

Moray Citizens' Panel

Budget Consultation 2011/12

Please use this survey to give your views on budget proposals set out in the enclosed consultation document - your responses will help elected members to set future Council budgets. The survey asks for your views on how the Council might be able to achieve the savings that need to be made over the next few years. The size of savings required means that some difficult decisions are likely to be needed, including for example:

- Changing how the Council provides some services, eg more centralised services;
- Focusing Council resources on the most important or core services; or
- Introducing or increasing charges for some services.

Much of our budget supports core services - eg caring for the elderly, protecting and educating our children and the most vulnerable in our community. Other services are likely to bear a larger share of any reductions.

The form includes references to parts of the **consultation document** that are most relevant to the questions being asked. You can also complete the survey online at www.craigforth.co.uk/MCP. If you have any queries please contact Craigforth on: **0800 027 2245** or office@craigforth.co.uk.

The Council's Role

Before we ask for your views on potential approaches to making budget savings, we would like you to think first about the role that the Council should play for local people and where Council resources should be focused

Q1 Overall, how big a role do you think Moray Council should have in the lives of people in Moray? Please select a number on the scale below, from "1" being the smallest role to "7" being the biggest. Please circle ONE only

Small role focusing only on essential services		←————→			Big role, the main service provider for all parts of the local community	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q2 Now we want you to think about services or activities which are not a statutory requirement, but which are currently provided in Moray. Do you think that responsibility for these should lie with Moray Council? Please circle ONE option for each

Should the Council be responsible for...	Yes, completely	A significant role	A limited role	No role
Providing sport and leisure facilities?	1	2	3	4
Subsidised community bus services?	1	2	3	4
Car parking?	1	2	3	4
Advice on money and welfare benefits?	1	2	3	4
Advice on energy efficiency of homes?	1	2	3	4
Health promotion?	1	2	3	4
Supporting local businesses & economic development?	1	2	3	4
Supporting community groups/ voluntary organisations?	1	2	3	4
Encouraging tourism in Moray?	1	2	3	4

Re-designing Council Services

Here we ask for your views on how the Council could best approach the need to re-design Council services to make the savings needed. **It may be useful to refer to p4-6 of the consultation document on the Council budget savings required.**

Q3 Bearing in mind the size of budget savings that the Council needs to make, how do you see the Council's role in the lives of people in Moray? Please indicate which of the following statements best reflect your view. Please circle ONE only

The Council should maintain all current services (note that this is unlikely to be feasible, even if there is an increase in charging for services)	1
The Council should make savings across all departments, but should still provide services to all parts of the community	2
The Council should focus only on core services and supporting the most vulnerable, even if this means withdrawing some services	3

Q4 Below are a list of the key service areas currently provided by the Council. Please consider which you would most want to protect from any service reductions, and which you may be prepared to see some service reductions.

1	<u>Community care</u> ...inc support to older people, people with disability and health/ care needs
2	<u>Children & families services</u> ...inc support to families, child protection, adoption/ fostering, residential care
3	<u>Housing support and homelessness services</u> ...inc lets of Council housing, property repairs, homeless services, housing grants
4	<u>Schools and nurseries</u> ...inc learning support and childcare
5	<u>Community support and learning</u> ...inc adult learning & literacy
6	<u>Arts, Sports and leisure</u> ...inc sports/ leisure facilities and programmes
7	<u>Libraries and museums</u> ...inc mobile libraries and heritage centre
8	<u>Roads and transport</u> ...inc road design and maintenance, transport and car parking
9	<u>Waste and recycling</u> ...inc waste collection, recycling centres, fly tipping and litter
10	<u>Parks and open spaces</u> ...inc open spaces, outdoor access, ranger service
11	<u>Planning and development</u> ...inc planning permission, building regulations
12	<u>Environmental health and trading standards</u> ...inc enforcement of regulations, pest control, protection of public health, fair trading
13	<u>Economic development</u> ...inc lottery and other community funds advice
14	<u>Council estates management</u>
15	<u>Council Tax collection & benefits services</u>
16	<u>Road, fire and home safety projects</u>
17	<u>Community planning & social inclusion</u> ...inc community safety, employability projects, equalities and research

If you had to select 3 areas for service reductions, which 3 would you choose?

Please write the numbers in the boxes below (eg for libraries/ museums write "7").

1st

2nd

3rd

And if you could protect 3 areas from service reductions, which 3 would you choose?

Please write the numbers in the boxes below (eg for libraries/ museums write in "7").

1st

2nd

3rd

Q5 The following are areas being considered by the Council for possible savings. Please indicate the extent to which you feel a reduction in these services/facilities could be possible. This might be through withdrawing some services currently provided, or limiting access to services to a single central point. Please circle ONE option for each

	No service reduction	Small reduction	Moderate reduction	Significant reduction	Service withdrawn
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5
Street sweeping	1	2	3	4	5
Road maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Arts	1	2	3	4	5
Sports	1	2	3	4	5
Swimming pools	1	2	3	4	5
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5
Museums	1	2	3	4	5
Subsidised travel	1	2	3	4	5
Burial grounds	1	2	3	4	5
Parks & open spaces	1	2	3	4	5
Community support	1	2	3	4	5

Centralising Access to Services and the Council Estate

One option currently being considered by Moray Council to make budget savings is to reduce the number of locations in which services can be accessed. The services being provided would remain unchanged, but some local offices may be closed and residents would access services through an office in a nearby location. For some services access may be through a single central location, by telephone or online.

This approach could result in significant savings against the cost of providing services through local offices. Moreover the Council would also be able to reduce the cost of maintaining premises, and potentially generate income through sale of some premises. Some of the options being considered here are set out in the **consultation document at p8-19**.

Here we ask for your views on the extent to which it would be acceptable to limit local access to a range of specific services.

Q6 Centralising the registrars service would mean that the only permanent service access point would be in Elgin, although staff would be available in local access points by appointment. What do you think of this approach?

Acceptable					Unacceptable	
1	2	3	4	5		

Q7 Centralising the school catering service would mean that some school meals were delivered through serveries?

Acceptable					Unacceptable	
1	2	3	4	5		

The Council estate includes a large number of premises across the area used for a range of purposes including Council department offices, schools and community premises. Costs related to the Council's estate is currently around £18million per year and there is scope for significant savings here. This could be through sale of some premises, or through passing management of premises to community organisations (eg for public halls and community centres).

Q8 Thinking about the kinds of premises listed below, to what extent do you think it would be acceptable for the Council to reduce the size of its estate? Please circle ONE option for each							
	No reduction at all			←—————→		Significant reduction	
Schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Council offices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public halls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Community centres	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Charging for Services

Council services are currently funded mainly by Government Grant (75% of Council income), with the remainder funded by Council Tax and direct charging. A significant reduction in Government Grant is expected, and increasing charges for services could reduce the need to cut or withdraw services. Here we ask about the extent to which charges could be introduced for services, or existing charges increased.

Q9 To what extent do you think the Council should support services by increasing or introducing charges for the following? Please select ONE option for each				
	No change	Small increase	Moderate increase	Significant increase
Swimming pools/ leisure facilities	1	2	3	4
Football pitches	1	2	3	4
Music instruction	1	2	3	4
Burial fees	1	2	3	4
Car parking charges	1	2	3	4
Disabled badges (blue badges)	1	2	3	4
Stair lift maintenance annual charge	1	2	3	4
Telecare (eg community alarms)	1	2	3	4
Market stalls charges	1	2	3	4
Licensing fees (eg liquor, taxis, etc)	1	2	3	4
Council Tax is not a charge for specific services, but again please comment on a potential increase in Council Tax...				
	No change	Small increase	Moderate increase	Significant increase
Council Tax	1	2	3	4

The Role of Communities

As the Council's resources become more limited and have to be focused where they are most needed, there may be more reliance on other organisations and groups to get involved in providing some services. This could include communities taking more responsibility for the management or maintenance of community assets or provision of some services. For example communities could play a greater role in:

- Community Centres and Public Halls...eg allowing community groups access to halls and ensuring the hall is kept clean;
- Flowers/shrubs...eg tending to communal flower beds;
- Maintenance of cemetery head stones...eg ensuring head stones are clean and tidy (but not undertaking repairs);
- Maintenance of bus shelters...eg ensuring bus shelters are kept clean and tidy (but not undertaking repairs); or
- Low level Antisocial Behaviour services...eg neighbourhood watch or "Green Dog Walker" volunteers could play a role here.

Here we ask for your views on the potential for communities to take more responsibility in these areas.

Q10 Do you think that more community involvement in maintaining facilities or providing services is a good idea for Moray? Please circle ONE only

Very good idea	Good idea	Neither/ nor	Bad idea	Very bad idea
1	2	3	4	5

Q11 How practical or impractical do you think it will be for the community to take on the following roles? Please circle ONE for each

	Very practical	Fairly practical	Neither/ nor	Fairly unpractical	Very unpractical
Helping in the management of Council run community centres & public halls	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining communal flowerbeds and shrubs	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining cemetery headstones	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining bus shelters	1	2	3	4	5
Low level Anti Social Behaviour services	1	2	3	4	5

Q12 And do you think that you personally would be interested in getting involved in any of the following? Please circle ALL that apply

Helping in the management of community centres & public halls	1
Maintaining communal flowerbeds and shrubs	2
Maintaining cemetery headstones	3
Maintaining bus shelters	4
Low level Anti Social Behaviour services	5

Any other comments?

Q13 Do you have any comments you would like to make about the topics covered in the survey?
Please write in below

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Please return your completed questionnaire using the reply PRE PAID envelope provided to:
Craigforth, 47 Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen, Stirling, FK8 2DZ

ANY QUERIES?

Freephone **0800 027 2245** or Email **office@craigforth.co.uk**

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