

# Your money

## Your views



### Message from Councillor Andrew Eade, Leader of the Council

It is no surprise that the Council is facing some challenging times financially. Public sector spending cuts have been dominating the news, but we want to assure our residents that we have been working extremely hard to put ourselves in as strong a position as possible to meet the challenges ahead.

We have been planning our priorities and considering how tax payers' money can best be spent. This summary explains our plans, and importantly gives you the opportunity to have your say.

Our aim is to deliver essential services whilst keeping Council Tax as low as possible to minimise the burden on household budgets – we are proposing a 0% increase for next year's Council Tax.

## What have we been doing?

For over a year now, we have been reviewing services across the Council and restructuring our workforce, particularly at more senior levels, to identify new ways of delivering services at a lower cost while protecting frontline services as much as possible:

- **We have completed a review of our senior management, halving the number from 28 to 14 and saving the Council around £1.75 million a year**
- **We are also proposing a 25% reduction in our Councillors**

# Our spending plans

Although we can't spend money on all the things we would like to, we are still committed to investing in the Borough's future. As our funding reduces, we have to decide what is most important. Our spending plans are based on the community's needs and priorities, and a continuing commitment that the Council will allocate its resources fairly across the Borough.

Over the next few years, we plan to prioritise and invest in:

## Active Lifestyles

- Improving Telford Town Park. **(£3.5 million)**

## Adult Care and Support

- Helping vulnerable people stay in their own homes. **(£1 million - for 2011/12)**
- Re-investing savings back into Adult Care and Support Services. **(£1.6 million - for 2011/12)**

## Children and Young People

- Extra funding for Children's Social Care Services – to help children in care. **(£1.4 million - for 2011/12)**
- Creating new Sports and Learning Communities by modernising and improving schools with sports and leisure facilities. **(£158 million)**

## Environment and Rural Area

- Maintaining roads and pavements. **(£19.8 million)**
- Building a waste bulking station to enable us to divert more waste from landfill, minimising landfill tax and giving the Council more options to manage recyclable materials. **(£1.1 million)**

## Housing, Regeneration and Prosperity

- Transforming Telford Town Centre. **(£51 million – phase 1)**
- Improving our Borough Town Centres including Dawley, Wellington, Newport, Hadley and Oakengates. **(£16.6 million)**
- Providing specialist, extra care housing and housing for disabled adults and older people. **(£2.2 million)**
- Supporting more new homes being built, particularly affordable housing in rural areas. **(£2.9 million)**
- Improving Woodside and Sutton Hill. **(£4.9 million)**



Thinking about our spending plans overall, how strongly do you support or oppose our spending proposals?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Don't Know



Is there anything missing from these priorities?



Is there anything we are planning to do that you don't agree with?

# Our savings plans

Last year, we made savings of around £4.7 million and this year we plan to make a further £15 million savings to meet the gap made by Government. Although we have a proven track record for making savings (we have saved £17.8 million in the last 4 years), it is becoming increasingly difficult. Our approach has always been based on 'keeping cuts to frontline services as a last resort'.

For 2011/12 we have considered savings options suggested through consultation and have wherever possible focused on things that have minimal impact on services delivered to the public. One of the ways we can do this is to **continue reducing the number of managers in the organisation**. To date there has been a 50% reduction, resulting in a saving of £1.75m per annum. We will also be looking at other options, such as:

**Getting the most of your money** – by getting the best price for the things that we buy, and changing the way we do things to reduce costs.

**Spending less** – on equipment, telephones, stationery and printing. Also cutting down the number of buildings we use to reduce costs and only doing what is absolutely necessary in terms of training, meetings, events and travel.

**Bringing in more money** – by delivering services in partnership with other local organisations, seeking external funding (like grants) and reviewing our fees and charges.

Given the scale of the challenge facing us we now have no choice but to make savings to some services. We will need to continue with this throughout the year and further consultation may need to take place. Rather than stopping doing things, we have looked at whether we can review charges or 'scale back' the service provided, whilst carefully weighing up the impact on local people and taking account of the results of consultation.

### Active Lifestyles

- **Leisure & Culture (Saving = £62,000)**

We are considering 2 options:

- Review and revise the cost of admissions and charges for a range of leisure and culture services, and/or;
- Reinstate a charge for Flex cards – this would mean paying a small fee, but if used regularly the savings would outweigh this amount.

### Adult Care and Support

- **Social Care** - Increase charges from £6 to £8 per hour (for up to 2 hours a week) for services to help people with tasks like shopping and cleaning – these increases will not apply to people's personal care or to those who need intensive support. **(Saving = £50,000)**

### Children and Young People

- **School milk** - review non-mandatory milk provision in schools asking parents to opt-in to the scheme rather than provide milk which ends up being wasted. **(Saving = £96,900)**

### Community Protection and Cohesion

- **Licensing** - Increase licensing fees to cover the full administration costs for issuing licenses. Licensing fees are currently subsidised by the tax payer. **(Saving = £27,400)**
- **Cemeteries** - Increase cemetery burial charges, to move towards the prices charged in our neighbouring authorities. **(Saving = £14,000)**

### Environment and the Rural area

- **Street lighting** - Extend the switch off of street-lights between midnight and 5am to other (mainly non-residential) roads. **(Saving = £61,000)**
- **Roads** - Reduce spend on repairs to roads, pavements, street lights and drainage by up to 20%. **(Saving = £125,500)**
- **Transport** - Revise the Wrekin Connect services for rural areas in the west of the Borough with Wellington. This will enable a more regular service and people will have access to the broader bus and rail network. Withdraw the Twister service (for people in certain rural areas to phone and book transport on demand) as it costs around £400 per regular user of the service to provide each year. **(Saving = £16,000)**
- **Concessionary Travel** - Comply with the national concessionary travel scheme by reverting to the mandatory service only (so removing the service currently available between 9.00am and 9.30am). Also the removal of the £18 subsidy for people who choose a Senior Citizen's Railcard rather than a concessionary bus pass. **(Saving £98,200)**
- **Shrub beds and grass cutting** - Reduce shrub bed maintenance across the borough by taking out tired/bare/unwanted shrub beds (or parts of them) and reducing chemical applications from three to two a year. Reduce the frequency of grass cutting across the borough from 16 cuts to 12 cuts a year. **(Saving = £252,500)**
- **Road sweeping** - Reduce the frequency of road sweeping on all roads across the borough, from 5 times a year to 3, but not Borough town or district centres – this will remain daily/weekly. **(Saving = £89,000)**
- **Pest control** - Removal of the pest control service for residents. **(Saving = £50,000)**
- **Traffic management** – Reduce spend on yellow lines, bollards and signs (by 50%), reduce spend on rights of way maintenance and reduce road safety and public transport promotional materials. **(Saving = £29,500)**
- **Bulk collections** - Introduce a standard charge for all special bulk collections. **(Saving = £25,000)**
- **Car parking** - Increase existing council parking charges by between 10% and 20% (for Ironbridge a maximum increase of 20p a day and for the car park at the back of The Range, Telford Town Centre, a maximum increase of 40p a day). Parking at local market towns will remain free. **(Saving = £12,000)**
- **Bins** - Introduce a charge for new/replacement recycling bins. The charge would be between £3 and £5. **(Saving = £35,000)**



Thinking about our savings plans overall, how strongly do you support or oppose these proposals?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Don't Know



Which of these savings proposals do you support?



Are there any proposals that you do not support?



How strongly do you support or oppose the freeze on Council Tax for 2011/12?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose
- Strongly Oppose
- Don't Know



If you do not support this proposal, it would be helpful if you could tell us your reasons below:

## What happens next?

Residents are being invited to have their say on the Council's budget proposals throughout January 2011. This includes a survey to our Community Panel members, meetings with various community groups, and an online 'Spend & Save' challenge ([www.telford.gov.uk/spendandsave](http://www.telford.gov.uk/spendandsave)). The feedback from these will be considered before we publish our final plans, which will be considered by our Councillors in March 2011.

**Have your say** - we want as many local people as possible to have their say on our savings plans – **the more people that take part, the more helpful the information will be.** You can tell us what you think by:

- **Post** – send your comments to 'Your Money, Your Views', Telford & Wrekin Council, FREEPOST SY1154, Telford, TF3 4ZZ (no stamp required)
- **Email** – [get.involved@telford.gov.uk](mailto:get.involved@telford.gov.uk)
- **Twitter** at <http://twitter.com/TelfordWrekin>
- We are also on **Facebook** (please search for Telford & Wrekin Council)

Full details of our savings package are available to view on the Council's website (under Cabinet reports) at : [www.telford.gov.uk/budgetproposals](http://www.telford.gov.uk/budgetproposals)

## What does this mean for Council Tax payers?

At the moment, Council Tax for the services that this Council provides remains the lowest in the Midlands region and below the national average. But although it may be lower here than in other parts of the country, we know it is still a big expense for people.

We want to do as much as we can to minimise the burden on household budgets so taking account of our saving plans we are proposing to freeze Council Tax for 2011/12. To enable this, the Government is offering the Council a specific grant of some £1.4 million.