

# **Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC General Budget Strategy Consultation Exercise**

## **Stage 1**

**November / December 2014**



# Objectives of the General Budget Strategy Consultation Exercise

- General budget strategy consultation will be focussed on 3 key areas:
  - Services & Priorities
  - Council Tax Levels
  - Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)
- Links to other consultation activity:
  - This does not include consultation activity in respect of Service Change Proposals – **these will be reported separately as appropriate**
  - Opportunities are being taken to gather feedback from participants in the Service Change consultation (eg drop in sessions)
- Still a 2 stage process:
  - Stage 1 – gather views before Cabinet determine a draft budget strategy; and
  - Stage 2 – consultation on the Cabinet's **draft budget strategy**

# General Budget Consultation

- Stage 1
  - Initiated Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014
  - Will end on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014
- Who we are consulting with this year:
  - Scrutiny Committees
  - Schools Budget Forum
  - Older Persons Advisory Group
  - Public via online / hard copy questionnaires / opportunities at 'drop in' sessions
  - School Councils



**Part 1 - 2015 Council Priorities**

In June 2014, the Council set out a list of work areas that you told us we needed to improve. These have been our priorities for 2014 and are listed below. Do you agree or disagree that the Council has made sufficient improvement in these priorities? (please tick the relevant box)

**1. 2014 Priorities**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing a top quality education for all - "Every School a Great School"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping all children and young people safe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regenerating our communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making best use of our budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

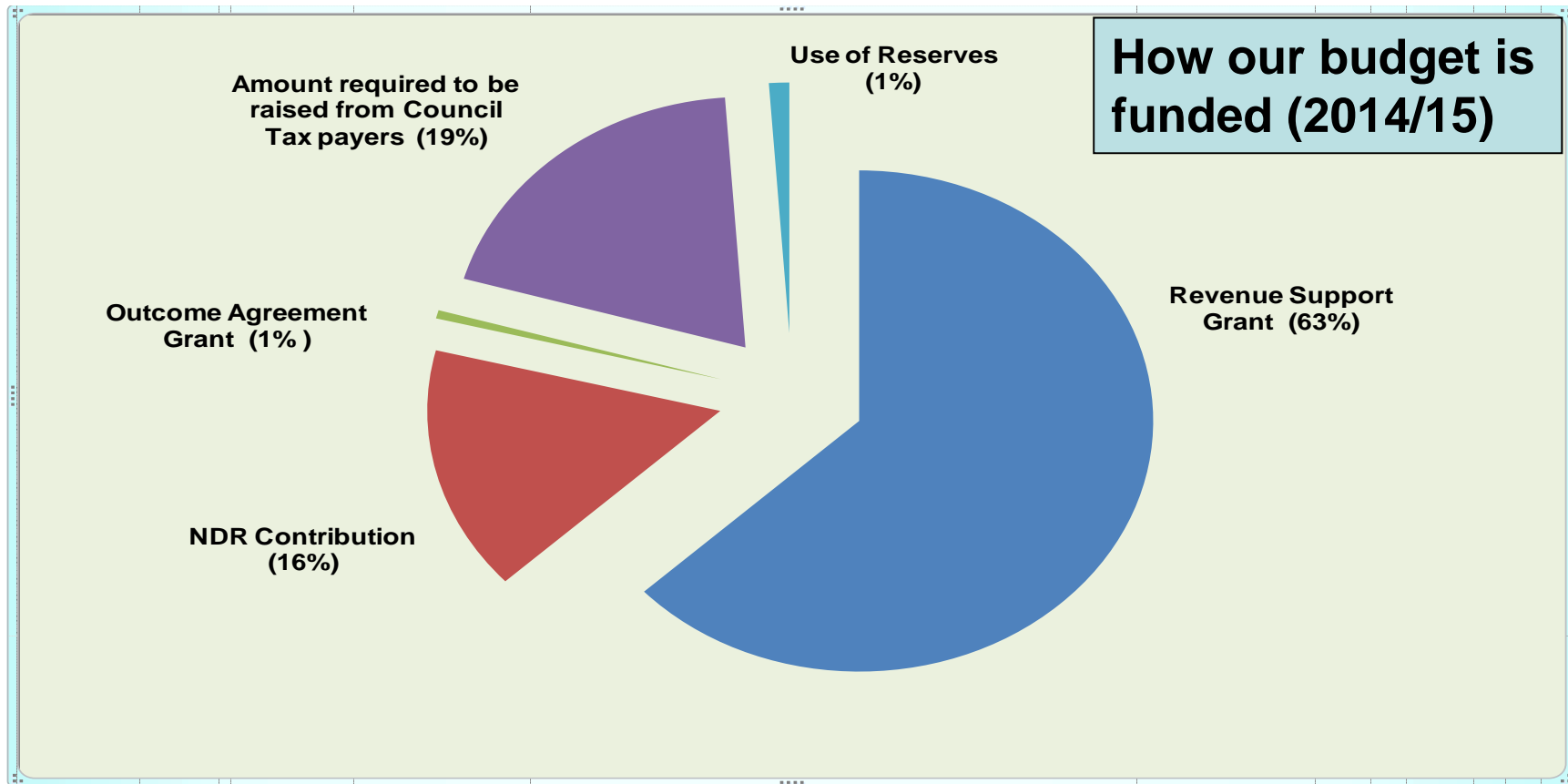
**2. If you generally disagree that the Council has made sufficient improvement in these priorities, where do you think further improvements need to be made in 2015?**

Powered by **snap**

Back Reset Next



# Local Context

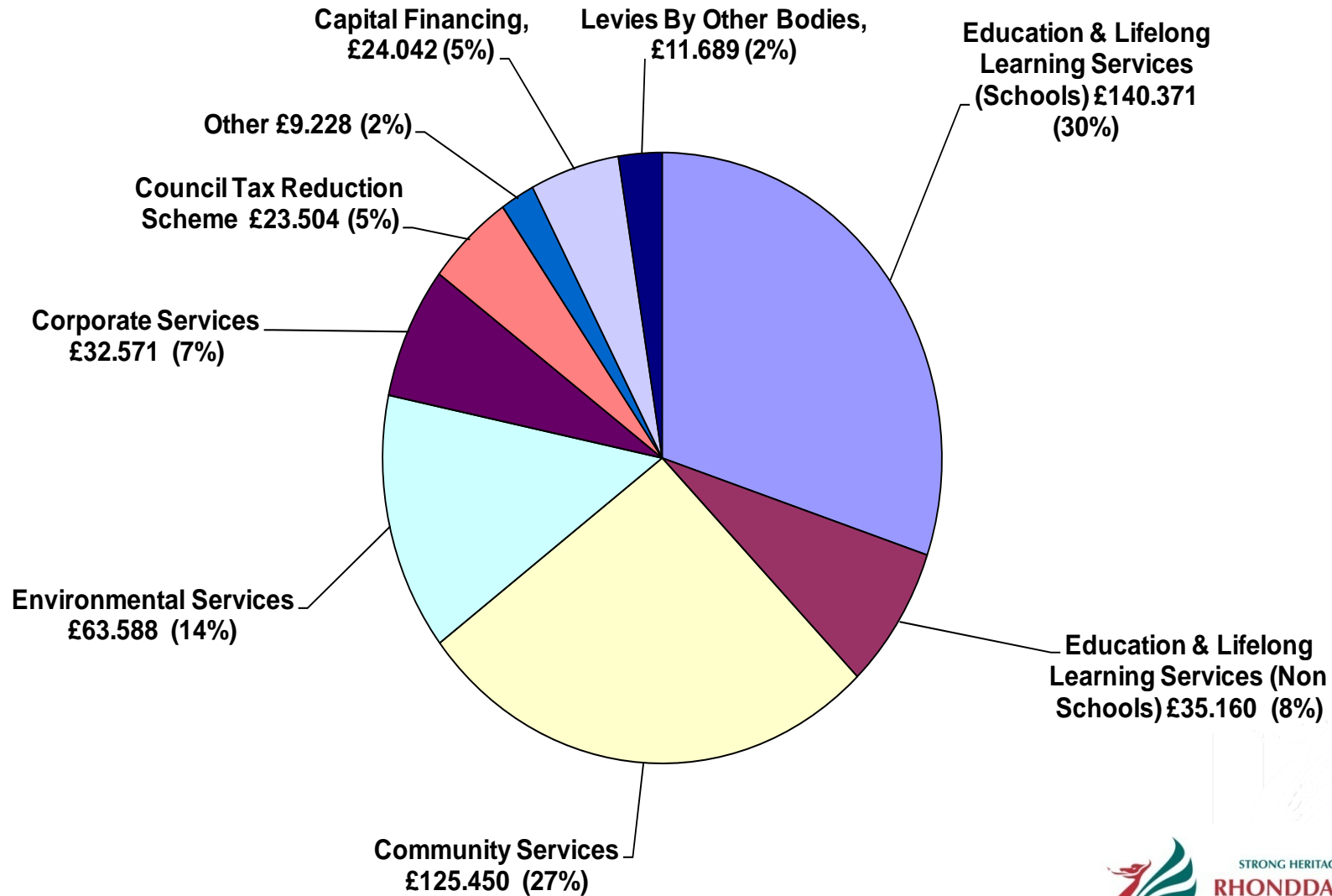


Funding	£M
Revenue Support Grant	293.799
NDR Contribution	73.533
Outcome Agreement Grant	2.504
Use of Reserves	5.216
Amount required to be raised from Council Tax payers	90.551
	<b>465.603</b>

# Local Context

£M

**Our spend  
(2014/15)**



# Budget Timetable

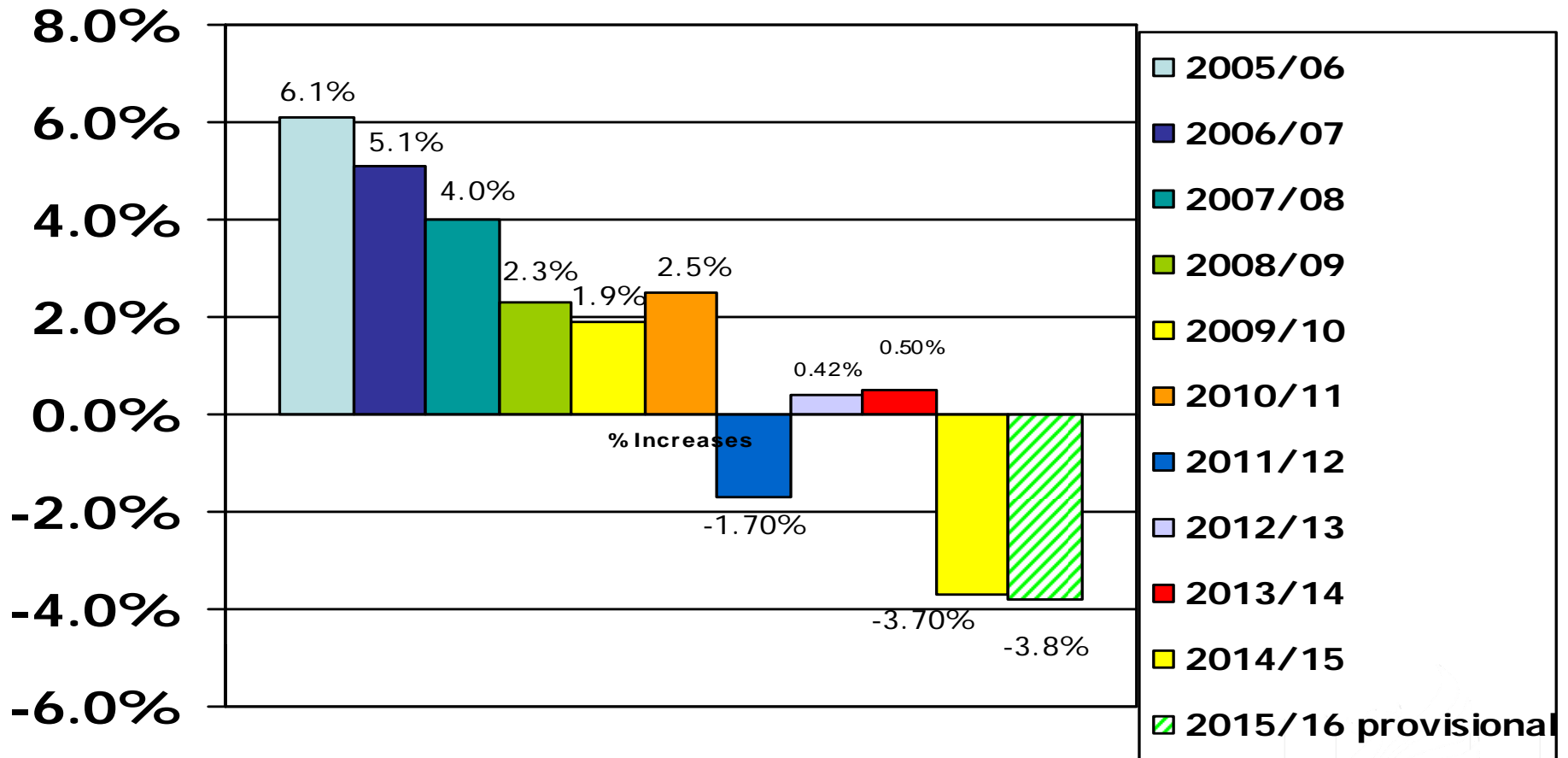
- 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014 – Provisional settlement figures released by Welsh Government
- 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014– Final settlement expected from Welsh Government
- November to February – options for next year's budget to be considered, including consultation processes to be undertaken
- March 2015 – Council sets budget and Council Tax levels for 2015/16

# Provisional Settlement Details

- Average cash reduction across Wales -3.5% (after adjustments) for 2015/16
- Reduction for Rhondda Cynon Taf -3.8%
- Cost of 'floor' protection for the Council £0.262M
- A number of 'Transfers in' and 'out' of settlement
- No information provided on future year settlements
- Many specific grant details to be confirmed
- Capital funding cut of -0.3% in 2015/16



# Annual Settlement Levels from WG



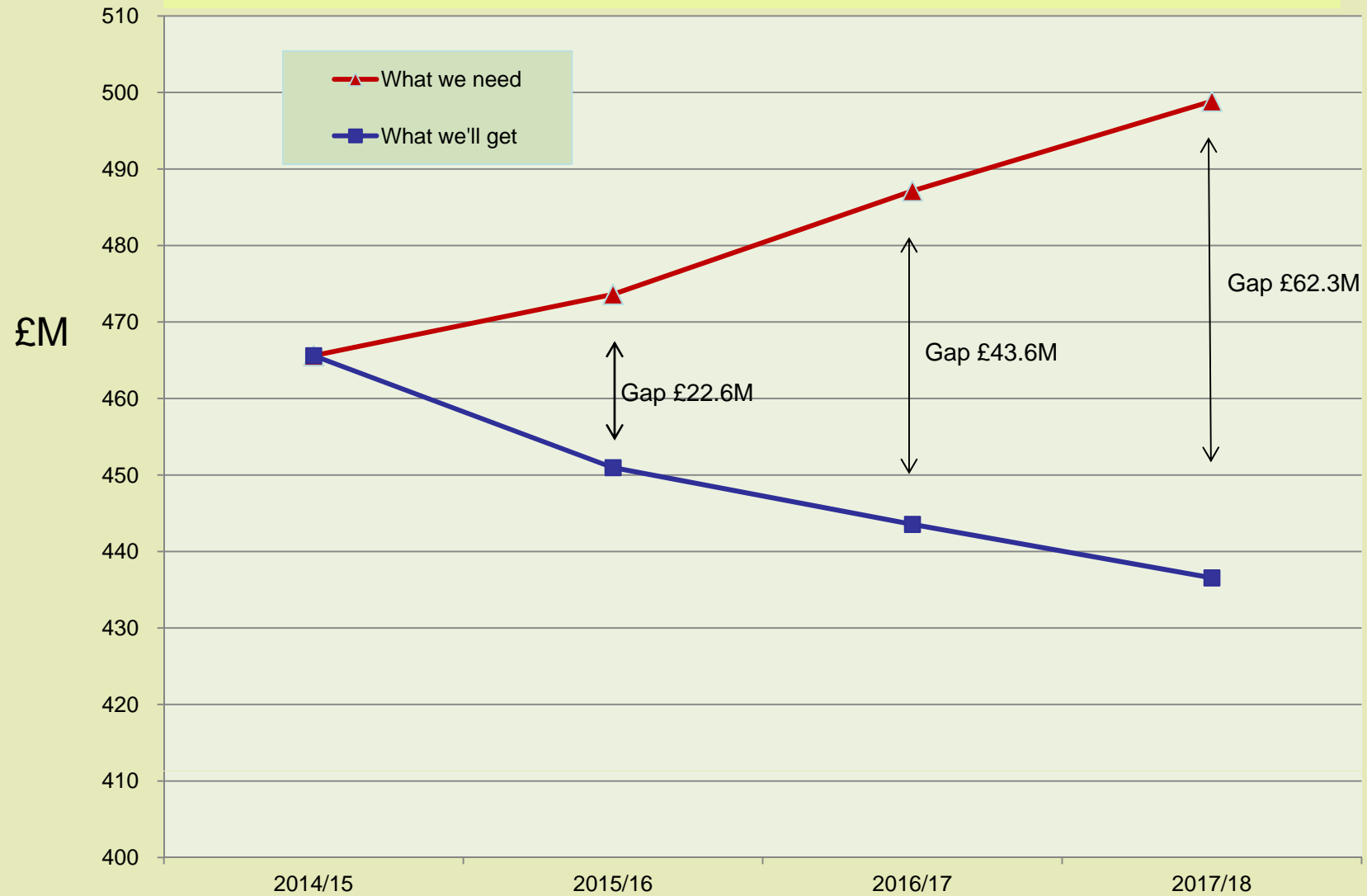
# Development Of An Equitable Budget Strategy

- Key parameters must be set:
  - Financial stability
  - Protection of key services / jobs where possible
  - Review of all service areas, including :
    - Eligibility to services; and
    - Charging arrangements
  - Funding for legislative changes, corporate requirements and inflation
  - Pursue all opportunities for efficiency
  - Take maximum advantage of external funding opportunities (where in the best interests of the Council)

# Development Of An Equitable Budget Strategy

- Individual Schools Budget
  - Direction from Welsh Government to increase schools budget by 0.6% in 2015/16
- Council Tax Levels
  - Key strategy consideration
  - Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) continuing in 2015/16
    - No increase in funding for 2015/16
    - Will impact on available income for Council through any agreed increases – 1% increase in Council Tax will cost £0.235M in additional CTRS

## Starting Point Budget Gap (as per 29th October 2014 Council)



# Services & Priorities

# Services & Improvement Priorities

- 1 Following a review with residents of the County Borough, the Council agreed seven improvement priority areas for 2014/15 and these are listed below.

Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour
Keeping all children and young people safe
Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently
Providing a top quality education for all
Regenerating our communities
Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'
Making best use of our budget

***Do you think these are the right areas that we should continue to focus on in 2015/16?***

***Is there anything specific that you would like to see included within these improvement priorities?***

***Are there any other improvement priorities that you think the Council should have?***

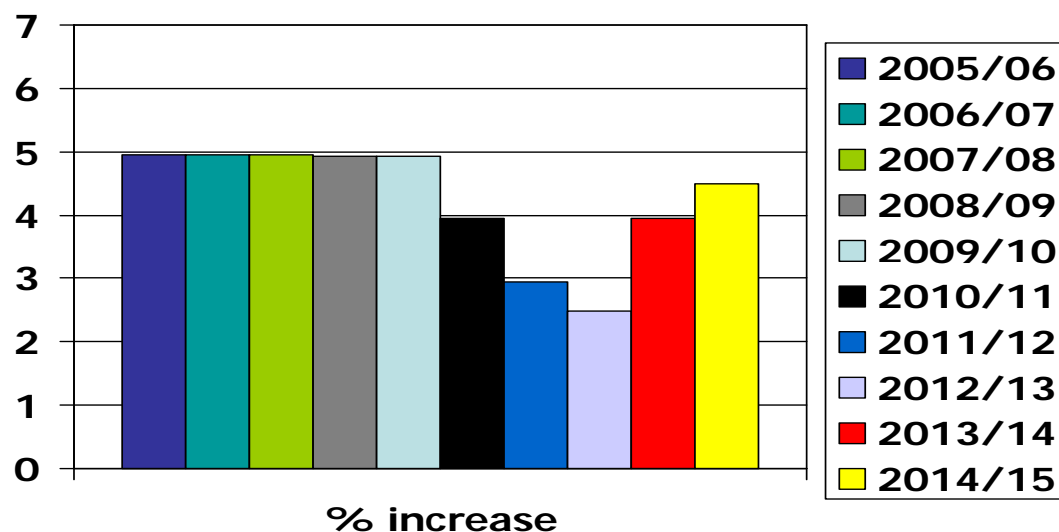
# Budget Consultation 2015/16

# Budget Consultation 2015/16

## 2. Next Years Council Tax Increase

*When making decisions about spending next year, should the Council:*

*Maintain as many services at the current level as possible even if it means a reasonable increase in Council Tax? .....Or,  
Cut services to keep any increase in Council Tax to a minimum?*



*What are your views on Council Tax levels for 2015/16*



# Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

# Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

- Scheme implemented 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2013 to replace Council Tax benefit
- CTRS is a national scheme in Wales with limited discretion to vary the scheme in 3 areas locally
  - Extended payments
  - Disregard War Disablement Pensions / War Widows Pensions Income
  - Backdating claims
- Councils must adopt their CTRS by 31<sup>st</sup> of January each year

# Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

## 3 Views on the Council's Discretionary Decisions That May Be Added to the National Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR Scheme)

- **Extended Payments**
  - *a) Do you think that 4 weeks is a reasonable period to continue paying Council Tax Reduction when someone returns to work?*
- **Disregard of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions income**
  - *b) Do you think that it is reasonable for the Council to continue to totally disregard War Disablement and War Widow's Pensions income when assessing entitlement to CTR Scheme?*
- **Backdating Claims**
  - *c) Do you think that 3 months is a reasonable period to backdate claims?*

# General Budget Strategy Consultation Exercise

## 4. Any Other Comments?

*An opportunity to comment on any other factors in relation to this consultation exercise*

# Thank You