunteers rather than the Council.

“I think, basically, some of the places are well maintained and others aren’t very well maintained, you know. It just depends on where you go in the city and where you don’t go, you know.” (Resident)

Running community centres – Businesses and residents believed community centres are an important resource for vulnerable groups as they need the services and activities offered that they may otherwise have limited access to. A few businesses had the perception that most of the community centres in the city are now run independently of the Council.

Some participants said they regularly used their local community centre and were very positive about the service available and felt that the amount of volunteering and local engagement was very high and did not see much of a contribution from the Council.

However, some residents and business owners did feel that activities in community centres weren’t for everyone and that there was very little offered for young adults.

“I think the community development services are a bit inadequate. From my age, there is hardly anything that is offered at my community centre. I’ve tried looking for some. There’s nothing. There’s hardly anything for my age. It’s either for really
young or for the older generation. Not really up-to-date services either, not very modern.” (Resident)

Some business owners commented that they would be more likely to engage with community centres as residents if there were more sport based activities on offer. A few also felt it could be made easier for businesses to offer support and resources to community centres and charities (e.g. providing leftover food), and that the Council should facilitate this a bit more.

3.2.4 Key Service Area: Environmental Health

Investigating complaints – This service was mentioned by a few residents who said they had contacted the Council in the past about noise nuisance but did not receive a satisfactory response or solution to their problem. It was felt that the Council does not investigate complaints effectively and they would be reluctant to use this service again in the future.

Promoting environmental health – Several businesses and residents commented that environmental health issues were important to them but that they did not recall seeing any information from the council about the work of environmental health.

“I don’t think there’s been a lot of promotion about environmental health. I don’t think we see very much information or encouragement for low carbon, energy saving, air pollution and land contamination, that sort of thing.” (Resident)

Some businesses questioned why the Council was undertaking these activities to promote environmental health as they perceived it as the role of other organisations.

“I’m not sure which information about carbon footprint, energy saving and things that I might have got from the city council, of from the county council, or from central government, or from The Energy Saving Trust. I’ve no idea where I might have read those things, so as you say, the fact that the council’s spending money or need to - what are they adding that nobody else is doing? I’m not sure.” (Business)

3.2.5 Key Service Area: Waste and recycling services

Collecting household waste – Satisfaction with household waste collections in the workshop was generally low. It was said that the Council missed collections and that there was confusion about when collections would take place after bank holidays. It was stated, particularly by residents, that they required more information, preferably in the form of a calendar, to know what days the collections take place.

Increasing recycling – Overall participants were generally satisfied with the recycling services provided by the Council and felt this had improved over the years. Some residents reported having seen an increase in their area for the number of items recycled and felt it was better in Cambridge than in other parts of the country.

“I think, in terms of recycling, we’re quite lucky here.” (Resident)

“I think the increasing in recycling is pretty well done, because I’ve seen the lorries around and all sorts of guys going around collecting, you know.” (Resident)
Running a commercial waste service – Some of the businesses represented currently use the Council’s waste and recycling service and find it mostly useful and efficient (although one stated they had to ring the Council several times to arrange their collection). However, some businesses suggested the service is not competitive and therefore have opted for an alternative provider. Some businesses also commented that the service does not meet all their requirements e.g. it does not offer a facility for more ‘toxic’ items such as batteries.

“I have a commercial establishment, and I’m not really satisfied with the recycling services which are offered.” (Business)

3.3 Usage of services in the key service areas

Overall, participants said that they used the services covered by streets and open spaces most frequently, particularly the parks, open spaces and waste and recycling services. Other services mentioned as being used relatively frequently included planning and community development services.

3.3.1 Usage for residents

Most residents said they used local parks and open spaces most frequently, followed by community development services. Although these services are thought to be universal and used by all demographic groups, it was felt they were more important for families, especially those with young children, the elderly and people with disabilities and that more emphasis should be placed on these groups.

Individual respondents also said they used planning services, particularly for the purchase of accommodation. Concern was expressed by some participants about the extent of affordable housing that is available for young people and accessible housing for those with a disability. There was a general agreement amongst residents that there are very few properties in the city available for disabled people and families with disabled children. Furthermore, it was felt that most of the newly built accommodation is aimed at students.

Additionally, across the groups, some residents expressed concern about the failure of cyclists to use cycling lanes where they had been provided and the hazard this caused to other road users.

“There’s a cycle path all the way from Hills Road to Cherry Hinton, yet they ride on the road.” (Resident)

Residents were positive about the cycling lanes on the roads when they are used properly and felt that using the cycling lanes is a lot safer than the pavements, especially for those who are cycling with children.

“They’ve now started including the cycle path on the road, and people are using the roads more than the paths because it is more convenient, it is safer on the road than going on the path where you hit tree roots.” (Resident)

3.3.2 Usage for businesses

Businesses had made greater use of the waste and recycling services than residents. There were mixed views on the value of the business waste collection service and some felt that
the Council is more expensive in comparison to private contractors whilst others were generally satisfied with their waste and collection service.

Planning services were also mentioned by a few. There was general consensus that the city had numerous and potentially valuable business premises and that developers should be made to cover the cost of their negotiations with the Council to develop them.

“If I want to build an extension, then I should be paying for the right to put the plan through the building extension.” (Business)

Similar to residents, businesses also demonstrated usage of local parks and open spaces but primarily in their personal lives (only one used these for their core business purposes). This was mainly by those with children or grandchildren who are using these facilities on a regular basis.

3.4 Perceptions of current services

Participants were asked to highlight the service areas they are most and least satisfied with as well as any areas where the Council should have more or less involvement. Perceptions of the services have been highlighted for residents and businesses.

3.4.1 Perceptions of services for residents

Overall, other than some positive aspects of the streets and open spaces and recycling services, such as the maintenance of flower gardens in the parks and a recognised increase in the number of people recycling, satisfaction was generally lower amongst residents across the services considered. Some residents demonstrated dissatisfaction with street cleansing services by suggesting the Council needs to do more to ensure cleaner streets.

“There is litter lying around and people don’t pick up their dog mess.” (Resident)

Almost all residents expressed concern about the level of maintenance of public toilets in the city. Some said they were not aware where the public toilets were located, while those who were aware suggest they were often closed.

“I notice that there’s £604,000 plus spent on maintaining public toilets. Where are these bloody public toilets? There’s one on Chesterton Road at Mitcham’s Corner, there’s another one in The Lion Yard, which is locked at night.” (Resident)

Residents also highlighted dissatisfaction with elements of planning services and suggested the majority of new flats and developments are being built and targeted at students or are too expensive for average residents to afford. This makes it difficult for young residents and longstanding residents to find not only local, but affordable accommodation. Residents suggested the Council needs to cater more for local residents and have less emphasis on students.

“Cambridge is all about the community, it’s not just about the students, and there’s a lot of emphasis on them, but students are transitional, and community services for people who have lived here all of their lives should be looking after them. They’ve put in, whereas students will come and go.” (Resident)
Additionally, some residents raised concerns with the planned tree works and uneven paving slabs, which they consider dangerous for children, the elderly and those with a disability.

“My husband’s now in a wheelchair. About 30 years ago the Council came along and planted trees in the pavements. One of these trees is right in the middle of the cycle path, next to the bus stop, opposite the Co-op, and it’s in a terrible, awful state, and somebody’s going to have an accident here.” (Resident)

“Elderly people are having to walk on the roads to avoid all these great big holes. It’s an absolute disgrace.” (Resident)

Of all the services outlined, residents felt the Council should be investing more in community development services. They felt the Council had been cutting costs in this area when they should be providing more support and facilities for those with mental health and learning difficulties.

Residents had mixed views about the use of outsourcing to deliver some of the services discussed. For some, the use of contractors seemed to be a good idea as they believed they may be more efficient. However, others were concerned that the standards and quality of services may decrease if contractors were involved due to their need to make a profit.

“The problem with contracting is, I think, is it might be difficult to maintain standards and control if the work is taken away from the council.” (Resident)

Some residents were positive about where public land and services were delivered or could be delivered by local organisations other than the Council, specifically a few residents referred to University and private developer lands being better kept than Council lands, and several noted where roundabouts etc had been maintained and sponsored by local businesses.

“You certainly see a difference in the parts which are council maintained and the parts that are University maintained. The University parts are impeccable, and you can tell the council ones, because they’re a little bit… a bit scruffier, shall we say” (Resident)

3.4.2 Perceptions of services for businesses

Streets and open spaces were highly valued amongst business representatives who perceive and recognise Cambridge city to be a prime tourist area; businesses were also most satisfied with this service (although this was often voiced from a personal rather than a business perspective).

“I walked across Coldham’s Common yesterday. It’s beautiful.” (Business)

“The streets and open spaces are important and the parks and children’s play areas; I have a little grandson so I’ve been using them recently. They’re great. I’m very satisfied.” (Business)

Some businesses have found they are providing some support to the council in terms of street cleansing as they find many people fly tipping and are continuously picking up rubbish outside their shop/store each morning. One business mentioned there used to be a policy where each business was responsible for cleaning their street area. Therefore, rather than
the council having to pay to keep streets clean, they agreed the community should have more involvement in ensuring they are keeping their particular areas clean, e.g. outside their home, flat, business etc.

Some suggested as a tourist area, it is important how the City portrays itself and keeping the parks and open spaces well maintained will help to uphold Cambridge’s current image as a popular tourist destination. Several businesses were very positive about recent improvements and suggested the council has done a very good job on improving the parks and playgrounds for children.

Waste collection was also generally valued by businesses; however some felt a level of dissatisfaction with the commercial waste service, suggesting collections sometimes have to be chased for them to get their commercial bins emptied. Some suggested they chose a private contractor as the Council was unable to compete on price for a like-to-like service.

“As a business leader, as a business owner, recycling and waste collection, that is something, sadly, I chose not to use the city services because we didn’t find them competitive. Reluctantly we went to a private contractor. I would very much like to use the city services but they just weren’t competitive.” (Business)

Businesses were more positive about recycling though, and had seen a perceived increase in the opportunities to recycle recently.

Planning services were perceived as quite ineffective by businesses. Several participants suggested the council needs to do more to stop the numerous developments across the city as these lead to an increase in traffic congestion. One business owner reported seeing a queue of traffic outside her shop from 10am-5pm every day. Others believe poor planning ruins the reputation of the city as a tourist location as it has become congested and ‘industrial’ looking.

Further to this businesses suggested the Council ought to apply congestion charges to encourage more people to cycle, walk or use public transport to reduce the volume and pressure of cars in the city.

In terms of the Council being more involved in the delivery of these services, businesses proposed there are opportunities to get local businesses involved through subcontracting, wider conservational support or volunteering; for example, tree-planting to promote more people to protect open spaces.

### 3.5 Impact of change in the delivery of services

When asked whether participants had noticed any changes in service delivery, residents and some businesses suggested they have seen improvements in waste and recycling services and parks and open spaces.

“The recycling has been very positive as far as I’m concerned. I’ve been here 37 years, and there’s so much build-up of waste and rubbish, and it’s nice to recycle. I mean, I think it’s a positive move, that one, definitely.” (Resident)

“For instance, our Coleridge Park, it finally has a new toddler area to play, which is safe, where it wasn’t before.” (Resident)
Residents said that they felt bus services had improved and that the guided bus route, which now comes more frequently, makes it easier for them to get to their destination. However, businesses suggest the guided bus service has now deteriorated as very few people outside people getting to work or retired people receiving free transport are using it.

In terms of negative impacts, many businesses reported that traffic congestion is a concern as this makes it difficult for them to get in and out of the city. Businesses suggested this has a knock on effect on the punctuality of their staff. Recent developments of tower blocks and accommodation were also perceived to add to the weight of traffic as the population of the city increases.

“For me, the big change over the last twenty-odd years is certainly the number of people who are now crammed into the city because they’re putting up apartment block after apartment block, and the weight of traffic. The traffic must make virtually everything unmanageable. It must make waste collection unmanageable. It must make getting out to do something about the parks unmanageable.” (Business)

Some residents also noted that the range of provision from community centres had deteriorated, with less activities than had previously been offered being available.
4 Cambridge City Council’s initial cost savings suggestions

The Council suggested eight different potential ideas for savings in the future. This section outlines the views of residents and businesses in relation to each of the initial ideas, highlighting those most and least favoured by participants as well as any differences or similarities amongst residents and businesses.

4.1 Overview of importance

The following section shows the extent to which businesses and residents see the different services as important (either to themselves, their family, their business, or the wider community).

4.1.1 Businesses

Businesses are most likely to perceive the Bank Holiday bin collections, protecting and promoting the historic environment and negotiating with developers as the most important services to them and their business.

Of less importance to businesses were the Out of Hours service, green bin collection, and public toilets.

Whilst the reasons for these views are explored in more detail subsequently in the chapter, businesses were more likely to see services as important when there was a tangible link to their business operations and the wider profile of Cambridge as a tourist destination (hence supporting their customer flow).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service area</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Quite important</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>78%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protecting and promoting the historic environment</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating with developers</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground provision</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community centres</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public toilets</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green bin collection</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of hours service</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2 Residents

Residents are most likely to perceive community centres, playground provision, and Bank Holiday bin collections as the most important services delivered by the Council.
Similarly to businesses, of less importance to residents were the Out of Hours service, green bin collection, and public toilets.

Again, the reasons for these views are explored in more detail subsequently in the chapter, however, residents were more likely to see services as important when they directly impacted on them and their family, as well as their local community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service area</th>
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<th>Quite important</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>19%</td>
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<td>Public toilets</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>Out of hours service</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Community centres

Participants were informed that a large amount of resources (£799,260) are currently tied-up in the Council’s community centre provision and were asked whether the resources should be re-allocated to offer more targeted support for communities, used to develop services in other parts of the city or stay the same.

4.2.1 Interactive voting session findings

A high proportion of residents suggested community centres are important to them with a quarter suggesting the services have a big impact on them/their family’s lives, while over four in ten suggested this service is important although they do not regularly use it. Nearly half of the businesses also suggested community centre provision is important but they do not use it, whilst a third of businesses think this service is not very or not at all important.
When asked to vote whether the community centre services should be re-allocated to offer more targeted support for communities or used to develop services in other parts of the city, residents mainly voted for the former. On the other hand, a third of businesses voted the community centres should stay as they are and a quarter of both groups were unsure.

**Figure 3: Voting on importance of community centres**

When asked to vote whether the community centre services should be re-allocated to offer more targeted support for communities or used to develop services in other parts of the city, residents mainly voted for the former. On the other hand, a third of businesses voted the community centres should stay as they are and a quarter of both groups were unsure.

**Figure 4: Outcome of voting for community centres initial suggestion**

4.2.2 Resident and business perceptions

Overall, there were mixed reviews for this initial suggestion. Some participants agreed those community centres which are not being used or are very near to each other should be shut down while others suggested community centres are essential and used regularly therefore would be negatively impacted by the closure of their local centres. Additionally, one
participant found it difficult to answer as they felt that as the majority of community centres were located in the north of the city and it was these that were more likely to be closed.

“I actually find that’s difficult in my view, because what I felt was a bit guilty when you said, ‘Nearly all of these are in the north of the city’, where they’ve always been.” (Resident)

Another resident raised their concern about community centres being bought by individuals living outside of Cambridge and being privately owned. Furthermore it was pointed out that the centres are important for children and young people to partake in activities over the summer months. There was a general consensus that there is not currently enough things for young people to do in the city, so closing down specific centres would further limit the amount of resources available.

“There’s not enough stuff for the youngsters. There’s nothing really targeted for the age group of eleven to fifteen and those are really important years, those are where the children are shaped into society and because they’re being left on their own, and to their own devices, being shipped from pillar to post-, no, honestly, you know, if you go into Coleridge Park, what do you see there? Unbelievable.” (Resident)

The main concern for participants who disagreed with this initial suggestion was the impact that it would have on their families, children and the elderly.

“I’ve got grandchildren who use the parks and the places and the community centres, you know, and I’m quite lucky living where I am, as it’s well-used.” (Business)

“It’s well-used where I am for the elderly, for all ages. Like I said, if people don’t use it, they lose it so it needs to be used and updated and money put in.” (Resident)

The general consensus, particularly amongst residents was that the community centres are important and although some disagreed with this initial suggestion, most suggested they required more information such as which centres would be most likely to close to make a more informed decision.

In terms of making changes to this initial suggestion to better meet the needs of participants, some suggested that the monetary savings from one community centre should be reallocated to different locations where there are limited resources and to help parents and families find the services they needed. Some businesses also suggested looking for further support from local business volunteers and sponsorship may be a way to be more efficient in the running of community centres. However, broadly businesses and residents were against the idea of privatising community centres as they felt the community would know best what they needed to be provided, and there were suspicions that the quality of services would decrease if they were privatised.

“I think once you start getting profit and there’s a fat cat, you know, wants to see a margin in something, it brings in the worst in people sometimes. Yes, alright, run it efficiently, run it well, you don’t need to make money. Any money that’s made should be re-invested back into the building and make the actual services cheaper for the local people. That’s the way it should be done.” (Business)
4.3 Negotiating with developers

The Council informed participants that a lot of time, beyond that of other similar local authorities, is spent negotiating improvements to planning applications, especially for large scale developments and new communities. The purpose of this is to get the best quality environments and standard of construction possible. The initial suggestion was set out to identify whether the Council should reduce the amount of time it spends negotiating with developers.

4.3.1 Interactive voting session findings

There were mixed responses from participants when voting about the importance of negotiating with developers. This service was considered very important to over half of the businesses while four in ten residents voted it as important although they do not regularly use the service.

![Importance of services](chart)

**Figure 5: Voting on importance of negotiating with developers**

When asked to vote whether the Council should reduce the amount of time it spends negotiating with developers, half the businesses and nearly half of the residents voted against this.
4.3.2 Resident and business perceptions

Again, there were mixed reviews from residents regarding this initial suggestion with most being reluctant to comment as they did not feel this had a direct impact on them. However residents did feel they wanted to know more about what the implications would be of a reduction in negotiation time before they made further decisions.

“Well, I’d want to know what the impact would be of the council not negotiating with developers. So if the council wasn't negotiating, who is then? You can't just say to developers, ‘Oh, do what you like. Put up a multiplex in the middle of Jesus Green, that's fine.’ So who would take over if the council didn’t do it?’” (Resident)

However the majority of businesses agreed that the Council should reduce the amount of time negotiating with developers. They perceived the main reason for this initial suggestion as to restrict developers from building properties in a city which is heavily populated by construction, some suggested there is limited land in the city and there was a general agreement that developers should be paying for the amount of time they spend negotiating, it is not a cost which is perceived to covered by the Council. Further to this several businesses believed there needs to be a better policy and structural plan of what construction is going on in the city and proactive consultations with the community about the changes being made.

“This is probably the single most issue that they can make money from, and they're saying, ‘Ooh, we shouldn't be talking to them because it’s going to cost us.’ It’s like, why can't you think of ways of making them pay for everything?” (Business)

“That’s one aspect from what I know, the land in Cambridge itself is so limited and is such a valuable resource that, to be honest, the longer you wait, in a way, I mean, it’s kind of through the highest bidder. There must be ways that they could be exploiting this by getting different companies to come with different initial suggestions. So I
think they should look at it very, very carefully, because it’s a limited resource. I mean, they’re going to run out of land. They’ve already run out of land.” (Business)

4.4 Protecting and promoting the historic environment

The Council informed participants that they seek to protect and promote the historic environment of the city and actively promote proactive conservation work. The initial suggestion set out to identify whether the Council needs to be more reactive in its approach to conservation and respond to problems as they arise rather than preventing them from happening.

4.4.1 Interactive voting session findings

Protecting and promoting the historic environment was voted as important by the majority of businesses with over a quarter suggesting it would have a big impact on them/their family’s lives and a third of businesses stated it was important although they do not regularly use the service. There were mixed views from residents with nearly a third thinking protecting and promoting the historic environment was very important although they do not use the service, and a quarter seeing it as quite important.

Figure 7: Voting on importance of protecting and promoting the historic environment

When participants were asked to vote on whether the Council should be more reactive in its approach to conservation and respond to problems as they arise rather than preventing them from happening, the majority of residents (63%) voted yes. Businesses voted more sporadically with over half agreeing with this initial suggestion but over a third voting against it.
4.4.2 Resident and business perceptions

Again there were mixed views on this but the majority leaned towards suggesting the Council ought to focus its priorities on ensuring the city upholds its reputation amongst tourists, and that involves protecting the environment.

Several residents and businesses also noted that a strategy of prevention would be less expensive in the long term than any potentially larger issues that may develop if things are left.

“If you wait until a problem’s reported, it’s a great big hole in the roof that the rain’s pouring through. Whereas if you plaster over the crack in the first place, you don’t get to the big hole.” (Resident)

Older residents suggested the Council should be putting money towards protecting the environment due to its history, which attracts many tourists to the city, and therefore disagree to responding to problems as they arise and favour being more proactive about dealing with issues.

“The historical buildings, and the history of Cambridge, are part of Cambridge, are a part of the attraction.” (Resident)

The majority of businesses also have the view that the historic view of Cambridge is crucial and as a city attracts a lot of tourists therefore the Council needs to ensure they are maintaining and continuing to improve the standard of the environment.

“Cambridge gets a lot of its money from tourism. It’s a case of, if you don’t pay attention to keeping what you’ve got, it’ll diminish its appeal. Either we stay as a
tourist magnet, then we’ve got to pay and that’s part of the cost of maintenance.”

(Business)

On the other hand, one younger resident suggested history was of less importance to their generation, as they felt it was something that will be built on so the city needs to focus on the future through the development of services for young people.

Both residents and businesses suggested local communities or business owners could provide support to deliver this service through sponsorship or volunteering activities. Participants felt having more emphasis on developing a community of local business links would enable them to focus on protecting themselves and each other in the environment or area they are located. By doing so, together they could help uphold the reputation of the city and continue to be an attractive tourist area.

As with other suggestions explored, residents and businesses believed it would be useful to know how many buildings the Council is responsible for, and therefore what the potential impact would be, before they felt they could agree or disagree with the proposal.

4.5 Playground provision

The Council informed participants that they currently maintain and continue to safeguard up to ninety equipped playgrounds of different sizes. The initial suggestion set out to explore whether participants felt the Council should rationalise playground provision in the city, retaining and investing in some while removing others.

4.5.1 Interactive voting session findings

A similar proportion of residents and businesses voted playground provision as important. Around a third suggested it would impact them/their family’s lives and a similar proportion voted it as important although they do not regularly use the service.

![Figure 9: Voting on importance of playground provision](image)
When participants were asked to vote on whether the Council should rationalise playground provision in the city to retain and invest in some and removing others a higher proportion of residents (56%) agreed with this to some extent (compared with 36% of businesses). Nearly two fifths of businesses thought playground provision should be rationalised to a large extent.

**Figure 10: Voting outcome for playground provision initial suggestion**

### 4.5.2 Resident and business perceptions

Overall, although some residents agreed to this initial suggestion in the voting session, both residents and businesses strongly disagreed within the discussion, mainly due to the lack of clarification regarding the number of playgrounds that may potentially be shut down and the impact it would have on families with young children.

Residents were unwilling to accept this idea as they would be affected by the limited resources available to them outside their homes and would have difficulty in finding places to go that are within a convenient distance.

Some businesses disagreed with this initial suggestion based on the recognition of the impact it would have on individuals living in the city. They suggested the Council would become increasingly unpopular with local residents, particularly those living in the city without back gardens or provisions for their young children. Some businesses also believed there would be knock on effects of reducing the facilities available, such as an increase in antisocial behaviour.

“For families within the city that don't have gardens, don't have good income, you know, the parks, the playgrounds, need to be maintained to a high standard because that's their only place to go.” *Business*

Finally, some businesses also recognised that a lot of the elderly population also make use of the parks and playground areas, although not directly impacting them as a business.
“Also, if you think, a lot of elderly population get so much enjoyment from walking into a park and viewing the children playing. You know, their wellbeing is much better. You know, there’s a stimulus. I mean, yes, I think you could reduce it, but equally, what dangers would then increase? Antisocial behaviour if you took the playground away, with the youths. You could create so many worse problems.” (Business)

For some residents the value was more having the spaces than playground equipment. Therefore one suggestion was that the parks and playgrounds should remain but faulty equipment should not be replaced.

“If equipment has come to the end of its life and they can’t afford to replace it, like swings and hobby horses and whatever I’m assuming, I would rather see them take those out and not replace them if they can’t afford, but leave the space for kids to play on.” (Resident)

Other residents and businesses also suggested allowing and enabling local communities to do more to maintain and take care of the parks and playgrounds.

“If you get the people who live around the parks involved in getting them back into shape and maybe giving them some money to do what needs done, people will then look after the space because they’re then invested in the space and they’re part of the space and they’re involved and they’re raising money.” (Resident)

### 4.6 Public toilets

The Council outlined they have twenty public toilets in the city with some offering different levels of provision. The initial suggestion set out to explore whether the Council should be providing and cleaning all twenty public toilets in the city.

#### 4.6.1 Interactive voting session findings

Views on the importance of public toilets were quite varied amongst residents and businesses. A third of businesses that voted believed public toilets were important although they do not use them, while nearly half suggested they are not very or not at all important. For residents, most suggested public toilets are at least quite important (69%).
There was a clear need for the Council to provide and clean public toilets in the city with the majority of residents (81%) and businesses (86%) voting yes this was needed either to some or to a large extent.

The provision of public toilets sparked considerable debate with participants with most unable to provide a definitive response as to how they felt the Council should act due to the lack of clarification on the cost saving of this initial suggestion.

**4.6.2 Resident and business perceptions**

The provision of public toilets sparked considerable debate with participants with most unable to provide a definitive response as to how they felt the Council should act due to the lack of clarification on the cost saving of this initial suggestion.
“If they are in poor condition and not used, shut them. That’s an easy choice, to my mind. If we’re talking about the ones that are in poor condition aren’t the ones that are infrequently used, that becomes a different question.” (Resident)

Although residents voted for the Council to provide and clean public toilets some argued that they have not seen any public toilets in the city in the first instance and for those that have, most of them are regularly shut therefore the Council needs to provide more information about where these toilets are located. Additionally, some residents also pointed out that the toilets need to be more spread out across the city.

“I said I reckon, alright, they’ve got twenty, but those twenty need to be spread out, you can’t just have a block of toilets here and a block of toilets there.” (Resident)

Most residents suggest the closure of public toilets would only have a negative impact dependent on the location of which ones were shut down. For example, toilets in the town centre and market square are important to residents as these areas are often utilised by late night socialisers. Another concern expressed by shoppers was the numerous problems they face with finding toilets when out with their children, particularly as a lot of business owners do not allow to use or have toilet facilities.

“I was just mentioning that my son, he often needs to go to the toilet, which is a bit of a nightmare really. Every time I go and shop, he needs the toilet, and some shops, they won’t allow me to use the toilet, so, which means we have to end up going round a tree somewhere. I don’t want to teach him to do it like that, but if there’s nowhere for him to go, and the shop won’t let him use the toilet, what do you do?” (Resident)

Businesses also argue the closure of toilets would have a negative impact on their business. Some suggested they often find individuals have urinated in the streets when opening up each morning due to the current limited availability of public toilets which as a result is increasing urban decay.

Some businesses believe that if there are duplicated facilities in a particular area then some public toilets could be removed if there is not a need for them.

One resident, a pub owner, suggested they often allow individuals to use their private toilets; however, this is something that the Council could possibly incentivise.

The underlying issue with this initial suggestion outlined by both residents and businesses was they are currently unaware which toilets are open across the city and the lack of clarification on which toilets the Council is exploring closing. Residents were more inclined to suggest all twenty toilets are kept open and the Council focuses on cleaning all.

4.7 Bank holiday bin collection rounds

Participants were informed when bin collection rounds are missed due to bank holidays, the rounds are shifted back during the remainder of the week with an additional round taking place on the Saturday to make up for the shortfall. This initial suggestion set out to identify whether the Council should drop additional Saturday bin collection rounds, ensuring that the shortfall is spread across all rounds during the year.
4.7.1 Interactive voting session findings

The majority of residents and businesses voted the bin collection rounds as very important with four in ten residents and around five in ten businesses suggesting this service has a big impact on them/their family’s lives/their business.

![Importance of services graph](image)

**Figure 13: Voting on importance of bank holiday bin collection rounds**

Participants were asked to vote on whether the Council should drop additional Saturday bin rounds and ensure the shortfall is spread across all rounds during the year. There were mixed responses from both residents and businesses. Over half of residents were against this initial suggestion whereas around half of the businesses voted in agreement whilst a quarter of businesses were unsure.

![Voting outcome graph](image)

**Figure 14: Voting outcome for bank holiday bin collection rounds initial suggestion**
4.7.2 Resident and business perceptions

As per the voting session, residents tended to disagree with this initial suggestion whilst businesses were more inclined to accept this as a budget cut going forward.

Most residents suggested this change would have a negative impact on them and their families as they would have difficulty in remembering the new collection dates. Some residents pointed out they currently get confused after bank holidays as to which days to put their bins out, and when they do miss the bin collection round it has a knock on effect for the remainder of the week, for example, excess rubbish and attracting rodents.

The majority of residents also stated that unless the collection day is a Tuesday, it would be of no benefit to them.

“At the moment people have collections on a Tuesday, it doesn’t affect them because they’ve come and used it mostly as per usual, but then again if you’re Wednesday or Monday you would have to wait another week.” (Resident)

Therefore the core reasons for disagreement with the suggested changes to bin collection rounds for residents were:

- Difficulty in staying on track with the bin collection round.
- Large families being impacted by the delay in the collection.
- Considered a too small a saving compared to the other initial suggestions.

Although businesses were more willing to accept this suggestion, there was some disagreement with similar reasons to residents. One business representative suggested as it is a basic service, it should not be changed. As a business they often find that bank holidays create more waste in the city due to the events taking place therefore delaying the collection would cause further ramifications for example, fly tipping in the streets and bad smells. Not only does this impact their businesses, it also creates a bad image for the city.

“I always think that you’re creating as much of a problem by reducing that. I mean, bank holidays, generally, in Cambridge, create more waste, because there are normally a lot of events going on.” (Business)

Other businesses suggested that the impacts of this initial suggestion also depend on the season of the bin collection rounds for example, the bank holidays that fall in the summer period would cause more concerns.

“If it’s in the summer, people get more agitated because of the rats and infestation, the flies and the smell. In the winter, you can basically do whatever you want”. (Business)

4.8 Green bin collection

The Council outlined that during the winter months the production of green waste is low and many bins collected are almost empty. Therefore the initial suggestion sets out to explore whether the Council should collect green bins once a month rather than fortnightly during the winter.
4.8.1 Interactive voting session findings

There were mixed votes on the importance of the green bin collection amongst residents with a quarter suggesting it is very important and would impact them/their family’s lives while a similar proportion also suggested it is not very and not at all important. Businesses were most likely to think the green bin collection service was quite important or not very important to them.

**Figure 15: Voting on importance of the green bin collection**

When asked to vote whether the Council should reduce the bin collection rounds in the winter to once a month rather than fortnightly, the majority of residents and businesses agreed with this initial suggestion.

**Figure 16: Voting outcome for the green bin collection initial suggestion**
4.8.2 Resident and business perceptions

In the discussion there continued to be widespread support from participants who agreed this was the favoured initial suggestion to make budget cuts going forward mainly due to the large saving in comparison to the other initial suggestions outlined and the limited impact.

Both residents and businesses had similar views in that they very rarely use the green bin during the winter months therefore the reduction in the collection would not have much of an effect on them.

“It saves loads. No brainer.” (Resident)

“Well, I personally think that the green bin could be cut down to once a month.” (Business)

Some businesses also pointed out they would not be impacted by this change as they have an alternative supplier for their bin collection.

4.9 Out of hours service

Participants were informed that the Council runs an out of hours service costing £100,000 which allows individuals to report noise problems and other nuisances between the hours of 7pm and 7am every night and between 9am and 5pm at weekends and bank holidays. The Council looked to explore whether participants felt the present out of hours service should remain the same, be reduced or stopped.

4.9.1 Interactive voting session findings

There were mixed views on the importance of the Councils “Out of Hours” service amongst residents and businesses. Nearly a third of businesses and residents believed the out of hours service to be quite important while a further third of residents and a quarter of businesses voted the out of hours service as not very important.

![Importance of services](chart)

**Figure 17: Voting on importance of the out of hour’s service**
Participants were asked to vote on whether the current out of hours service should be reduced or stopped. Around six in ten residents and businesses voted for this service to be reduced. Four in ten residents voted the out of hours service should remain the same.

**Should the present “Out of Hours” service be reduced or stopped?**

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<tr>
<td>Stopped</td>
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<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remain the same</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/not sure</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
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**Figure 18: Voting outcome for the out of hours service initial suggestion**

4.9.2 Resident and business perceptions

The general consensus across the groups was that the “Out of Hours” service should be reduced, most likely to a weekend only service; however, they wondered how many people are actually using this service during the times indicated.

Most residents stated they rarely contact the Council and do not consider it their first point of call for nuisances such as noise pollution; instead, they contact the police.

“I think it definitely needs to be reduced, if not got rid of.” (Resident)

The minority who suggested they have contacted or know someone who has contacted the Council suggested the “Out of Hours” service does not work. Some were aware complaints had been made but nothing had been actioned by the Council.

“I’m not sure it works, because I’ve got a friend who lives in an upstairs flat, and the downstairs have music going loud until three, four o’clock in the morning, and yet he’s complained to the Council. Nothing’s been done.” (Resident)

Although most businesses voted for the “Out of Hours” service to be reduced, some did indicate they required more information about how the service worked i.e. the number of staff available between 7pm and 7am to contact for queries and what resources the monetary saving associated with this initial suggestion would involve omitting.

“I don’t know, you know, if it is seven days a week, I don’t know how busy it is, they haven’t provided that information. Or is it only weekends? If they provided that"
information, that would be useful. If they said that absolutely, the phones very hot at weekends, and they're talking about cutting the service, well that doesn't make any sense." (Business)
Appendix A: Methodology

Three deliberative workshops took place in August and September, held from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. The first workshop took place with residents of Cambridge and the second and third workshops included a mixture of residents and businesses.

Each workshop incorporated presentations from BMG Research and a representative of the Council who provided the necessary background for the consultation followed by an interactive voting session and two small break-out group discussions. The first discussion aimed to identify the key services participants valued and perceived to be important. Participants then took part in an interactive voting session which looked to explore the importance and agreement of eight initial suggestions for where savings may be achieved put forward by the Council. The second discussion explored the levels of agreement, views and opinions of the initial suggestions in more detail.

The recruitment of residents took place using an on-street face-to-face method. A key remit of the recruitment criteria ensured a representative mix of gender, age, working status and ward within Cambridge. Each participant was screened using a pre-agreed questionnaire and recruited accordingly. During recruitment, the recruiter provided potential participants with an outline of the purpose of the workshop, an overview of the topics to be covered and a BMG contact should they have any queries regarding the research.

The recruitment of businesses took place using a database of business contacts sourced from the database provider, Experian. BMG’s specialist qualitative recruitment team used this database to telephone potential participants ensuring a representative mix of length of business, business size and type of industry.

Confirmation emails were sent to those who agreed to take part and reminder calls conducted close to the event. An incentive was also used by BMG Research to encourage people to attend and act as a thank you for the hard work they put into participating in the workshops.

Each workshop was led by three independent researchers from BMG Research. At the beginning of each break out discussion, participants were informed about confidentiality and assured that responses remain anonymous in the analysis and reporting and any quotes used are not attributed back to named individuals. They were also told the discussion will be audio-recorded (unless there were any objections) and the file would be stored securely at BMG Research and not made available to anyone outside of the company. Finally, participants were informed BMG Research abide by the Market Research Society code of conduct which reiterates participant confidentiality.

A topic guide for the two break-out discussion groups and supporting stimulus materials was designed by BMG Research in partnership with the Council, and is appended to this report (Appendix B and C).

4.10 Profile of participants

In total, 38 participants attended the workshops. Across the workshops, there was a good mix of gender, age, working status, constituency and people with disabilities. There was, however, less ethnic diversity, with a small minority of people with different ethnic
backgrounds (3) in the business group. A breakdown of the profile of participants is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Profile of Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Working status</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>X8 female</td>
<td>x3 18-24</td>
<td>x16 White</td>
<td>x6 full time employee</td>
<td>x5 Arbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X8 male</td>
<td>x1 25-34</td>
<td>x3 retired</td>
<td></td>
<td>x3 Cherry Hinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x2 35-44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x2 looking after the home and family</td>
<td>x2 Chesterton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x7 45-64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x2 permanently sick/disabled</td>
<td>x1 Coleridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x3 65+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x1 unemployed</td>
<td>x3 Kings Hedges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x1 student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x1 Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x1 unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Profile of Business representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Business size</th>
<th>Length of business</th>
<th>Industry type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>x9 female</td>
<td>x15 0-10 employees</td>
<td>x3 less than 1 year</td>
<td>x2 Research and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x13 male</td>
<td>x3 11-20 employees</td>
<td>x7 1-5 years</td>
<td>x5 Professional services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x2 21-50 employees</td>
<td>x3 6-11 years</td>
<td>x1 Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x2 unknown</td>
<td>x3 12-15 years</td>
<td>x3 IT/Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x5 16 years or more</td>
<td>x3 Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x1 unknown</td>
<td>x1 Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x5 Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x2 unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.11 Breakout discussions and interactive voting

Two breakout discussion groups took place during each workshop lasting approximately 45 minutes. Participants were allocated to smaller groups of between four and eight individuals for each discussion. The discussion sessions were run by BMG Research moderators. A topic guide was designed jointly with the Council to help facilitate discussions. A Senior Officer from the Council was on hand to answer questions arising, but did not take part in the
discussions to ensure that views could be aired without prejudice and collected in an independent manner.

The event also made use of interactive voting, whereby participants used keypads to respond to questions during the plenary sessions. The voting results are not designed to be statistically significant, since the valid sample base is small\(^2\) and participants have limited opportunity to absorb the detail of the initial suggestions before making their vote. However, some topline information was provided before each question (including a description and potential savings that might be achieved) to allow consideration, and the results can be usefully considered alongside with the other findings from the workshop, to provide a fuller picture of participants’ views on the Council’s initial budget suggestions for 2016/2017.

Following the provision of the background to and description of each of the initial suggestions, respondents were asked to vote on two questions; first the importance of the service areas and secondly their opinions on whether the suggested changes should take place.

In order to ensure all eight initial suggestions were explored across the two workshops, each moderator was allocated four suggestions to discuss. This was to ensure the services were discussed across a minimum of two groups. The findings for each of these services have been outlined for each initial suggestion in the report.

Questions and comments were also taken from the floor during these plenary sessions, and the notes taken have been reviewed as part of this reporting, along with voting results and analysis of break-out discussion transcripts.

### 4.12 Note on the interpretation of qualitative research and data

A break out discussion is a small, informal discussion group made up of members of the public and led (moderated) by a professional researcher. A typical break out discussion is made up of around six to eight carefully recruited people (participants) who are brought together to discuss a particular subject nominated by the client. The group members’ different views and experiences combine to create a unique and useful conversation.

Break out discussions can provide understanding of what people think, need, want and care about – and can explore the reasons behind those views. The researcher guides the group through a series of topics (agreed beforehand with the client), but in a less structured way than with a quantitative (survey) questionnaire.

Findings may emerge from break out discussions which the researcher and client had not previously considered; these can be identified and explored. It is the moderator’s job to ensure that all of the client’s questions are answered and that every participant has an opportunity to express his or her point of view.

It should be remembered that break out discussion participants may hold views that are based on incorrect information. It is the moderator’s role to explore and report participants’ perceptions, not necessarily to correct any misunderstanding or incorrect perceptions.

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\(^2\) No more than 38 responses for each question.
When interpreting the findings from break out discussions, it is important to note that they are not based on quantitative statistical evidence.

It should be borne in mind that there is a tendency for group discussions to induce participants to express critical views. This report should be read with these notes of caution in mind. Additionally, unless stated within the report, there were no particular differences noted by participants across the two workshops.

Where verbatim comments are included in this report they are reported in italics.
Appendix B: Topic guide – session 1

Introduction and briefing (5 minutes)

Introductions:
- Welcome respondents and thank them for agreeing to take part in the discussion
- Moderator to introduce themselves and BMG Research.
- Moderator to explain any ‘ground rules’

Overview of the research: Cambridge City Council has asked BMG to conduct a workshop with members of the public to explore residents’/business’s views on specific service areas such as street and open space, refuse and environment and communities. The purpose of this is to help inform the Council’s financial decisions.

Confidentiality: All information you provide will be treated confidentially. We will not identify any individuals or disclose the personal details of those who take part. I am independent: I do not work for Cambridge City Council. Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence as observed by standards determined by the Market Research Society.

- Views stated are not attributable to individuals and the more open and honest you can be the better.
- Quotes from the discussions may be used in the research report as a way of bringing the findings to life. However these quotes would not identify any individual. This is in line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- There are no right or wrong answers: it’s just your views or opinions that count.
- Please ensure that you respect others’ views and opinions.

Recording: we would like to audio-record the discussion for the purposes of accurately capturing all the information you share with us. The audio will be used for analysis purposes only and will not be shared with anyone outside of BMG research.

Provide opportunity for respondents to ask any questions.

Seek permission to audio-record. Switch microphone on. Once switched on, confirm that the audio-recorder is on for the benefit of the tape.

Warm Up (5 minutes)

Moderator to ask each respondent to introduce themselves in turn:
- First name?
- Area you live in?
- How long you lived there?

Moderator to take note of whether respondents meet the recruitment criteria - in addition to other information gained during the discussion, this will be required to complete the respondent validation section on the overview sheet.
Before we ask your specific views, we would like to give you a bit of background information about the Council’s financial savings consultation. The Council has carried out a budget consultation exercise annually since 2002 and in 2014 adopted a more sophisticated approach which allowed residents to make more informed choices than in previous exercises. As mentioned in the presentation earlier, the Council used the You Choose budget simulator for its 2014 budget consultation which as a result, gave residents the opportunity to increase or reduce the budget for 22 individual City Council service areas by up to 50% as well as setting an overall budget for the Council to achieve a net saving of £6 million. This year Cambridge City Council would like to consult with members of the public to explore businesses/residents’ views on five key service areas. These were the area’s residents identified the largest monetary savings in the 2014 budget consultation.

Value of service areas (20 minutes)

- The Council’s previous budget consultation identified the following five key service areas as providing the largest monetary savings. Moderator to provide stimulus 1 with service areas listed and total costs
  - Which of these services do you or your family/business use in your everyday life?
  - Which of these services do you value the most/least? Why do you say that? (Moderator to use flipchart to capture responses)

- Generally how satisfied are you with each of the service areas? (satisfied/dissatisfied) Why do you say that? (Moderator to probe for examples)

- Are there any of these service areas in which you think the Council needs to have more or less involvement in the delivery of e.g. more/less use of subcontractors?

- Thinking about the services provided by the Council overall, what sort of words or phrases would you use to describe them? Why do you say that? Moderator to hand out stimulus 2 word grid and ask respondents to circle words/phrases

Impact of changes in the delivery of services (10 minutes)

- In your opinion, what changes have you seen in the way each of these services have been delivered by the Council over the years? Why do you say that?
  - How has this impacted on the way you access these services? Positive/negative
  - What are the advantages/disadvantages of the changes mentioned?
  - Have these changes resulted in you using these services more or less?

- Thinking about the different service areas, do you have any suggestions or preferences in the way these services should be delivered by the Council? Why do you say that?

Perceptions of Cambridge City Council (5 minutes)

- Just briefly, what are you perceptions of Cambridge City Council? Capture positive/negative responses.
- If Cambridge City Council was a brand, which one would it be and why?
• *If respondents struggle to answer spontaneously, moderator to probe with stimulus 3 board of examples.*

**Wrap Up (5 minutes)**
- Moderator to check for any final closing comments.
- Thank and move on to voting session.
## Stimulus 1: Breakdown of service areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Budget Net total</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Budget Net Total for Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streets and Open spaces</td>
<td>£6,622,150*</td>
<td><strong>Parks maintenance and management of city parks and neighbourhood parks, commons and open spaces, recreation grounds, children’s play areas, allotments, sports pitches and paddling pools.</strong></td>
<td>£1,792,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental improvement programme, including improvements to bus shelters, play facilities, highways improvements and cycling and walking projects.</td>
<td>£631,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Street Cleansing, including clearing city centre streets and shop fronts of litter on a daily basis, sweeping residential streets regularly and carrying out intensive cleans as needed.</strong></td>
<td>£2,224,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Planned tree works, including carrying out all maintenance work for each tree in an area.</td>
<td>£207,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Environmental crime, including educating and enforcing about environmental standards covering dog fouling, litter, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and abandoned shopping trolleys</strong></td>
<td>£430,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maintaining public toilets</td>
<td>£604,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning services</td>
<td>£2,211,750*</td>
<td><strong>Developing planning policy that feeds into and prepares strategies for the future growth and development of Cambridge - to deliver high quality new development.</strong></td>
<td>£545,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dealing with all types of planning applications, including housing, neighbourhoods and business developments.</td>
<td>£639,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Building control, ensuring buildings are constructed properly, safely and meet construction standards.</strong></td>
<td>£215,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Neighbourhoods delivering new housing and related growth on the fringe sites around Cambridge.</td>
<td>£60,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Urban design and conservation providing high quality design in new developments as well as protecting and promoting the historic environment of Cambridge.</strong></td>
<td>£510,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Area</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development services</td>
<td>£2,942,340</td>
<td>Providing activities and events for children and families £467,420</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Giving grants to local community and voluntary sector organisations £1,105,900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Running community centres £799,260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Running neighbourhood community development activity £569,760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>£2,059,560*</td>
<td>Investigating complaints about noise, pollution of air land and water, private sector housing conditions, businesses, taxi drivers and taking enforcement action where necessary. £382,160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enforcing standards in private rented housing and food standards in restaurants £533,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting food and occupational safety £463,790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preventing air pollution and land contamination £390,960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting low carbon and energy saving initiatives and advising and encouraging landlords and owners to invest in low energy technology £127,920</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste and recycling services</td>
<td>£2,775,020*</td>
<td>Collecting household waste in black, blue and green bins in an efficient and customer centred way. £2,403,050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing recycling, reducing the amount of waste treated, through promotions, projects and working with the community, including the recycling champions scheme and providing a range of recycling points for residents to deal with their recycling that cannot be accommodated in blue bins. £155,540</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Running a commercial waste service for local businesses and others. (£397,390)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stimulus 2: Describing service areas

Well maintained

Dangerous

Efficient

Useless

Useful

Important

Co-operative

Adequate

Pleasant

Improved

Too much litter

Successful

Inadequate

Safe

Necessary

Out of touch

Inefficient

Deteriorated

Unimportant

Meets environmental standards

Unnecessary
Stimulus 3: Personification exercise
Appendix C: Topic guide – session 2

Introduction and briefing (2 minutes)

Introductions:
- Reiterate confidentiality and ground rules

Seek permission to audio-record. Switch microphone on. Once switched on, confirm that the audio-recorder is on for the benefit of the tape.

Overview of session 2: Earlier in the workshop we provided some background information to the five key service areas residents/businesses identified as providing the largest monetary savings in CCC 2014 budget consultation and from these, which are valuable and important to you. We would now like to explore your views towards some of the specific proposals for making the financial savings that are needed that were discussed in the previous voting session.

Moderator to read out: The Council plan to continue to look for new ways to make savings. In this session we will be discussing four proposals to save costs.

Each moderator to be assigned 4 of the 8 proposals under discussion to ensure sufficient breadth and depth of coverage. Moderator to introduce each assigned proposal in turn.

Proposal 1 (max. 15 mins)
- Do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Why do you say that?
- How would these changes impact you or your family/your business? Would it have a positive or negative impact?
- Are there any ways in which you think local communities/local businesses could support or deliver these services? Why do you say that?
- How realistic do you think it is for the Council to achieve the change proposed? Why do you say that?
- Is there anything you would change about this proposal? What would this be?

Proposal 2 (max. 15 mins)
- Do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Why do you say that?
- How would these changes impact you or your family/your business? Would it have a positive or negative impact?
- Are there any ways in which you think local communities/local businesses could support or deliver these services? Why do you say that?
- How realistic do you think it is for the Council to achieve the change proposed? Why do you say that?
- Is there anything you would change about this proposal? What would this be?
Proposal 3 (max. 15 mins)
- Do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Why do you say that?
- How would these changes impact you or your family/your business? Would it have a positive or negative impact?
- Are there any ways in which you think local communities/local businesses could support or deliver these services? Why do you say that?
- How realistic do you think it is for the Council to achieve the change proposed? Why do you say that?
- Is there anything you would change about this proposal? What would this be?

Proposal 4 (max. 15 mins)
- Do you agree or disagree with this proposal? Why do you say that?
- How would these changes impact you or your family/your business? Would it have a positive or negative impact?
- Are there any ways in which you think local communities/local businesses could support or deliver these services? Why do you say that?
- How realistic do you think it is for the Council to achieve the change proposed? Why do you say that?
- Is there anything you would change about this proposal? What would this be?

Wrap Up (3 minutes)
- Moderator to check for any final closing comments.
- Thank and close
Appendix D: Statement of terms

Compliance with International Standards


Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not be publishing any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each participant participating in the research is protected.
With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

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