

### 3.8 Feedback from Local Business Consultation

A two stage approach to consulting local businesses on their views on the Council's budget has been undertaken.

A short electronic survey was available via the Council's web site with local businesses invited to take part. In total 18 replies were received. A copy of this survey and a summary of the results are shown in Annex 8.

Despite the relatively low response rate, this looks to have been a useful exercise in obtaining the opinions of local businesses. It is anticipated that a consultation using a questionnaire will be used again next year and will be publicised more widely among local businesses.

There was also a meeting of the Economic Development Action Group of the Test Valley Partnership held on November 19<sup>th</sup> with members of the Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and local business people in attendance. The budget position was explained and businesses put forward their views on the options to close the budget gap. The views of the meeting are summarised in the table below.

Car Parking charges after 4pm	The group believed that car parking charges after 4pm should not be introduced. They feel strongly that this plays a significant part in keeping customer levels up through the later part of the day.
Increases in car parking charges	The group were comfortable with the proposed increases to car parking charges
Cease hanging baskets and flower troughs	This is an area that the group did not wish to be ceased.
Income Generation	The group believes there is an opportunity to generate additional income by allowing businesses on the industrial estates to lengthen the remaining term of existing leases and paying a premium for the additional security. This area will be addressed in the Industrial Estate action plan currently being developed.