Promote economic development as the engine for growth and jobs

This priority will see the Council focus on developing the local economy by supporting local businesses, attracting investment from around the World and helping people into work. Our aim is to attract new, high quality jobs and turn Cardiff into a leading business city raising the quality of life for residents in the city and wider region.

The Stark Realities

The Welsh Government announced its draft budget for 2014/2015 on 8th October 2013. The bad news was that local government will see a significant reduction in the money it receives over the next few years. This is because of the UK Government’s cuts which have resulted in a £1.7 billion cut in Welsh Government funding since 2010.

The level of the budget shortfall, an estimated £100 million over 3 years for Cardiff, means that a number of tough choices will need to be made about what we do and how we provide services in the future.

Our Priorities for Cardiff

Whatever options we are faced with our commitment will be to:

- Promote economic development as the engine for growth and jobs;
- Develop education and skills for people of all ages to enable them to fulfil their potential and be well prepared for employment in the Cardiff economy and beyond; and
- Support vulnerable adults, children and young people

The Council’s Administration were elected into office to deliver against these clear priorities. They will shape our thinking and all our decisions will be made with these considerations in mind.
Choices for Cardiff
Cardiff Council Budget Consultation

› Where are we now?

Next year the Council will need to bridge a budget shortfall of £50m which is due to the combination of a funding reduction and increased demand pressures on services. A number of services we provide are a statutory requirement (that means we have a legal duty to deliver them) so we have to do these. Several other services, such as the money given to schools, are protected by the Welsh Government and will not be taken into consideration when addressing the funding gap.

Over the past four years the level of savings identified as part of Cardiff Council’s budget setting process has amounted to over £70m. However the pressure on services and the level of saving which is now required, places the Council in an unprecedented position. We will need to bridge an estimated £100m funding gap over the next 3 years.

Cardiff is not alone. All local authorities across the UK are facing difficult choices and the financial reality is that decisions will have to be made. However it is important that everyone has a voice.

› Other pressures facing the city

There are also other big issues we need to address in Cardiff. Difficult times mean that more people need access to support. Welfare Reform has had a considerable impact on families and communities in Cardiff and it is important that the Council helps people through these difficult times. But less money means that providing the support and services people need will become more difficult.

We also know that we have a growing population. Between 2011 and 2026 Cardiff’s population is expected to increase dramatically, with the biggest percentage increase in population of almost anywhere in the UK.

This will mean a big increase in the number of older people and number of school age children during this period. This means greater pressures on a number of important Council services such as schools, home care for the elderly and waste management.

› Develop education and skills for people of all ages to enable them to fulfil their potential and be well prepared for employment in the Cardiff economy and beyond.

The Council is committed to providing opportunities to help everyone fulfil their potential. In order to do this we need to focus on driving up education standards. If we are to attract major investment and jobs to the city then it is essential that people in Cardiff have good quality education and training opportunities delivering the right results.
Choices for Cardiff
Cardiff Council Budget Consultation

› Choices

Many of the services we value the most are provided by the Council.

Because of the budget situation however, we need to seriously prioritise what we do. The reality of this is that to maintain or improve some services, we will need to reduce the amount of spend in other areas. It is therefore important that we don’t just ask your opinion. We have a responsibility to explain the consequences of any decisions we undertake. This consultation process is about:

- Understanding what is most important for you
- Understanding the impact of prioritisation

Our Budget Strategy

There is no easy way to bridge a £50m budget shortfall in the Council’s budget. The Council’s Cabinet are looking at the best way to do this but we also want you to tell us what you think is most important for Cardiff.

The Cabinet is committed to understanding what your views are and will give serious consideration to all responses received. Initially we would like to know what your top priorities for Cardiff are, so please take the opportunity to complete our Budget Priorities Consultation. This information will help inform the development of budget proposals and we will consult further on our more detailed proposals in the coming months. Please see below an initial timeline of how the budget will be developed.

Thursday 7th November: Online consultation on budget priorities opens. Regular snapshots of the feedback received will be publicised on the Cardiff Council website.

January 2014: The Council will open consultation on its full budget proposals and this will include us seeking views on some of the following:
- Overall budget proposals
- The key principles around which we are shaping our priorities
- Any alternative proposals or suggestions

27th February 2014: The final budget proposals will be discussed at Full Council

Any further updates will be published on the Cardiff Council website.

› Supporting vulnerable adults, children and young people.

The way we treat our most vulnerable defines us as a society. The UK Government’s cuts, reform of the welfare system and the slow economic recovery has had a significant impact on households in the city. It is essential that the Council protects those most vulnerable through these difficult times and ensures that the key frontline services supporting these groups are maintained.