

BUDGET CONSULTATION REPORT

1. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Cabinet undertook a range of consultations with various stakeholder groups, including council staff and the Trade Unions and residents and local businesses. The consultation process began with publication of the Cabinet's draft budget on 2 July 2012 and has included face to face discussions with staff. Specific feedback has been sought for particular proposals which have greater public or staff interest and these have been made available for consideration by the Cabinet prior to decision making.

2. STAFF AND TRADE UNIONS

In order for the council to meet its obligations as a good employer information relating to the budget proposals with implications for employees was discussed with staff and unions.

Consultation meetings with staff and Trade Unions commenced on 2 July 2012 and meetings have taken place at a council-wide level with Trade Unions, and at a directorate and service-level with affected staff and Trade Unions. There have also been other meetings with the Trade Unions, including meetings on 20 July 2012 and 28 August 2012 to discuss related issues about the Southampton Transition Employment Programme. In addition to directorate based face-to-face meetings as appropriate, each savings proposal that has a direct impact on staff has been detailed in a consultation document and made available to employees via the intranet, (and in hard copy where required).

One budget consultation meeting was also held between the Trade Unions and the Cabinet Member for Resources to discuss the Executive's draft budget proposals on 14 August 2012.

The following specific staff consultations have taken place:

(a) **Parks (HLS 1)**

The proposal to reduce costs within the sports pitch maintenance service by £21,000 does not involve the redundancy of any existing member of the team, but does involve some changes to the working arrangements and scope of responsibility of a few specific team members. Consultation has already taken place with these team members over how these proposed new arrangements could work out in practice. Affected staff have made helpful suggestions about the way in which change could be most efficiently and harmoniously implemented, and in respect of requirements in terms of vehicles, equipment and additional support during busy periods. This dialogue to improve the efficiency of the service and reduce costs is an ongoing process.

(b) **Oaklands Pool (HLS 5)**

There have been three formal staff consultations meetings held and the Senior Manager, Leisure and Culture has given all staff the opportunity for a one to one discussion with a manager. Every staff member affected has been given a

secondment or work placement opportunity in other areas of the council, with partners Active Nations or at Red Lodge Pool as the pool is currently temporarily closed. This has provided them with the opportunity to be in work and to increase their skills base. Management have worked closely with unions throughout the process

(c) City View (LEAD 3)

The Senior Manager, Communications, has met with the Design team to discuss the proposed City View saving on the following dates:

- 2 July informal meeting
- 6 July informal meeting with Finance colleagues
- 12 July formal meeting with HR and UNISON
- 26 July formal meeting with HR and UNISON
- 23 August informal meeting to explore City View self-funding options

The main thrust of these discussions has been to explore options that will enable City View to become self financing through securing external income and thus preventing a redundancy in the Design team. These discussions are continuing and discussions are underway with others to learn from their experiences.

3. RESIDENTS

The Cabinet's draft budget was publicised from its publication on 2 July 2012, via a range of council channels and also the news media. The proposals have been available since that time on the council's website. The website has a feedback mechanism that allows residents to share their views.

Oaklands Pool Proposal

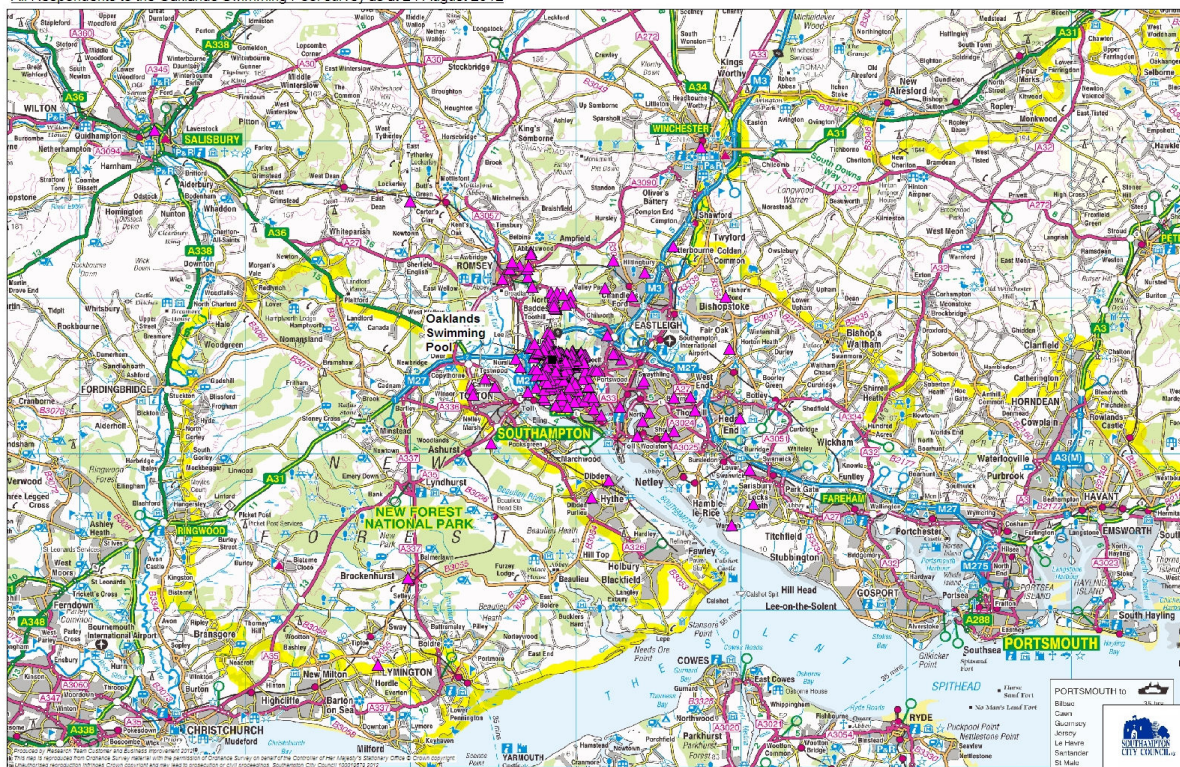
The number of individual visits to the swimming pool in 2011/12 was 80,246. The public consultation was initiated following the decision on 11 July 2012, and used different approaches to engage with varying user groups, given the usage:

- In addition to consultation with staff, a specific consultation exercise with residents was also carried out. This budget proposal was identified as requiring specific consultation, over and above the general consultation because it is a front line service. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed at the start of the process and will be updated in light of the feedback.
- Oaklands Pool is used by a variety of user groups, including schools and individual residents. In 2011/12, the number of individual visits to the swimming pool was 80,246.
- The consultation consisted of a questionnaire that was used in face-to-face drop-in consultation sessions, sent to regular users and placed on the council website. These methods were chosen to reflect the varied nature of hirers of the pool.
- The questionnaire requested information which included the potential impact of the proposed pool closure, what alternative arrangements users had made while the pool had been closed temporarily and whether these could continue in the future.

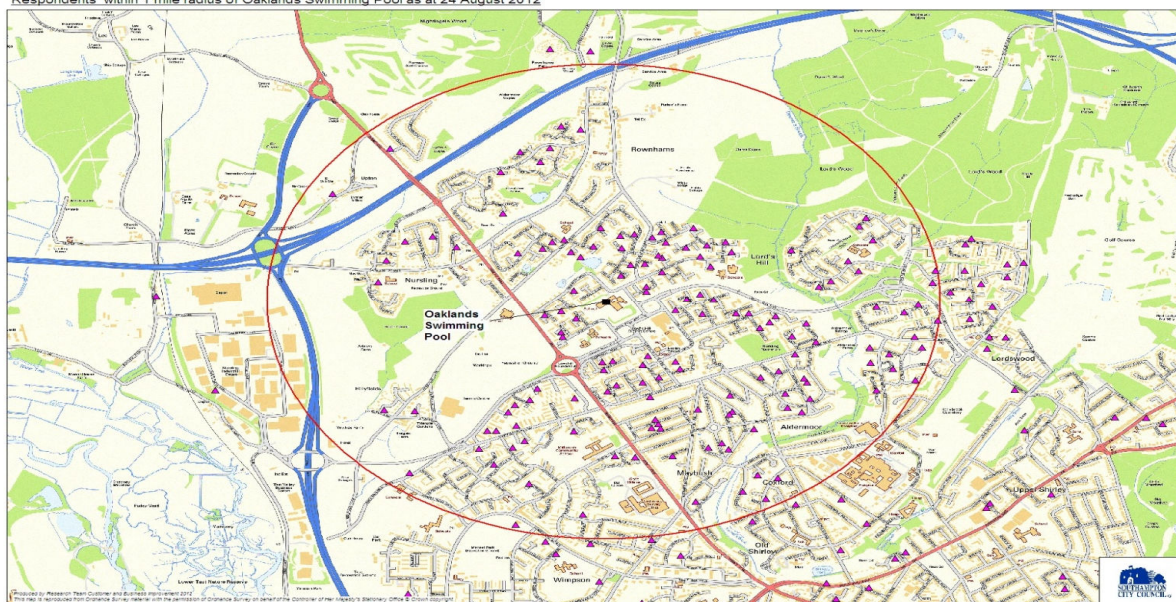
- The consultation sessions were held in venues with relatively high footfall that presented a good opportunity to make contact with a wide range of local residents. The sessions were held at:
 - Sainsbury's Lordshill (Wednesday 18 July 5pm – 7pm; Friday 20 July 10am – 12noon)
 - Lordshill Library (Thursday 26 July 2pm – 4pm).
- Following feedback from Ward Councillors two additional sessions were organised at Sainsbury's on Tuesday 31 July 5pm – 7pm and Wednesday 1 August 2pm – 4pm).
- Letters were sent out to all schools that were regular users of the pool on 12 July, to ensure that information was received before the impending school holidays.
- Letters were also sent to other groups who had hired the pool through block bookings and individual customers, (where their contact details were on file)
- The Council website had an online version of the questionnaire, to enable users/residents from outside the immediate area to submit their views, particularly if they were unable to attend one of the drop-in sessions.

The consultation process ended on 31 August 2012. In total 412 responses were received. The maps below show the distribution of home locations of respondents.

All Respondents to the Oaklands Swimming Pool survey as at 24 August 2012



Respondents within 1 mile radius of Oaklands Swimming Pool as at 24 August 2012



The range shows that 131 respondents lived within half a mile of the pool, 234 respondents within 1 mile, and 169 outside 1 mile. Most responses focused on requesting the council to complete the repairs and re-open the pool. Some responses recognised additional capital was required to complete the repairs and suggested the receipt from sale of the school site might be used. Others suggested contracting it out to a commercial operator.

Ward Councillors organised a public meeting on 3 August 2012 at Lordshill Church, focal media reported approximately 100 attendees. There was strong opposition to the closure voiced and some initial interest in developing a community group to take on the management of the pool and further enquiries by individuals have been responded to by officers. No concrete proposals for alternative management arrangements have been received or developed to date.