



## **PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **DELIVERING BETTER OUTCOMES CONSULTATION – OVERVIEW**

#### **REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report provides the Panel with a summary overview of the Delivering Better Outcomes (2014) consultation and sets out the arrangements for reporting the consultation results to Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels (PDSPs) in the week commencing 15 December 2014.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Panel notes:

1. the council faces a budget gap of £30.4million.
2. the overview of the Delivering Better Outcomes (2014) consultation process;
3. that the consultation responses will be used by the council to help balance its budget for the period to 2018.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being honest, open and accountable</li><li>• Focusing on our customers' needs</li><li>• Making best use of our resources</li><li>• Working in partnership</li></ul>
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	<p>The council is required to set a balanced revenue budget on an annual basis.</p> <p>Best Value duties establish the council's requirement to understand the needs of its different communities and involve them in setting priorities and shaping service.</p>
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None at this stage.
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None.
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	The consultation will help the council support the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement for the next three years.

**VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)**

The council faces expenditure pressures such as pay, inflation and demographics over the period 2015/16 to 2017/18, whilst also continuing to face Scottish Government funding constraints.

The consultation will assist in the prioritisation and allocation of resources to activities that have the greatest impact, whilst ensuring balanced budgets for the period to 2018.

**VII Consideration at PDSP**

The feedback received from the consultation will be reported to all relevant PDSPs in the week commencing 15 December 2014, as detailed within the report.

**VIII Consultations**

Details of a programme of consultation with all key stakeholders were set out in the report to Council Executive on 19 June 2014.

A Project Team was established to progress and manage the consultation process.

**D. TERMS OF REPORT**

**D.1 Background**

The economic environment remains very challenging and the council still faces considerable budget pressures. The demand for our services continues to rise and the level of funding the council receives from the Scottish Government is not sufficient to pay for these services.

In June 2014 the Council Executive considered a report which advised that the council faces a budget gap of £30.4million. Council Executive approved a further budget engagement exercise, delegated to the Chief Executive, as part of the council's medium term financial strategy to assist in the prioritisation and allocation of resources to activities that have the greatest impact on the council's outcomes, whilst ensuring balanced budgets for the period to 2017/18.

**D.2 Consultation Process**

**D.2.1 Approach**

To facilitate full and effective consultation on Delivering Better Outcomes (2014), a proposed set of priorities and options on how the council could deliver services in a better way and balance its budget was brought together in one consultation document which was published on Thursday 9 October 2014. The consultation ran for six weeks and closed on 21 November 2014.

The consultation document sought feedback from respondents on measures that will allow the council balance its budget and continue to deliver its priorities for the period to 2018.

### D.2.2 Communications Plan

The communications campaign for Delivering Better Outcomes (2014) was wide ranging. The campaign began with the consultation launch on Thursday 9 October 2014. The Delivering Better Outcomes consultation was branded 'Your Say' for easy recognition and consistency with the consultation that took place in 2012 on the council priorities. This distinctive branding helped to identify all of the consultation information and publicity.

A wide range of stakeholders were targeted with agreed messages through various methods to raise awareness and prompt participation. Key messages included information about the council's financial position and the savings that need to be made in the future.

As part of the consultation, employees, individuals and groups were invited to comment on proposals for savings to ensure that in the future, the council provides the best possible service for West Lothian citizens. Stakeholders were encouraged to contribute and complete the consultation which was publicised in various ways. Target stakeholders included a wide range of groups, including but not limited to, employees, members of the public, various community and representative groups and community planning partners.

To ensure broad accessibility, the consultation was publicised both online and in print. The consultation document was distributed by direct mailing to an extensive number of key stakeholders and community and representative groups. The consultation was also published in the October 2014 edition of the council's newspaper Bulletin, which was distributed to every household and local business in West Lothian. The Corporate Communications team also engaged with the local media to help publicise the consultation.

The consultation was signposted through social media on the council's Facebook and Twitter accounts. This provided the council with instantaneous access to a large number of people living and working in West Lothian. In addition, people were encouraged to participate in the consultation via mobile/smart phones by scanning a Quick Response (QR) code which was printed on all consultation material.

Posters and plasma screen messages displaying information on how to take part were displayed in the council's main public buildings, Customer Information Services (CIS) centres, libraries, community and partnership centres and schools to further promote the consultation.

Within the council, Trade Unions and Senior Managers were provided with a briefing on the consultation to ensure that employees were given every opportunity to participate in the consultation. Senior Managers then delivered a series of briefings to all staff using internal communication cascade arrangements to ensure that all employees were informed about the consultation and invited to participate.

This was further promoted through regular reminders at Team Meetings and a special edition of the council's staff newsletter, Inside News. Again, to ensure broad accessibility, the consultation was made available to employees both online and in print, particularly in areas of the council where there are employee groups without access to a computer.

### D.2.3 Hard to Reach Groups

A specific plan to target hard to reach groups was deployed as part of the consultation process. The aim of this work was to target individuals who do not easily engage with mainstream services and who might not readily respond to a survey about council priorities. These individuals can include, young people, older people, people with disabilities, lone parents, people who live in more deprived communities, unwaged people and people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

It was recognised that it was possible to engage with these individuals through alternative, more direct approaches. Appendix 1 outlines the plan in more detail and includes the rationale for targeting each specific groups and the approach used for engaging with them.

## D.3 **Consultation Results**

### D.3.1 Response

The number of responses received by the close of the consultation period was 3,467 which generated over 40,000 comments from all respondents. A breakdown on the number of responses received from employees, individuals and organisations/groups is set out below:

Type of Respondent	Total Number	Percentage of Respondents
Individual	1,900	54.80%
Employee	1,422	41.02%
Organisation/Group	145	4.18%
Total	3,467	100.00%

The consultation questionnaire comprised 39 proposals which sought the views respondents. A summary of the number of comments per respondent category, grouped under the associated PDSP, is set out below:

PDSP Grouping	Employee	Individual	Organisation/ Group	Total
Culture & Leisure	401	445	46	892
Development & Transport	1,383	1,599	131	3,113
Education	2,893	4,177	367	7,437
Environment	2,096	2,315	165	4,576
Health & Care	370	464	47	881
Partnership & Resources	8,115	7,353	630	16,098
Services for the Community	300	354	27	681
Social Policy	2,398	2,947	286	5,631
Voluntary Organisations	358	417	61	836
Total	18,314	20,071	1,760	40,145
%Analysis	46%	50%	4%	100%

### D.3.2 PDSPs

To consider the feedback from the consultation, a series of PDSP meetings are taking place between 15 and 18 December 2014. Each PDSP will consider a report which will include the following:

- statistical information relating to the responses received on each measure associated with the remit of that PDSP;
- a high level summary of the comments and feedback received relevant to the remit of that PDSP.

The summary feedback from respondents relating to the themes and issues arising from the consultation will be available to view online on the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/yoursay](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/yoursay). This summary feedback has been categorised and summarised to make the process more user friendly, therefore allowing Panel members to consider the key issues and trends.

Officers have also carried out a thorough analysis of the feedback to respond to each of the issues being raised and this is included on the council's website. A high level summary of the comments and feedback received relevant to the remit of individual PDSPs will be reported to each PDSP as noted above.

Lastly, where relevant the feedback received has been segmented by responses received from employees, individuals and organisations/groups for ease of reference.

### D.4 Next Steps

Following consideration at the relevant PDSPs between 15 and 18 December 2014, the consultation responses will be used by the council to help balance its budget and continue to deliver its priorities for the period to 2018.

## E. CONCLUSION

The report provides the Panel with a summary overview of the Delivering Better Outcomes consultation and sets out the arrangements for reporting the consultation results to PDSPs week commencing 15 December 2014.

## F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Report to Council Executive – 19 June 2014

### Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Engagement with Hard to Reach Groups

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**Graham Hope**  
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**15 December 2014**