



CHEL TENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Budget consultation 2015/16

Summary of activity and responses

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Cabinet on 16 December agreed to a 6 week consultation period on the interim budget proposals for 2015/16. The consultation went live on Wednesday 17th December and closed on Monday 26th January. The opportunity to comment on the budget proposals was publicised to the widest possible audience via publicity in the press and on the Council's website. Special meetings were held with interested parties including businesses, parish councils and residents, to make sure that their views were heard as part of the consultation.

This year's consultation also provided the opportunity to prioritise 13 suggested proposals to spend the capital sum arising from the sale of North Place.

This report summarises the consultation activity and responses

Online Consultation

The draft budget proposals were made available on the Council's website and people were invited to make comments via an online survey or by submitting responses via email. In total 171 online responses (summarised as appendix A) were received and 34 responses by email (summarised as appendix C available in the Members' Room)

Paper-based forms

Responses were also invited by post and 17 hand-written responses were received. These responses have been included with the online responses in appendix A.

Consultation Fora

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Director of Resources also attended a number of meetings to discuss the budget proposals in person with a range of stakeholder groups. These were:

- Cheltenham Voluntary and Community Sector Forum – 9th December
- C5 Parish Councils meeting - 5th January
- Residents' Forum at which 18 residents were in attendance – 15th January (notes are available in the Members' Room)
- Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce – 19th January

Representations from local organisations

Formal representations were received from a number of local organisations.

Cheltenham Civic Society held a meeting of their members to discuss the options for future investment in the town. They expressed the view that the first priority should be the improvement of the Town Hall into a prestigious and flexible public building, of a quality and design to induce admiration and envy from visitors. They also suggested that the remainder should be spent on enhancing the public realm. The Society's full response is available in the Members' Room.

The Honourable Company of Gloucestershire wrote to urge the Council strongly to take this opportunity to transform the Town Hall. The Company's letter is available in the Members' Room.

The Playhouse Theatre made representations about the benefits of using some of the capital to invest in the Theatre, both for repairs and improvements. This will be considered further as the capital programme develops.

The Friends of Imperial Square Heritage and Conservation (FISHAC) and the Friends of Montpellier Bandstand and Gardens (FOMBAG) made a joint representation against the proposal to provide a permanent electricity supply for events in the Gardens.

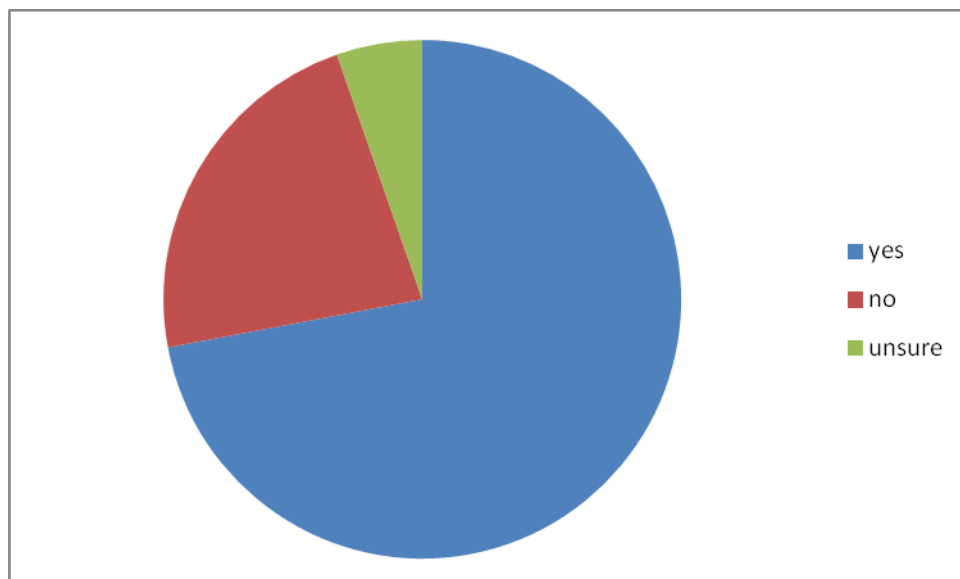
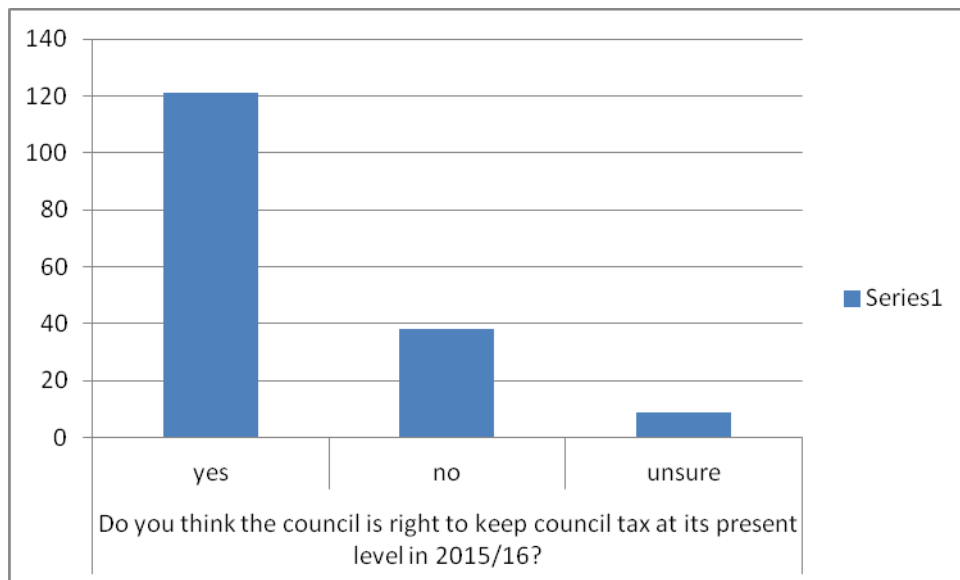
Summary of responses

In total 222 responses were received. This is far greater than in previous years, thanks in part to the opportunity to influence how best to spend the £7.8m capital sum from the sale of North Place car park. The results are set in Appendix A. Appendix B which summarises the individual responses to Q8, Appendix C which summarises the general comments received by email and Appendix D which consists of notes from the Residents' Forum, are all available in the Members' Room.

Appendix A – Summary of 222 online and hand-written responses.

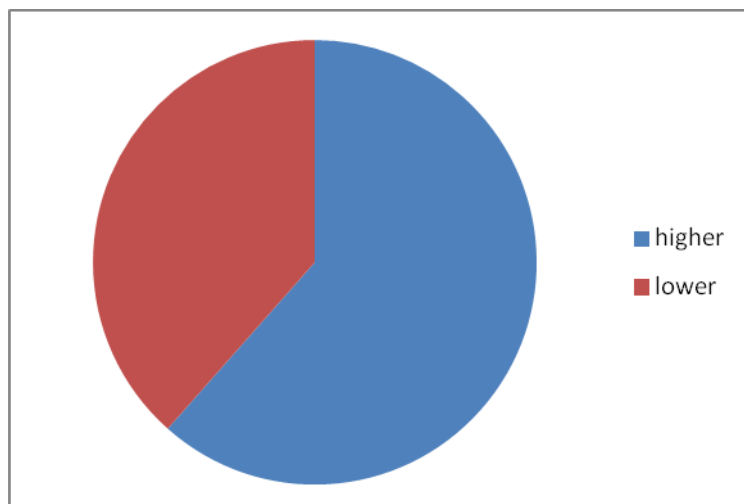
1) Do you think the council is right to keep council tax at its present level in 2015/16?

Out of 168 responses to this question, 72% of respondents said yes:



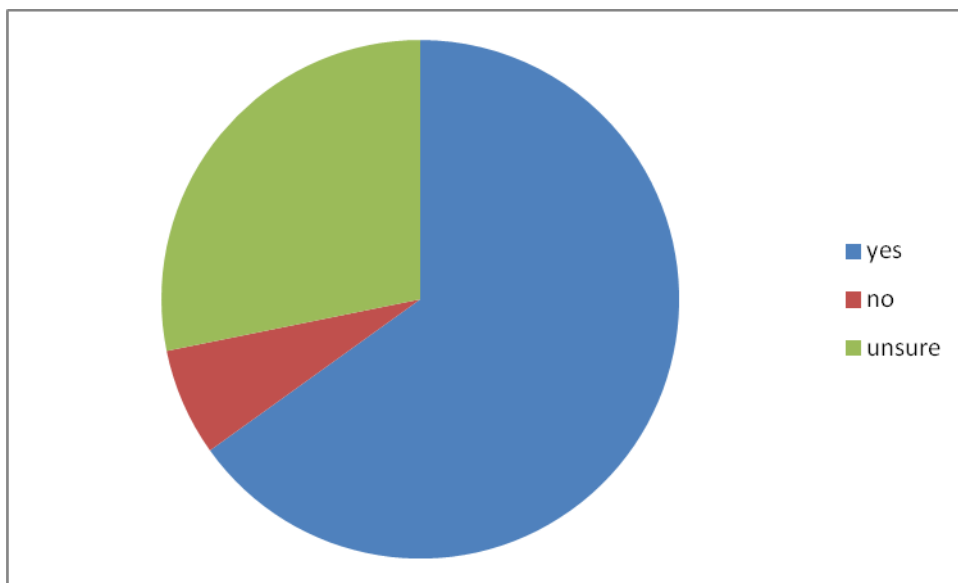
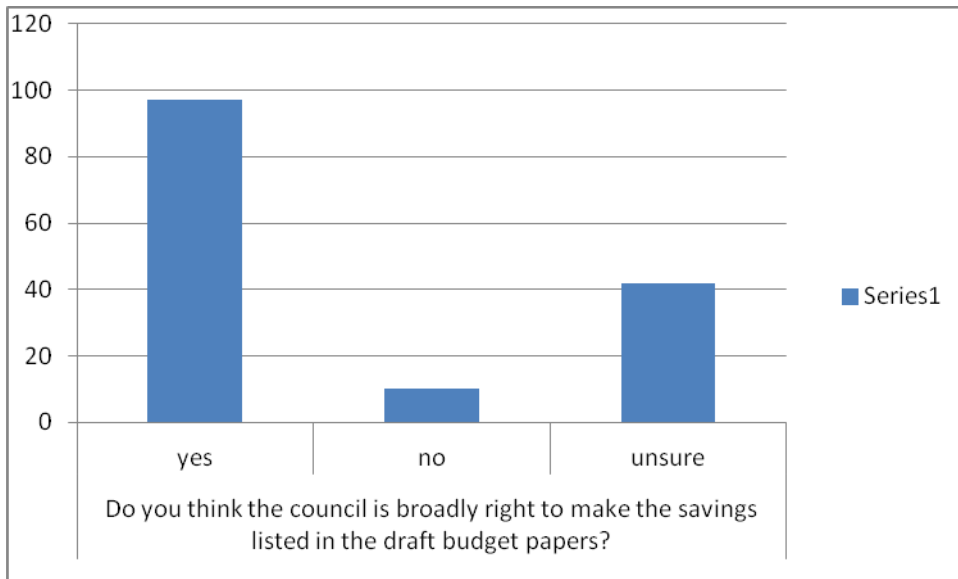
2) If your answer to question one was no, do you think council tax should be:

Out of the 39 respondents to this question; 62% said higher, 38% said lower.



3) Do you think the council is broadly right to make the savings listed in the draft budget papers?

Out of the 149 respondents to this question, 65% said yes, 28% though were unsure



4) What Borough Council services would you most like to see improved?

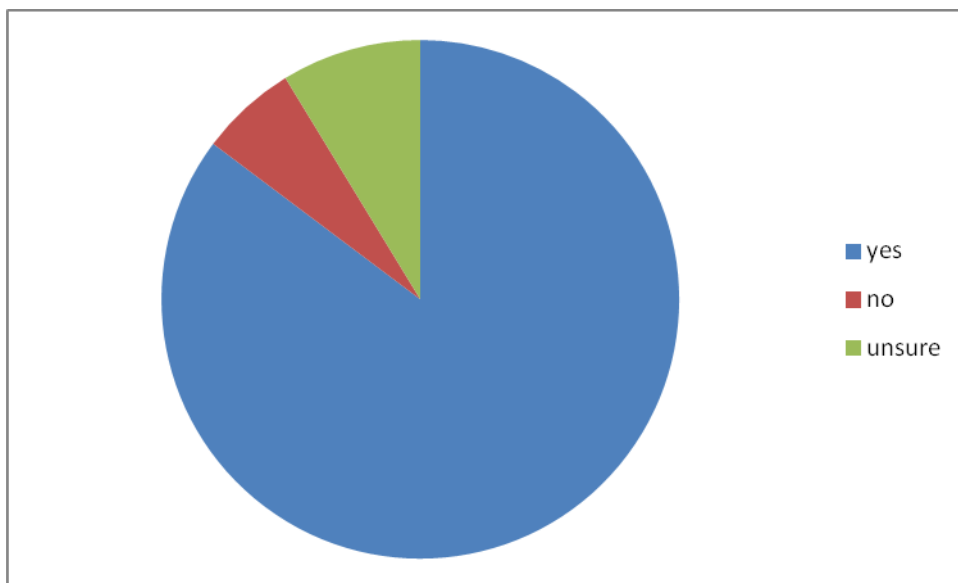
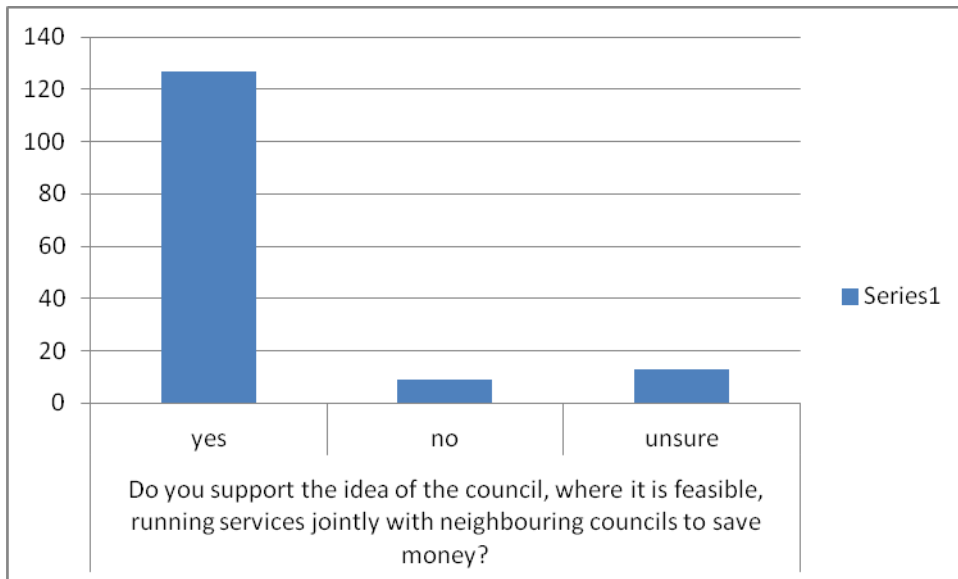
Out of the 85 responses to this question, 17 (20%) related to the maintenance and upkeep of pavements and roads, 12 (14%) related to waste and recycling services, 10 (11%) related to the cleansing of pavements and pedestrianized areas and 9 to car parking (11%).

5) Are there any services you would like us to cut back or stop providing?

Out of the 30 responses, apart from cutting benefits (3 respondents), there was no suggestion that received more than 1 mention. 11 (37%) respondents did answer "No" to this question.

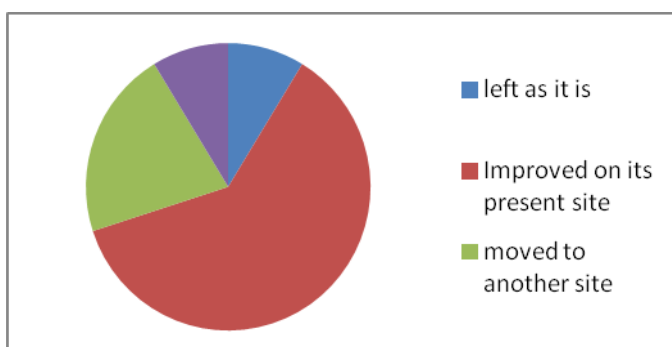
6) Do you support the idea of the council, where it is feasible, running services jointly with neighbouring councils to save money?

Out of the 149 responses to this question 127 (85%) said yes



7) There have been a number of complaints about the condition of the bus station. Do you believe the bus station should be

Out of the 150 responses to this question, 13 (9%) said it should be left as is, 92 (61%) wanted it improved on its present site and 32 (21%) wanted it moved to another site.



8) Have you any other comments on this budget or on the services the borough council provides?

28 responses were received to this question and these are listed in appendix A.

9) What do you believe the council's three top priorities for capital investment should be, from the projects listed below?

Respondents were asked to rank their favourites 1st, 2nd and 3rd. These have then been given a score with 1st rank getting 3 pts, 2nd rank getting 2 pts and 3rd rank getting 1pt. These scores are then added up to form a cumulative score.

What should be the council's top 3 priorities for capital investment			
Improve the Town Hall, creating a new foyer, providing better seating and a lift to the balcony, creating a new café/bar, and building a winter gardens style conservatory on the back as a restaurant and event venue (£2,400,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
37	24	18	
111	48	18	177
Create a new sports and play hub at the Prince of Wales Stadium providing facilities for competitive field sports and athletics (£1,843,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
43	8	10	
129	16	10	155
Create a new public square with landscaping and other improvements to the street scene at Boots Corner (£2,000,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
24	21	15	
72	42	15	129
Improve facilities for community sport and new gym facilities at Leisure at Cheltenham (£433,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
6	42	5	
18	84	5	107
Relocate the council HQ from the Municipal Offices to another office building, cutting the council's ongoing accommodation costs and allowing a redevelopment of the Municipal Offices for (for example) hotel, retail or leisure provision (£2,500,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
13	16	16	
39	32	16	87
Invest in the Crematorium to replace the cremators and potentially improve the facilities for bereaved families (£1,000,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
12	10	22	
36	20	22	78
Improvements to existing car parking provision (£3,700,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
12	12	12	
36	24	12	72
Invest in the Pittville Park play area to provide a higher standard of play equipment, create a major family attraction and potentially attract more visitors to the town (£300,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
12	6	11	
36	12	11	59

Small scale renewable energy initiatives including solar panels on top of council-owned buildings (£1,000,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
6	12	13	
18	24	13	55
Provide a permanent electricity supply to Imperial Gardens to avoid events organisers having to use noisy generators (£180,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
4	12	17	
12	24	17	53
Restore Neptune's Fountain to its former glory (£600,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
4	8	18	
12	16	18	46
Large scale solar farm to generate clean electricity and generate income for the council (£8,000,000)			
1st rank	2nd rank	3rd rank	Total pts
8	6	3	
24	12	3	39

St Mark's Junior School

As an experiment, Cllr Chris Coleman on behalf of the Cabinet conducted a consultation session with around 60 children aged 9 to 10 at St Mark's Junior School. The children were asked how they would like the £8 million spent and then given three votes each. The results were as follows:

- New Pittville play area - 35 votes
- Improve Leisure @ - 18 votes
- Improve Town Hall - 16 votes
- Repair Neptune's fountain - 15 votes
- Drainage for Swindon Village football pitch - 12 votes
- Electric parking signs - 12 votes
- Boots corner - 9 votes
- Electricity for the festival gardens - 9 votes
- Improve car parking - 8 votes
- Upgrade Prince of Wales stadium - 8 votes
- Renewable energy farm - 6 votes
- Buy and re- develop buildings - 5 votes
- Rainwater harvesting - 4 votes
- Move the council to save money - 4 votes
- Repair crematorium - 4 votes
- Solar panels on roof tops - 0 votes

A fuller version of the children's comments is available in the Members' Room.

Appendix B Individual responses to Q8) Do you have any other comments on this budget or on the services the borough council provides?

<p>If the Council must insist on making us all use multiple bins for our waste, then it should take some responsibility for encouraging householders to store them tidily. The street scene in Cheltenham is very much degraded by bins left untidily in the front of houses.</p>
<p>1. Re Town Hall: I like the idea of refurbishing this building internally. Also of having a conservatory-style building to remind us of the old Winter Gardens--but would hope we can still have the quiet haven of the Skillicorne Garden.</p> <p>2. Re Municipal Offices: I would be very sad to see the council leave Harwards Buildings. This is the ideal place for Borough Council offices. As a Cheltonian, when I go in the offices in this iconic terrace in the heart of town, I feel a sense of pride and ownership.</p> <p>The Council moved into Harwards Buildings in 1915, which means it has been there for 100 years. The Promenade has retained on this West side a calm and dignity that makes the other, shopping side an even more attractive place to be. If given over to retail interests, can we ensure their sensitivity (despite its being a Listed Building) to the architectural heritage, and the tranquillity and dignity of the Long Garden? Again, as Anthea Jones says, The Harwards Buildings are, with Royal Well, "the heart of Cheltenham."</p> <p>Is there no way the Council could invite other offices to share the space, if it is too big? I think the Tourist information office should return to the Harwards Buildings. I love the Wilson but it's not the right place for Tourist information. It's harder to find and less central. Again, the most important terrace in Cheltenham is the ideal place.</p> <p>One lovely day, I remember being outside the Municipal Offices and passing a woman who had just come out of the old tourist office. She was standing there, with the splendid terrace to one side of her and the Long Garden to the other, and saying to someone on her mobile phone, "I am in Cheltenham, and it's so beautiful!"</p>
<p>2 million to make boots corner 'pretty'? Really, what a serious waste of money..</p>
<p>As indicated earlier, young people in Cheltenham have little alternative to visiting bars etc. Would it really be so difficult to create an ice-rink which would attract people from a wider area? And what about the Axiom Centre? Surely somewhere where young musicians can practice and perform on a regular basis must be a good idea?</p>
<p>Can the council consider an inexpensive strategic scheme by relocating the bus station back to the North Street car park area then also broker an arrangement with Morrisons and the U of G or some developers like Uliving to build student accommodation on the discontinued Morrisons site. This would solve several problems in one go - students would be close to their campuses and any bus routes, pollution and congestion would be very reduced and the buses would be outside the central area of town so reduce Boots Corner" vehicular movements so increase safety. It could even accommodate new council offices perhaps? Maybe that would be too much but you get the picture. Lets make it happen. Win win and all it would take is the will to examine it and get on with it if feasible. Great for Cheltenham, potentially.</p>
<p>Capital projects: I would add restoration of the railings in Clarence and Wellington Squares to improve the public realm and improve security, so that the Squares could be locked at night and petty crime discouraged.</p>
<p>Cheltenham has become a bottleneck due to a poor road layouts and infrastructure. Living in Pittville it takes 30 minutes to cross the town in the mornings and evening to reach the M5.</p>
<p>I believe that money should be invested into the Municipal Offices. With efforts to make it energy efficient and bring it up to modern standards. It is the jewel in our Regency crown. It is in essence, the heart of Cheltenham and something we should be proud off.</p>
<p>I would like to see a relatively small amount, say 250,000 spent on improving the cycle network around Cheltenham. In particular I would like to see a new cycleway created along the old railway line from Pilley bridge nature reserve all the way back to the railway station following the route of the old railway line as far as possible.</p>
<p>Inequality across the wards needs resolving.</p>
<p>It is evident that the Municipal Offices are too large to continue as the Municipal Offices. The facade should be retained at all costs and the best solution for the buildings would be for them to be returned to domestic dwellings. There would be enough car parking for these and it seems that the Municipal Offices were originally 10 or so separate dwellings. It is recognised that the inside of the buildings are also listed and so have limited scope for change. This solution would help with that aspect. Other terraces within the town have returned to domestic dwellings and have proved to be very popular. Investigations should be initiated with Developers with this in mind. This would preserve the characteristics of this side of The Promenade.</p>
<p>Keep the bin lorries off the roads until 9.30. Create all kind of traffic mayhem in the mornings</p>
<p>Keep trimming at the staff costs - delayer and get more commercial (dirty word I know but it does work)</p>

<p>More litter picking would be nice. Especially in parks. Maybe it could be done ahead of grass cutting to stop cans & glass bottles being shredded up by the mowers.</p>
<p>Of the items below, relocating the HQ, but only if it saves significant amounts per year - supplying a benefit in 5-10 years If providing permanent electricity supply to Imperial Gardens helps secure and develop the various festivals, then that too seems a very good idea at the relatively low cost.</p>
<p>Proposals for the Prince of Wales stadium, Town Hall, Pittville Park, Boots corner, Imperial Gardens and solar energy farm are expensive and unnecessary. Selling off the Municipal Offices and (presumably) moving them to a less central location is a terrible idea.</p>
<p>Refuse collection - is a pretty good service, but why do the collection lorries often park in the middle of the road, with very little regard for other road users?</p> <p>Will the council actually take heed of concerns raised on these matters? I know of a considerable amount of people who replied the council suggestion of changing traffic flow in town - they voted No. But the council have gone ahead anyway. How is this democratic??</p> <p>Stop condoning 'garden grabbing'. The impact of development on those areas adversely affects existing residents and local infrastructure.</p> <p>Stop outsourcing services. Whilst the council considers it is saving money by doing this, the recipients of the service have no recourse, when, as often happens, the service become sub-standard. Repair of Cheltenham roads are a case in point.</p> <p>Rock salt during icy conditions. Why continue waste money on using standard brown rock salt, that dissolves very quickly? Why not use non-staining white rock salt that lasts much longer. Often used in supermarket car parks. Use of this would also reduce the amount to times roads need to be gritted.</p>
<p>Scrap the cheltenham transport plan as it stands it will cause much more harm to our town than good, move power back from unelected cheltenham Development Taskforce back to elected councillors, you know the people who are supposed to be the ones with the power.</p>
<p>Support investing to save and increase income and green initiatives as below. Think Festivals should be encouraged to use existing buildings in town (and thus bring economic benefit to them) and only use one park as a tented village.</p>
<p>the basic problem remains - the CBC is responsible for the town but has no control over the roads and little over traffic</p>
<p>The bus station is a disgrace, especially when you consider that it is the first impression that many visitors get of our town.</p>
<p>The Council does an excellent job with Cheltenham's parks and gardens, given limited resources. Please maintain the funding for this. It makes a real difference to the lives and well-being of Cheltenham's residents and visitors.</p>
<p>The Council also deserves praise for working with Friends of Pittville and providing grants for the restoration of Pittville Gates. I would welcome similar projects in future.</p>
<p>There should be more integration of the staff working on parks and green spaces.</p>
<p>Too many of the community projects, where cuts have been felt, are existing on volunteering. While there is a place for that there needs to be more local funding.</p>
<p>Use the 8 million to stop parking fees in cheltenham. Other towns have free parking and appear to reap economic benefits from people visiting to shop and eat etc...</p>
<p>Waste disposal and recycling services in the area seem to be efficient and considerate - especially thanks to the frontline people who provide them come rain or shine.</p>
<p>When you put electricity into Imperial Gardens that should be extended to Montpellier Gardens as well as the same criteria apply. Many events which benefit the whole town are held there and electricity would mean less disruption for the area and could also be a source of income in the long term.</p>
<p>With the money raised by the sale of North Parade - restoration of the railings in Clarence Square would enhance the appearance, plus would in the long term save the council money by not having to regularly cut the hedges. Traditional streetlights and natural stone paving would also improve the Square. It is after all the only complete Regency Square in Cheltenham.</p>

Appendix C Summary of 35 general comments received by email

I would like to see some of the money spent on repaving/resurfacing the high street area. Every time I go to town I cringe at the absolutely awful state of the paving etc. from the beginning of the strand to boots corner. But before spending the money please research other towns that have had hard landscaping done to find suitable materials, and managing regimes, as the slabs which were used previously have proved a disaster, as well as the mismanagement of the utility company excavations, and repairs. Let's get it right this time once and for all. Why not set up a committee and consultation process with members of the public involved in the decision making process.

My proposal is that this sum should be spent on resurfacing pavements. Most tarmac pavements in and around the town are in a very poor state. Most paved paths are uneven with many broken stones. Pavements in my own road, Alma Close, have not been resurfaced since the houses were built, approximately 60 years ago, but have been damaged and disfigured by various utilities over the years. On this subject, it seems to me to be a good idea to specify that when utilities dig up pavements to install or repair services they should resurface the whole pavement while they are at it instead of putting in unsightly and uneven patches. This shouldn't cost much more and would be cost effective in the long run. As it is one often sees roads and paths closed, sometimes for weeks, while underground work is going on, then when the road or path is reopened, there it is with big new patches and an opportunity for a proper repair lost. So that's my proposal.

The pavements around Pittville are in a shocking condition. I feel this really lets the look and feel of an otherwise architecturally beautiful area down. Couldn't we come up with a more attractive solution than replacing broken slabs with tarmac?

As a member of the Montpellier Association representing 78 traders and residents of Montpellier, I would like to ask the Council to consider using some of their capital investment to invest in this important and unique area of Cheltenham. Some of the budget approved last July for the Town Centre and High Street should also be used to improve the paving and lighting of Montpellier including the walk from the Promenade to Montpellier past Imperial Gardens. Montpellier is seen as the most beautiful shopping area in Cheltenham, the Carotids are often used to represent the beauty and individuality of our town and the walk from the Train Station to the Centre takes people straight through Montpellier.

I would like to also request that when the proposal was put forward to put electricity into Imperial Gardens for very good reasons, this should be extended to Montpellier Gardens for the same reasons. The festivals, fiestas and other leisure event which attract crowds to Cheltenham would all benefit from electricity in situ in Montpellier Gardens.

I understand that you have money to invest in infrastructure in Cheltenham. Please may I suggest that you consider what could help Montpellier. It is a unique area of Cheltenham, with its own special architecture (the caryatids), and its own charm. It attracts many visitors all year round. Improved lighting and pavements for those of us who walk there regularly would be a great help.

Also, I see that you are going to add lighting to Imperial Square. Please consider extending this to Montpellier Gardens. Both are the main part of the festivals which bring so many visitors to Cheltenham and both need better lighting. Last year, I fell trying to get into the Gardens to attend an event at one of the festivals, and have damaged my knee. Please help those of us who are elderly by improving the lighting so we are safer.

I write to support the use of CBC investment in the Town Hall. As CE of the Everyman Theatre I have some knowledge of entertainment venues and have the chance to hear about the improvements planned.

The development of the Town Hall to include restructuring the stage, the introduction of stage lifts, extending the circle and developing the park aspect of the Hall all makes good sense in terms of increasing the commercial potential and improving the venue for today's audiences. A venue for the 21st century indeed!

Clearly this may take a deal of time if the CBC money is only 25% of the likely total cost. But a venue that would have been suitable for the 20th century is required and some funds need to be found to provide the modern PA system and lighting rig that incoming acts demand. Currently the Town Hall must struggle to compete against better resourced venues in addition to competing with the many halls with a larger capacity. Additionally the improvements to the Pillar Room and the provision of sound proofing need to be carried in the short term rather than wait for the full scheme to be financed.

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As a resident of Cheltenham born and bred I would not like to see any more money spent on the Town Hall. All my adult life they have been spending money on it i.e. a new sprung floor and the place still looks the same as when we went to parties there sixty years ago. The catering facilities haven't changed in 50 years either!!!!!! I thought any rate that this was run by a Trust now?

What we want in Cheltenham is proper linked up public transport with a decent bus station serving coaches and all local buses that can be caught at the station and then en-route to their destination in town. Also without clogging up the Promenade. The towns premier street is now a bus terminal. In fact the coach station would have made an ideal bus/coach station near the centre of town. A good link to the railway station also needs to be established. I was told some years ago that people who do food shopping in Cheltenham don't want to walk far to the bus stops Well that problem has been solved as we do not have any small food retailers left in the town. In fact we do not have many small individual shops in the town centre any more. Just like furniture shops have all vanished out of town. As a shopper I find Cheltenham very bland with its range of chain shops.

The pavement by the Neptune Fountain needs to be repaired and because the arm and trident always go missing there should be CCTV on it.

I would like to see the council give consideration to perhaps some of the less eye-catching things that need to be done as well as those that are high profile. The need for improvement/replacement of the crematorium incinerators is of course well known and absolutely essential, but there also needs to be additional parking facilities at the crematorium. I wrote to the cemetery and crematorium on 15th March 2011 and received a detailed reply from the Bereavement Services Manager Mr R Hainsworth. Whilst he intended to investigate ways of alleviating what is a serious problem it was clear there was not at the time funding to provide the many additional spaces required.

On behalf of those who attend funerals and those like myself and my family who also hold a family grave could you please take this special opportunity to solve this parking problem.

Below are some spending options for the 8 million raised from selling council owned assets:

1. Improve Coronation Square or demolish. Plenty of space available to let. Massive catchment area with GlosCat and GCHQ walking distance from it plus all the residents within. It looks an eye sore and with that it brings trouble.
2. More financial support to help the homeless within the town. Build a homeless shelter.
3. Improve and add more cycle tracks within the town. Not just painting a line on current paths to separate cyclists.

I have a couple of observations from the 2015 budget on your website.

- 1) The £8M on a Solar Farm for the council, what is the payback on this over say 20 years (based on the lifetime of current solar technology)
- 2) The £600K on restoring the Neptune fountain feels extravagant based on current austerity measures.

Two areas of focus that I wish should be considered.

- 1) I feel there should be investment in environmentally friendly travel such as Cycling. The town currently has little in the way of cycle friendly routes. For example Swindon Village to Bishops Cleeve (Hyde Lane) should be considered for a raised cycle route providing safety from cars. Perhaps a Boris Style Cycle Scheme should be trial, with stations in key communities. These have proven very successful in places such as Bristol, London and Paris.
- 2) Traffic in the town centre is still a problem, while I support the public area at Boots it still needs addressing. A large amount of the chaos is attributed to stopping busses. Over all the parking strategy / car strategy does need addressing in the town centre to make the town viable for businesses to operate. (Too few parking spaces now, permits only on many of the street parking) Only yesterday wanted to goto the Cinema and all car parks were full

and street parking didn't allow enough time to see the full film.

I write to you today to ask that The Playhouse Theatre be included in your list of buildings to be supported by Cheltenham Borough Councils £8 million pound fund.

The Playhouse Community Theatre is run by a team of volunteers on a relatively small budget (Cheltenham council give a yearly grant of £5,700 which has remained unchanged for many years).

The grade 2 listed building is owned by the council and rented to the Playhouse Theatre Charity at a nominal rent of £1 on a repair lease. The team at the Playhouse work hard to keep the building repaired but because of the age of the property it is suffering from its age. The Victorian brick arches which form part of the foundations are crumbling, the sewage pipes which run through the under-ground arches are leaking (a health hazard) the water pipes are so old that they are seeping water.

There are these and other problems in the basements/cellars which are unseen by the public but will ultimately lead to serious problems with the building. The Playhouse Theatre Charity does not have anything near the funds to carry out the work that needs to be done. With the £8 million pounds available to Cheltenham Borough Council now is the opportunity to help the Playhouse Theatre before it's too late. Our Facilities Manager has completed detailed inspection of the state of the building and has photographs available which show the state of the building both above and below ground level.

As pleased as I was to read in your consultation documents that you are contemplating spending on money on the Town Hall, the Imperial Gardens (during the Festival seasons), restoring Neptune's Fountain and "landscaping and improvements" at Boots Corner, I was a little disappointed to note that there was no mention of any support to the Playhouse Theatre in Cheltenham.

I would have thought The Playhouse ought to have been included on your list for some additional funding, bearing in mind that it, like the Town Hall, is apparently owned by the council and is a grade-II listed building of historic and architectural interest that needs just as much protection. Please consider some support for the Theatre as well.

I have seen that there is a substantial amount of money available for repairs and improvements to the town's public buildings. May I suggest that some of it is spent on the building currently used as the Playhouse Theatre. I have three major reasons for recommending this:

Firstly, the building is council owned, and, whilst the Theatre as lessees are responsible for repairs and maintenance, there are some major renovations required to maintain the fabric and integrity of the building which are beyond its means. Any further delay will only make these renovations more costly.

Secondly, it is a successful theatre venue able to accommodate amateur, semi-professional and professional shows which cannot be accommodated at the Everyman. It is as valuable an amenity as any other leisure facility in Cheltenham.

Thirdly, it is a building of great historical importance. The oldest part of it was built in 1806 as the Manufactory of the Real Cheltenham Salts, the solid salts obtained by evaporating the Cheltenham spa waters. These were sold across the empire. Baths were added, the most eminent user being the Duke of Wellington when on holiday in Cheltenham. Then came a swimming bath. A steam powered flour mill was in operation for some twenty year. In the twentieth century, medicinal baths were added. Although the swimming bath closed at the beginning of the second war, replaced by a theatre in 1945, the washing baths continued in use until the 1960's.

Throughout its two hundred years, it has been in use as a public amenity. This makes it the oldest secular building in Cheltenham to have had continuous public use.

Evidence of much of this history is still within the building - the swimming bath is still there, as are the remains of some of the salts manufacturing and the mill.

Without some expenditure soon to preserve these features, whilst keeping the building up-to-date with modern requirements of a public building, it will fall into dereliction.

Having studied carefully your Budget proposals regarding the suggested utilisation of the over 7million pounds "pot", I am pleased to see that a number of deserving projects are now in the pipeline. Having trained as an Architect in Cheltenham the late 60's/early 70's and practised locally for over 35 years I have always had a keen interest in our towns building heritage. It is with some sadness that I see that one of Cheltenham's oldest and unique grade II listed buildings is not on the current proposed agenda.

That building is of course The Playhouse Theatre in Bath Road. It is a building I know very well having surveyed it completely and prepared all the drawings (*still currently being used*) as part of their lottery bid some years ago. Many of the labyrinth of tunnels etc below the property date back to the early 1800's and the abundance of decorative detailing throughout from the days when it was The Public Baths deserve to be maintained and restored for posterity. Over the last number of years both the Theatre Management team and an army of volunteers have worked hard to improve the facilities. With their help and effort it has finally ceased to be " The Amateur Theatre" and finally become a true Theatre not only for shows Professional & Amateur but

also a hub for a large number of Arts and other community activities.

Over the past few years a great deal has been done to improve and restore the building but there are still so many areas, not generally seen by the visiting public, that require constant attention in order to keep this property well maintained.

I have intimately known this building since the early 70's having been in my time on the Committee running it and also designing & building over that period many, many shows etc. I therefore whole heartily support The Playhouse Theatre's application for possible inclusion in the forthcoming budget plans. This building embodies so much of our town's history. It may not be as grand as the regency Pump Rooms, The early 1900's designed Town Hall and many other of our splendid buildings, but it has a unique history of its own. An inclusion in your budget would help preserve this little gem and hopefully provide a thriving theatre and centre for the Arts and the community as a whole in the years to come

I would like to reply to your consultation on capital costs, particularly on the spending of the £8m. from the sale of car parks.

I support the investment in the playground in Pittville Park and would urge other improvements to bring the park up to Green Flag standards. It is in the CBC Green Spaces Strategy to bring all parks up to Green Flag standard, but it is a disgrace that Cheltenham's premier and most historic park is not up to these basic standard.

I would also support the proposal for improving Boots corner. However this is only part of the problem. The public realm in the High Street and Lower High Street are very poor. In the High Street there is poor quality paving and a lot of this is patched up with tarmac. The general design is poor, no trees, no imagination in the design. Cheltenham is known as a popular shopping destination but the High Street lets it down, lets spend some money and improve it. Also the promenade outside of House of Frazer needs tidying up with the muddy area where a tree used to be and the 6 disused telephone boxes which only seem to be used by beggars for storing their bags.

2016 will be the 60th anniversary of the Cheltenham Schools' Art Exhibition. The exhibitions have been held annually with the collaboration of Cheltenham Art gallery and Museum- The Wilson and is a great opportunity for our students from primary and secondary schools to show their work in a public gallery space. Will Cheltenham Borough Council consider supporting this with a small financial contribution to cover any costs the new Trust may charge for continuing to host this exhibition? Previously the exhibition drew in a large audience from the local population and we want to continue to showcase the best creative art work being produced in our local schools.

Having looked through the consultation documents, may I suggest some of the money should be put aside for much-needed renovation work on the Playhouse Theatre in Bath Road? The building, owned by the council, is sadly in need of repair, yet it is a grade-II listed building with a unique history; once serving as the local baths, it has long since played host to community theatre events in which local people, including youngsters, can take an active part.

We are members of the Montpellier Association representing 78 traders and residents of Montpellier, I would like to ask the Council to consider using some of their capital investment to invest in this important and unique area of Cheltenham. Some of the budget approved last July for the Town Centre and High Street should also be used to improve the paving and lighting of Montpellier including the walk from the Promenade to Montpellier past Imperial Gardens. Montpellier is seen as the most beautiful shopping area in Cheltenham, the Caryatids are often used to represent the beauty and individuality of our town and the walk from the Train Station to the Centre takes people straight through Montpellier.

I would like to also request that when the proposal was put forward to put electricity into Imperial Gardens for very good reasons, this should be extended to Montpellier Gardens for the same reasons. The festivals, fiestas and other leisure event which attract crowds to Cheltenham would all benefit from electricity in situ in Montpellier Gardens.

What a great project the council could do if it would get the old Cheltenham Tram number 21 back up and running. It has been of great interest in the echo over the last few weeks and would be of great interest to many people young and old. This project wouldn't cost a great deal but would bring joy to the town.

I've recently read on the Gloucestershire ECHO website and on your own pages about the funds which the council have generously set aside to make improvements to local facilities. There are already some excellent suggestions and I look forward to seeing the end results. However, I wonder if any consideration has been given to spending some of the money on the Playhouse Theatre in the town centre? If not, I implore you to do so.

I am a relatively young person (27) and have only been involved with the theatre for a little over a year, so I offer a fresh perspective. Still, like many of the members I have met I believe that the lovely community theatre with it's rich history and welcoming membership deserves more support. It has such a lot to offer Cheltenham,

however, it struggles to meet its potential due to a lack of funding.

I could provide many personal opinions on why I think the theatre would deserve any funding that could be spared, though others can talk with much more authority and detail on the matter so I will try to keep my reasoning short. I offer my support so vocally because:

- the theatre is almost entirely run and maintained by volunteers who are striving to improve the historic but ageing building and facilities with severely limited resources.
- whilst the theatre has managed to maintain or even improve on some key areas, other important facilities are lacking or desperately require modernising in order for the playhouse to meet its potential. With additional funding and promotion the theatre could become an even bigger thing of pride for the people of Cheltenham and surrounding areas.
- the theatre offers something unique - a place where anyone can get involved as all are welcome; where medium sized, intimate plays can be performed by those with a passion to do so and where (by keeping prices as low as possible), as many people as possible can afford to watch good quality theatre. It is a credit to the Cheltenham Council for having setup the Theatre, which, deserves continued support for the same reasons as were in play all those years ago.
- the theatre and resident companies are consciously trying to reach out and welcome new members, young and old - as they have with myself. With the right support, the theatre could actively support more people in the community, providing a place to practice the arts or providing opportunities of work experience, socialising and the personal rewards of working in the theatre & community.

I hope that the council will consider my comments and offer to provide some of the available funding to the Playhouse. I am always more than happy to share more of my experience of visiting and working at the theatre, or to explain further why I think it is a valuable and important community facility to maintain. I would also be overjoyed to put you in touch with the relevant playhouse management if you wished to pursue this further.

Regeneration of CLARENCE SQUARE:

Clarence Square is the only intact Regency Square in Cheltenham.

It is historically important and I fully support the excellent initiative from architect Bruce Buchanan to regenerate Clarence Square.

1: reinstate Regency railings around the square

2: reinstate traditional streetlights

3: refurbish pavements surrounding the square

In response to the request on the website I wish to comment as follows:

I support personally and as President of the University of Gloucestershire All Golds the investing of the £8 millions capital resource into a high specification and upgraded Prince of Wales Stadium with supporting infrastructure including an improved gym facility.

This would be a wise move and would produce significant commercial benefits for the entire town and its residents and businesses ie hotels,shops,stores,restaurants,cafés,clubs,bed and breakfasts,etc.

Moreover the publicity and media exposure would be worldwide and may indeed lead to significant businesses moving to or partnering with Regency Cheltenham.

Such a new stadium will:

★enable the All Golds to strive for Super League and thus play the biggest and most famous clubs in the world.

We were chosen as Club of the Year in 2014

★enable us to attract international fixtures featuring the England team.

★ensure Cheltenham hosts the RLEF inaugural 9s for 16 nations in 2016.

★assist greatly our current bid to host a high performance and funded Rugby Football League Regional Academy for under 16s and under 19s. A decision will be made by the governing body by April 30.

★lead to the launch of a brand new rugby league club for all ages in the town for the community - Regency Cheltenham XIII.

★enable the best schools' 9 aside competition in Britain to become even better and indeed international (we have this year received an application from Egypt).

I refer to the 1908 and Golden Fern cups for local boys and girls. Martin Horwood MP has attended every tournament hitherto and presented the trophies amid scenes of great joy!

★enrich the University of Gloucestershire Rugby League scholarship scheme which is already the best in the land and is buttressed by Sport England and its Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme.

★attract private investors. For example I may personally invest if for example there is an attractive bond issue. One imagines a hotel chain would wish to have a top facility on site too at a new stadium.

Finally it seems like this is destined to happen with Cheltenham being the Birthplace of International Rugby League ~ February 15 1908 Great Britain v New Zealand All Golds at the former Athletic Ground. A plaque on site now records this thanks to the Cheltenham Civic Society. Martin Horwood MP unveiled the plaque in 2008 ie the Centenary.

The sport of Rugby League sits on the cusp of unprecedented world growth. Our wonderful and unique town MUST be in the vanguard.

I understand there are significant funds available this year to invest in Cheltenham and would ask that you please consider Montpellier for support. The Montpellier Association has noted a considerable fall-off in footfall to the district, almost certainly attributable in part to an increase in online shopping. The Association has funded the production and widespread distribution of a fully illustrated brochure together with a new brand identity, improvements to our website and social media workshops. There are many opportunities for further strategic investment in the area that will improve the visit experience, attract more people and keep them coming back.

Please can we organise a consultation meeting between Council decision-makers and The Association to suggest ways in which Council funding may contribute value to Cheltenham by supporting one of its finest and most admired districts.

I feel strongly that Cheltenham needs proper facilities for a bus station. It's very poor at Royal well.

Nothing has been done since the old black and white coach station was demolished. Its currently shameful at Royal Well. With all the festivals in Cheltenham we need better facilities for meeting buses and coaches. Where do you legally park to drop off or meet a coach? What about disabled travellers?

Also you state that Cheltenham council is moving out of Municipal offices – I strongly feel we should not sell off Municipal offices. Look for a more creative solution!!!

Dear All, regarding the 8 million from the sale of the black and white coach site. please consider investing half in a 5 year safe account ,it should earn a fair bit and still allow at end of term for some reinvestment .[this could be a boon if the economy slides and help prevent council tax rise] with the rest I hope you will take a majority of Cheltonians wishes into account when deciding [although a bust of Ron Coltman at the lido and some investment to keep it belonging to us would be a small gesture] I just hope we can all hope we will have something in our coffers for the inevitable rainy days .thank you for the time taken to read this

I would like to make a proposal for use of part of the £8m received by the council from the sale of its interest in the North Place and Portland Street car parks. My suggestion is outside of those alternatives put forward by the council on the website.

My proposal is that £2m of the sum received should be allocated to provision of solutions for the poorest in the town and in particular for those in our community who find themselves homeless. The homeless are both those who are visible on our streets and those whose plight is not visible. Those who are not visible are those who are known to 'sofa surf' from house to house but who are in a position of not knowing from one day to the next where they are going to sleep that night.

What this would require at this stage is simply an allocation of funds. I would then propose that a working party is put together of all those involved in provision for the homeless in the town, including from the YMCA, First Stop, Trinity, Open Door, the Foodbank at Elim Church and others, as well as the Council. The best solutions and value for money for the people of Cheltenham will come through a collaborative partnership between the different churches and charities mentioned.

From talking to some of the above organisations, it is quite clear that although provision exists, it is not always available when a citizen of the town finds him - or herself in this predicament. For a variety of reasons, there are still people who are unable to access emergency accommodation, particularly when the need arises outside of what might be deemed to be normal working hours.

By supporting some of the capital projects that are currently being considered by these very worthwhile organisations, we may not be able to eradicate rough sleeping and sofa-surfing from the town entirely, but we could at least sleep soundly at night knowing that a safe, warm bed is available for anyone and everyone who wants it.

So, it is clear to me that there is need in our town for an additional night shelter as well as follow-on accommodation. However, I'm sure I'm only scratching the surface of these issues, which is why the working party would be so essential. Other ideas include the provision of funding for further district nurses with mental health training, and more provision for family centres dealing with life-skills training for individuals and vulnerable families.

The majority of suggestions put forward by the Council for use of the money have one thing in common; they would improve the visible environment in our town for the long-term. Cheltenham is a town that is not lacking in visible appeal to both those who live here and those who visit from outside the town, who of course add to the local economy. However, my view is that a one-off windfall like this, which may not happen again for the foreseeable future, should be used across the full spectrum of needs, and critically that should at this time include the long-term needs of the homeless and vulnerable.

I am not asking that the council allocate all the money to this, although I admit I did think about it. I am asking that a significant proportion be allocated as I'm suggesting. This would still leave £6m for other projects.

I would therefore urge the Council to use part of money to provide the capital required to make sure that our most vulnerable citizens are taken care of both at the initial point of need and as they move on. As one of those affected said to me recently, 'you know just one night in the warm would be nice.'

This is a chance for all at the Council to be great and demonstrate that the needs of all those who call Cheltenham home are legitimate and need to be backed with the resources we now find ourselves with. This is an opportunity to transform people's lives.

1. Refurbish the Town Hall ...I refer to Birmingham Town hall as a great example of where an iconic building has been refurbished
...and in Cheltenham add the provision for raked seating at the back of the hall
2. Turn the Honeybourne line into a world class garden ... examples of this can be found in Paris and New York
This would create a very attractive new approach to the town from the station and an amenity to be enjoyed by all.
3. Create a new rail connection between Cheltenham Spa rail station and the race course.
The existing system of bussing people from the station to the racecourse is archaic and very unpleasant for all involved. The rail course has a station and a tunnel leading to it... all it needs is a new connection to the main line and presumably a longer platform.

As a resident of Cheltenham and regular visitor to Montpellier, I would like to ask the Council to consider using some of their capital investment to invest in this important and unique area of Cheltenham. Some of the budget approved last July for the Town Centre and High Street should also be used to improve the paving and lighting of Montpellier. Montpellier is seen as the most beautiful shopping area in Cheltenham, the Caratids are often used to represent the beauty and individuality of our town and the walk from the Train Station to the Centre takes people straight through Montpellier.

I would like to also request that when the proposal was put forward to put electricity into Imperial Gardens for very good reasons, this should be extended to Montpellier Gardens for the same reasons. The festivals, fiestas and other leisure event which attract crowds to Cheltenham would all benefit from electricity in situ in Montpellier Gardens. As a regular supporter of the Cheltenham Festivals, it would be wonderful to see the Council investing in this great resource and attraction for our town by helping with electricity in Montpellier Gardens as well as Imperial Gardens

In principle extra expenditure should be only on improving essential core activities and retain monies where possible to avoid future rises in Council Tax. Of the proposals on expenditure I would comment:-
Capital expenditure:

Restore Neptune fountain - (a core L.A. activity should be to maintain all publicly owned property in sound condition, particularly historic/listed items). This principle would apply to the budget set aside for building maintenance.

Improvements to the Town Hall should be carefully assessed on whether it would be likely to pay for the expenditure over a reasonable period by increased returns. A return to a glazed building in place of the removed Winter Garden could be an exiting addition.

Avoid spending on solar energy projects- if this is sound commercially viable technology then the commercial world will become involved. It is quite wrong for the council tax payers of Cheltenham to be committed to capital and ongoing costs by Council decisions on matters outside their commercial expertise.

Not listed are two specific matters where works are urgently needed and which fall firmly into the category of core activities of the local authority:

- The first is the totally neglected and hazardous state of the pavements in the suburban streets of inner Cheltenham. There needs to be a technical assessment for the best paving solution, taking account of vehicles driving over paved areas and the effect of tree roots. Thereafter repairs need to be instituted. If this is the responsibility of the Count Council then perhaps, with a contribution from Cheltenham, they may be persuaded to act.
- The second is the lack of maintenance to the retaining walls and drainage along the very important cycle/pedestrian of the old Honeybourne line linking the railway station with the town. Wild sown trees and general lack of maintenance is or will soon cause immense damage to the retaining walls which will be prohibitively expensive to repair. An assessment of works needed is urgently required and action taken. Managed control of the vegetation alone could transform the route, with its impressive railway structures, into a very much more attractive route. This could perhaps even be partially achieved by Council led use of volunteers.

As a member of the Montpellier Association representing 78 traders and residents of Montpellier, I would like to ask the Council to consider using some of their capital investment to invest in this important and unique area of Cheltenham. Some of the budget approved last July for the Town Centre and High Street should also be used to improve the paving and lighting of Montpellier including the walk from the Promenade to Montpellier past Imperial Gardens. Montpellier is seen as the most beautiful shopping area in Cheltenham, the Caratids are often used to represent the beauty and individuality of our town and the walk from the Train Station to the Centre takes people straight through Montpellier.

I would like to also request that when the proposal was put forward to put electricity into Imperial Gardens for very good reasons, this should be extended to Montpellier Gardens for the same reasons. The festivals, fiestas and other leisure events which attract crowds to Cheltenham would all benefit from electricity in situ in Montpellier Gardens.

We understand the council is seeking opinion regarding spending of the above funds.

Whilst some of the suggestions have merit it is with great disappointment that no consideration is currently being given to funding for the Playhouse theatre.

The Cheltenham Playhouse gives not only great entertainment for the people of Gloucester but great education and support for so many vulnerable groups.

We hope consideration will be given to some additional funding for the Playhouse.

I would like to see the council give consideration to perhaps some of the less eye-catching things that need to be done as well as those that are high profile. The need for improvement/replacement of the crematorium incinerators is of course well known and absolutely essential, but there also needs to be additional parking facilities at the crematorium. I wrote to the cemetery and crematorium on 15th March 2011 and received a detailed reply from the Bereavement Services Manager Mr R Hainsworth. Whilst he intended to investigate ways of alleviating what is a serious problem it was clear there was not at the time funding to provide the many additional spaces required.

I feel there should be investment in environmentally friendly travel such as Cycling. The town currently has little in the way of cycle friendly routes. For example Swindon Village to Bishops Cleeve (Hyde Lane) should be considered for a raised cycle route providing safety from cars. Traffic in the town centre is still a problem, while I support the public area at Boots it still needs addressing. A large amount of the chaos is attributed to stopping busses. Over all the parking strategy / car strategy does need addressing in the town centre to make the town viable for businesses to operate. (Too few parking spaces now, permits only on many of the street parking) Only yesterday wanted to go to the Cinema and all car parks were full and street parking didn't allow enough time to see the full film.

I am writing as a resident of Cheltenham for the past 20+ years, and as the Leader of Trinity Cheltenham, which has a deep concern for and commitment to making a difference in this community.

I would like to propose that, from the £8m received by the Council from the sale of its interest in the North Place and Portland Street car parks, 25% or £2m be allocated to providing help to the poorest, and especially the homeless in Cheltenham, both those seen on our streets, and those who desperately try to find somewhere to sleep each night, perhaps on a friend's sofa. Some provision already exists, but emergency accommodation out of hours is not always readily accessible. It could be that an additional night shelter, funding for district nurses with mental health training, community care, provision for family centres, life-skills training, etc could be among possibilities for extra funding.

There are churches and charities in Cheltenham already involved in these arenas in a variety of ways, and perhaps the best way forward would be the provision of funds and representatives from these churches and charities working together in a collaborative partnership with support from funds for capital community projects. It could be that one or more representatives from Trinity may be available for such a partnership.

Appendix D Notes from the Residents' Forum held on Thursday 15 January

18 residents in attendance, plus

- Cllr. John Rawson
- Cllr. Chris Coleman
- Mark Sheldon
- Sarah Didcote
- Richard Gibson

General – capital projects

Is the £7.8m capital investment fund in the bank?

Yes we received the sum in February 2014.

When was the last time the council received such a sum?

Probably the sale of St James car park in late 90s.

Can the capital be used for anything else?

No it can only be used for capital projects.

Did £7.8m received represent good value for money?

Yes we are convinced we got good value for money, there was a competitive bidding process using external surveyors for advice.

When will the capital projects be decided on?

Not as part of budget, but we will look to bring forward plans over the next few months.

Town Hall / Imperial Gardens / Montpellier Gardens

Is there more detail about the proposed extension to the Town Hall?

This will be towards the footprint of the garden bar, Skillicorne gardens.

Waste and Recycling

Do we get good value from recycling eg metal from the doorstep or get value from other materials we recycle?

Yes we do get value from materials, but we are somewhat limited by size and capacity of vehicles, but look to expand the service wherever possible, in terms of doorstep recycling, bring sites and Swindon Road.

How is the exercise to recycle low value plastics going?

Okay, making small amounts of money on this

Municipal Offices and surroundings

Is municipal offices listed?

Yes, and English Heritage will take a great interest in the future of the building

Are we in discussions with private sector about future uses of offices?

We could explore a joint venture with a developer for a mixed use development that could generate an income stream that will support future plans for the council

What is the £2.5m capital investment for in terms of Municipal Offices?

This will be used for pump priming alternative office accommodation. This will ideally be town centre based, cabinet have relooked at the criteria for alternative office accommodation. The funding will probably be used for conversion rather than new build due to time lag.

Will allowing private business into the Municipal offices detract from this side of the Promenade which is a quiet area in contrast to the opposite side which is more bustling. This ambience might not be the case if the offices are converted to shops, hotels etc?

Feeling that the building itself helps create this special space, and the planning system will protect the heritage of this part of the town.

What will happen to the bus station which is shoddy and detracts from the ambience and useability of the town? Would like to see a proper bus station which would be supervised.

Could look at improving the bus station on its current location, would seem to be a high priority for local residents. This is being consulted on as part of the budget consultation.

Can the bus station be relocated?

Potentially but if we move away from the town centre operators may not use it.

Town Centre Public Realm

How will the council improve public realm of whole town centre at it is second rate, can the extent of public square be extended? Quality of town is compromised.

High street is very important and CBC / GCC have invested in Prom and parts of high street. There are possibilities coming about in the Strand area that we hope will significantly improve this area. Hoping to stretch the money out from lower high street to Strand

Should we go out for competition for the design of the public square?

May well go out to competition?

Is there money to pressure washing pavements?

This is not recommended as it damages the mortar in the joints

Service Delivery

Have we looked at privatising services?

Yes, for instance with ICT, but soft market testing indicated that it was not a cost effective option. Cotswold DC also brought formerly privatised services back in house so not convinced right approach for CBC.

What safeguards do we put into contracts if we privatise any services?

We have not privatised services

Other questions

Who sets business rates?

Government, any discretionary discounts have to be paid for locally

Has the Iceland funds been recovered?

Yes, we expect to receive in excess of 90% back.

How much does the council expect to benefit from additional housing?

Planning decisions are not taken on financial grounds, plus no guarantee that houses will get built.

How much council tax is not collected?

Typically collection rates are 98-99%, but we continue to chase debts for as long as there is a chance of recovering them.

Who is to blame for AGM overspend?

This will be subject of report to Audit Committee

Other comments

Feeling that electricity supply to the gardens needs to be a higher priority. But FISHAC not keen on this. John committed to carrying out further consultation

Would not want to see funding frittered away, can the funding be used to lever in other funds? Would want to see one significant project. Other ideas could include the Honeybourne line, or the Playhouse