

THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2015

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****BUDGET CONSULTATION 2016/17****EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There is no exempt information.

**PURPOSE**

To inform Cabinet of the outcomes arising from consultation undertaken with residents, businesses and the voluntary sector in accordance with the corporate budget setting process.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Cabinet endorse the report and take account of the findings along with other sources of information when setting the 2016/17 Budget.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****The vision**

Tamworth Borough Council's vision to 'aspire and prosper' and to be 'healthier and safer' is strongly endorsed by Tamworth's residents, businesses and voluntary and community organisations.

All priorities under 'Aspire and Prosper' were given a high importance rating by the majority of respondents with the most important priorities considered to be 'working with businesses to create more employment locally' and 'creating opportunities for business growth'. 'Creating the technology and physical infrastructure' and 'raising aspiration and attainment levels of young people' were also considered to be of particular importance to those respondents who were from the business community.

The priorities under 'Healthier and Safer' were also endorsed by respondents and the most important priority was considered to be 'tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.' This was closely followed by 'protecting those most vulnerable in the local communities' and 'tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour.' Community and Voluntary Organisations also prioritised 'improving the health of older people' and 'tackling poor health in children'.

**Spend on services**

Respondents expressed a high level of support for maintaining current levels of spend. This was the case in 11 out of the 12 major cost areas and respondents most wanted to maintain spend on refuse collection and recycling. 79% of respondents indicated that this was their preference. The only exception to this was for spend on 'improved access to information/customer services.' Respondents would most prefer to see less spend on this and it was also identified as one of the top two services which the Council should look at if it had to make savings.

Other services which respondents identified for less spend were on 'events' and on 'commissioning services from voluntary organisations'. Community and Voluntary Organisations themselves however had their own views and their main priority for

increased spend was for 'commissioning services from voluntary organisations'.

Respondents overall were least likely to indicate that they wanted to spend more on services and this was the case for 9 out of the 12 cost centres. The most notable exception to this was for spend on anti-social behaviour with 44% of respondents still liking to see more spent in this area.

If the Council were to consider changes to the charges it places upon its services, increasing charges for leisure and other activities and for public spaces would be met with least resistance. The majority of respondents would support increased charges for these services.

Conversely, decreasing charges for car parking would be a popular move. 82% of respondents overall said that they would like to see these decreased and it would be a popular initiative amongst residents, businesses and community and voluntary sector organisations alike.

### **What makes Tamworth a better place to live and prosper?**

Low levels of crime, good health services and good job prospects were considered by residents to be highly important in making somewhere a good place to live. All three of these were high priorities for improvement, in making Tamworth a better place to live. For businesses, the cost of business rates was the main request for improvement.

### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

### **LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND**

It is a statutory duty to consult before the development of the budget. Budget consultation ensures our compliance with this.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As part of an annual process Tamworth Borough Council reviews its Council Tax and Charges strategy for the development of the budget. This process ensures that funding is put into areas of highest priority. An important element of this process is to understand the views of residents, businesses, and local voluntary groups on what these priorities are.

### **REPORT AUTHOR**

John Day

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **APPENDICES**

Budget consultation 2016/17 – Full report