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Corporate Plan Output: Advice to Council	

The purpose of this report is to report the outcome of the public consultation of the above project.

INTRODUCTION

The Council, at its meeting on 24 June 1999, resolved that the bus interchange and car park be funded by a combination of operational and capital savings and the utilisation of the capital payment reserve/economic development fund (EDF), subject to a consultation process as recommended by the Director of Finance.

Savings would include annual operating savings of \$925,000 and capital savings of \$2.667m over four years, the balance \$8m to be met from the EDF (details attached).

The resolution also stated that the Council consider funding more of the capital cost from the EDF by utilising \$10m instead of \$8m from that source, and requested public comment on three specific questions relating to funding.

Half page advertisements were placed in the Press and Star on Wednesday 30 June (see copy attached), with questionnaires to be returned by 16 July.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

443 questionnaires have been returned and this is considered to be a good response to the survey.

A detailed analysis of the survey now follows.

Q1 - Do you want the Bus Interchange and car park to be funded without an increase in rates?

All but 14 have requested the project be funded without an increase in rates.

Q2 – Are there any other projects other than those listed in the budgets (centre column) that could be substituted to fund the project? Please specify which projects from the list should be kept and what you would substitute for them.

Did not reply to question 95
(Note: most also requested total use of the EDF (Q3))

Requested that no cuts be made to any listed items 52

Requests for retention of Specific Items

Free Parking Subsidy – retailers scheme	41
4 th Shuttle	35
Cycleways	24
Cycle Promotion	20
Undergrounding of cables/streetlighting	20
New Brighton Commercial Area Redevelopment	17
New parking Meter income increase	13
Central City Marketing Advertising	11
Bus Shelters in Cathedral Square	6
Deans/Ricc.Rd/Ricc. Ave	4
Blenheim Rd Overbridge	3
Unspecified	2
Aldwins/Ensors/Ferry	1
Victoria St	1
Oxford Tce	1

Request for Cuts to Specific Items

Cycle promotions	16
Central City Marketing	16
Free Parking Subsidy – retailers scheme	14
Local street threshold treatment	12
New Brighton Commercial Area Redevelopment	12
Bus Shelters in Cathedral Square	11
New Year Party/Festivals	11
Bishopdale Mall	10
Sell land/assets	9
Blenheim Road Overbridge	8
Charge for Shuttles	8
No new Shuttle	8
Oxford Tce	7
Reduce Art Gallery Spending	7
Bus fare increase/Bus Cos. pay	6
Colombo (Gloucester/Armagh)	6
Waterways/Wetlands	5
Jade Stadium	5
Reserves Acquisition/development	4
Heritage	4
QEII Upgrade	4
Staff salaries/nos.	4
Private car parts of budget	4
Social Funding by Council	4
Victoria St	4
Cycleways	4
Scrap shuttles	3
Car park element of Interchange	3
Support parking meter increase	3
Aldwins/Ensors/Ferry	2

Wizard plaque	2
Seek retail/business contribution	2
Employment/Economic development	2
Subsidies to sport	1
Reduce frequency of City Scene	1
Deans/Ricc. Rd Ricc. Ave	1
Reduce use of Consultants	1
Cut pay increases for Mayor and Crs	1
Cut operational budget only	1
Charge water rate	1
Eccentrics walkway	1
Tram	1
Irrigation scheme	1
All but core activities	1
Kilmore St	1
Cr O'Rourke should pay	1

Q3 – Currently the Council is considering taking \$8million from the proposed Economic Development Fund of \$41 million. Would you support taking more of the required \$10 million from the proposed Economic Development Fund ?

No	113
Yes	235

How much more?

\$2million/the lot	202	\$395,000	1
\$5million	10	\$370,000	1
\$1million	5	\$296,000	1
\$11million	1	\$20,000	1
\$12million	1	25%	
\$20million	1		
\$395,000	1		
\$370,000	1		
\$296,000	1		
\$20,000	1		

OTHER COMMENTS

A number of respondents have also taken the opportunity to comment on whether or not there should be a bus interchange, lack of consultation, their views on the EDF and a range of other matters.

Opposed to having a bus interchange	28
Concerns about lack of consultation re the project	12
Request that all of the EDF be returned to ratepayers	11
Use EDF for debt reduction	2
No EDF	1
Use EDF for Sewerage Scheme	1
Concerns about traffic issues/contraflow	2
Concerns about approval of resource consent	2

A small number of respondents sought the opportunity to present their views directly to the Council. This was never the intention of the survey and it is proposed to respond, in these cases only, with a detailed written reply. Copies of the “submissions” will be available at the Council meeting.

Finally a few quotes indicating the range of opinions given:

“This bus interchange should not proceed – totally object to rates being used for this project. Ratepayers should have been consulted before this was approved. All the Southpower funds should be used for debt repayment.”

“Bus transport is not used at all by over 85% of ratepayers. A user pay system should be implemented. Cancel ratepayers input into buses forthwith. We can’t afford it – get real!”

“I am pleased a central bus interchange is to be built. I am glad the opportunity was not missed out on.”

“It would be a real shame to lose all of the stuff proposed. I think the whole project should be funded from the ED fund – this is exactly what it is for after all. Or if this is impossible, fund it from an increase in rates.”

“...at least we would see something for the \$84m. I hope the Council gets its facts right and have priced this one correctly.”

“Will the tram lines be extended to the Bus Interchange – I think they should.”

“I did use a bus recently for the first time that I can remember. I was most impressed, cost me a dollar from Bryndwr to the City and it was a pleasant journey. How about a campaign to encourage people to use a bus for the first time. I now have a timetable and I will use the bus regularly.”

CONCLUSION

Some clear views have emerged from the survey, with (not surprisingly) overwhelming support for the project to be “rates neutral”. There was strong support for the use of the EDF for the Interchange, with 53% agreeing that more than the proposed \$8m should be sourced from the fund, and 48% saying that the whole \$10m (or more) should come from the EDF. Only 26% of respondents felt that no additional amount (beyond the suggested \$8m) should be taken from the EDF.

In respect of other particular projects, numbers were relatively low, with the free parking subsidy (retailers scheme) and the 4th shuttle evoking the most interest. 33% of all respondents either did not reply to question 2 or requested that no cuts be made to any of the listed items. While the list distinguished between operating and capital items, very few respondents recognised this distinction, with many assuming that the EDF could be used to meet all costs. If additional capital was to be taken from the EDF, then further operational savings would be needed to compensate for the interest which the Council has budgeted to receive from the EDF in the draft Annual Plan.

Note: This report has been discussed with the Chairmen of the Strategy and Resources and City Services Committees, who have undertaken to make recommendations to the Council, taking into account the results of the survey.

Chairmen's

Recommendation: To be tabled at the meeting.