



Citizens' Panel Survey – December 2006
Priorities and Budget for 2007 - 2010
Un-weighted January based on 839 respondents

We are currently developing our plans and budgets for the next 3 years 2007 – 2010.

We need your views on what we should be spending our money on.

We are taking a longer-term view, but will still be setting annual targets and milestones so you can see how far we've gone and continue to judge how well we are performing.

We would like YOUR contribution to support the development of our 3-year Corporate Plan and Budget.

The Government expects local authorities to make efficiency savings every year and we've a good record of doing so, but having identified savings over a number of years we are now facing some tough decisions on the budget. We need your help to ensure we make the right choices.

We want to continue to lead and support the regeneration of Hastings & St. Leonards, to deliver the good quality, cost-effective core services that you expect us to provide. We need to achieve this without placing ourselves in a vulnerable position financially and without placing additional financial burden on tax-payers.

However, the only way we can do this is through making savings. This means that in future we may not be able to deliver the wide a range of services we currently provide, but will target resources at delivering excellent core services that residents expect and need.

Your views are essential to ensure we're delivering what you want from your local council. In helping us make budget choices for 2007 - 2010 please bear in mind the following:

- That for every £1 of Council Tax paid – only 15p goes to the Borough Council
- Every additional 1% of Council Tax levied by the Borough Council yields around £60,000
- Government will continue to expect local government to make 2.5% efficiency gains per annum
- The Council has been using its reserves (savings) in recent years to support its revenue budget. These reserves are reducing and can therefore only be used to a lesser extent in this way
- Uncertainty exists around continuation of several external funding streams
- That we face a number of significant financial pressures and face future funding shortfalls

Q1 We have identified the following principles that will underpin our budget for 2007/08 and help us set our plans for the next 3 years. Please let us know the extent to which you agree or disagree that these principles should guide our future activities, by using a scale of 1 to 5, where :
1 = strongly agree : 2 = agree : 3 = neither agree nor disagree : 4 = disagree : 5 = strongly disagree
(Please write a number in each box)

	% Agreement (Strongly Agree + Agree)
Our principles are to :	
1. Continue our primary focus on the regeneration of Hastings and St Leonards	88.5%
2. Prioritise activities that contribute to improving the town's 5 E's. These are – Economy, Education, Employment, Environment (including housing), Enjoyment	89.4%
3. Provide good quality, customer focussed cost effective services	90.9%
4. Focus on affordability and recognise that our financial position means we have to..... make every penny count	91.0%
5. Ensure our expenditure is in line with income and we focus on our 'core' activities and work with others to bring in external funds for anything extra	88.6%
6. Recognise that we may not be able to deliver as wide a range of services in future	52.5%
7. Increase joint-working with local authority partners and others to share resources, improve the quality, resilience and cost efficiency of our services	84.2%
8. Deliver services in the most efficient, effective and equitable way either in-house or..... or by others in the private or voluntary sector	82.0%
9. Make savings by not funding activities which can be funded from elsewhere	81.3%
10. Keep Hastings Borough Council's Council Tax increase as low as possible whilst providing the services the town needs	91.6%
11. Recognise that the Council cannot be a funder of last resort when funding from other..... sources is reduced or ends	74.7%

Services in your local area are provided by a number of bodies. In Hastings, some of these services such as Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Transport and Libraries are provided by East Sussex County Council. The services outlined in this consultation document (listed at Q2) are provided by Hastings Borough Council, in partnership with other agencies where stated.

In addition to the services listed at Q2, we also carry out the following functions to help manage the smooth-running of our organisation:

- Provide means to communicate with us electronically and pay bills online
- Personnel and organisational development
- Policy development & Performance Management
- Legal Services
- Financial Services
- Internal Audit

In order to target our resources at delivering good quality core services we need to make choices about which activities we should continue to support and which areas we should invest more or less in.

Q2 From the list of activities that we currently undertake, please indicate -

- (a) Which of these activities you think are **core** activities that residents need and expect the Council to spend money on? (Please tick as many as apply under Column a) below).
- (b) Which of these activities, if any, do you think we should no longer provide? (Please tick as many as apply under Column b) below).
- (c) Which of the activities, if any, do you think most need improving? (Please tick as many as apply under Column c) below).

Currently we ...	(a) <u>Core</u> <u>Activity</u>	(b) <u>Should not</u> <u>provide</u>	(c) <u>Most need</u> <u>improving</u>
1. Are key partners in creating new and better employment, training and other opportunities for local people	69.4%	14.3%	24.9%
2. Support the growth of and investment in local business through the local enterprise growth initiative and other economic programmes	64.4%	18.1%	21.5%
3. Use the planning process to deliver housing, employment and environmental benefits	69.1%	6.5%	27.0%
4. Guide physical developments and protect the built environment through the Local Development framework	58.2%	17.8%	19.3%
5. Use planning to enforce seafront and town centre improvements and building regulations to ensure new developments are safe.....	74.2%	6.1%	27.6%
6. Provide guidelines on conservation and design to ensure that new developments respect our heritage and promote innovative design	65.5%	14.7%	25.5%
7. Teach vocational skills to young people who've left school with few or no qualifications.....	44.2%	35.2%	32.6%
8. Offer advice to reduce and prevent homelessness	49.2%	29.0%	29.7%
9. Work with housing providers to match housing supply to local needs	62.6%	14.9%	28.9%
10. Offer financial assistance to householders/ tenants whose homes are in need of minor repairs or adaptations e.g. the disabled facilities grant enables people to make adaptations which allows them to remain in their own homes	60.5%	22.6%	25.5%
11. Address disadvantage in deprived areas through Neighbourhood Renewal	52.8%	19.6%	30.5%
12. Work in partnership with others such as the Police, Health and Education to address issues affecting the town	78.6%	3.0%	28.9%
13. Support community groups such as young people, older people, disabled people, black and minority ethnic groups	53.5%	29.1%	23.0%
14. Provide financial assistance to the voluntary and community sector to support community based activities which benefit the residents of the town..	55.7%	30.2%	21.4%
15. Deal with licensing applications such as licenses to allow the sale or supply of alcohol, entertainments and hackney carriage/private hire vehicles	59.9%	29.0%	15.5%
16. Work with the police and other partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce crime.....	73.2%	4.4%	43.1%
17. Prepare contingency plans to deal with crisis or disasters such as flooding, fire, terrorism.....	74.7%	11.1%	21.6%

Q2 (Continued) <i>(Please tick as many as apply under each column)</i>	(a) <u>Core Activity</u>	(b) <u>Should not provide</u>	(c) <u>Most need improving</u>
Currently we ...			
18. Protect public health by ensuring that food outlets comply with food safety and health & safety laws, monitor air quality and deal with noise pollution ...	78.3%	5.9%	20.8%
19. Manage the Highways (on behalf of the County Council) by maintaining our roads, pavements and road signs	66.8%	9.1%	38.9%
20. Collect rubbish and provide opportunities for recycling	79.4%	1.1%	32.4%
21. Keep the streets clean.....	76.9%	1.8%	33.6%
22. Provide a warden service	58.8%	20.2%	22.6%
23. Maintain public conveniences.....	75.0%	5.2%	27.6%
24. Manage Hastings Museum & Art Gallery and the Old Town Museum.....	63.2%	29.4%	9.3%
25. Ensure our parks and open spaces are kept clean, attractive and safe for the public to enjoy.....	83.8%	3.0%	18.8%
26. Offer an arboriculture service, providing advice on trees and protecting our woodland	49.7%	40.8%	14.7%
27. Manage the contract for our leisure centres: Summerfields, Falaise and Hillcrest	53.8%	36.9%	13.1%
28. Provide opportunities for people of all ages to take part in sport through our Active Hastings Programme.....	53.4%	33.2%	18.8%
29. Hold play events and maintain play facilities for children and young people ..	56.4%	26.1%	20.7%
30. Support the Arts by supporting projects such as Coastal Currents and maintaining St. Mary in the Castle as an Arts venue	48.9%	40.4%	16.9%
31. Provide entertainment through the White Rock Theatre.....	44.9%	47.5%	15.7%
32. Manage Hastings cemetery and crematorium	81.0%	7.7%	10.7%
33. Collect Council Tax	79.8%	9.0%	11.4%
34. Distribute Housing and Council Tax Benefits and tackle fraud	73.6%	4.9%	26.9%
35. Provide a range of services through the Hastings Information Centre	77.6%	8.3%	11.9%
36. Oversee elections and voting	72.9%	19.1%	7.7%
37. Manage the Council's portfolio of land and property used for employment....	73.0%	10.2%	14.6%
38. Market Hastings as a tourist destination.....	73.4%	8.2%	28.0%

ABOUT YOURSELF

We need this information to ensure our sample is truly representative of the people in the area.

Are you : Male..... 51% Female.....49% **How old are you ?** *(Please write your age on your last birthday in years)*

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Collecting this information is important to us and we appreciate you giving us your comments. Please now place this completed questionnaire in the prepaid envelope provided, and return it to NWA as soon as possible.