

Appendix 1 - Customer Consultation

Formal consultation ran from 1/8/2012 to 25/9/2012 (8 weeks)

The consultation was conducted for a period of 8 weeks; this timescale was decided after consideration of the following:

- Impact of the proposals i.e. proportionate to the level of change
- Budgetary / political timetables
- Time to consider feedback and understand the key themes and impacts
- Time to make changes resulting from consultation through the Internal governance processes

The consultation was intended to reach the following groups:

- Members
- Precepting authorities
- Benefit recipients
- General public
- External stakeholders – tenants associations, Customer Consultation Group, Citizens Advice Bureau, Housing Associations, Tenants and Resident Associations
- Social landlords
- Council Tax payers
- Representatives of the Department for Work & Pensions and Job Centre Plus
- Internal stakeholders - Social care, Housing, Revenues, Dudley Council Plus
- Dudley Council For Voluntary Services

The consultation process included the following activities:

- Briefing
- Emails
- Leaflets distributed via the libraries and Dudley Council Plus
- Information with benefit entitlement letters
- DMBC Website
- Public notices in both 'paid for' and free newspapers
- Twitter
- Facebook

Results of customer consultation

Results of feedback			Feedback received via			Feedback received from		
agree	disagree	other	leaflets	web	email	In receipt of CTB	Not in receipt of CTB	Not known
32	14	6	30	20	2	24	13	15

Of the 32 responses who agreed with the preferred option:

- 20 were in receipt of CTB
- 7 were not in receipt of CTB, but 5 responses were from customers with an above average knowledge of the benefit system i.e. landlord, CAB
- 5 where it is not known if they are in receipt of benefit agreed for the following reasons:
 - Total impact of welfare reform
 - Prepared to pay extra council tax for single unemployed
 - 1st time unemployed so it is good Dudley want to help people like me
 - Timescales too short to change scheme

Of the 14 responses who disagreed with the preferred option:

- 4 were in receipt of CTB and disagreed for the following reasons:
 - Working age should be made to work
 - Unemployed should pay nothing
 - All single parents should be exempt
- 7 were not in receipt of CTB and disagreed for the following reasons:
 - All pensioners should get help and working age should be made to work
 - Given the timescales Dudley should apply an emergency 10% reduction on all CTB claims
- 3 where it is not known if they are in receipt of benefit disagreed for the following reasons:
 - Questioned the definition of vulnerable stating that some people in work are vulnerable
 - Working age should be made to work

NB. 5 out of 14 who disagreed wanted a more generous scheme

Of the 6 'other' the following comments were made:

- Councils preferred option is commendable but where is the money coming from ?
- Everyone should contribute to the community i.e. volunteering
- Just stated disagreed but gave no reasons or reasons given not consistent with the agree / disagree response