

THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2016

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2017/18

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 2017/18 Budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**The vision**

The general consensus from respondents was very much in support of the revised vision for 'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed – Open for business since the 7th Century A.D' and this was reflected in one respondent's comment; *"I think it's great news that the revised 'vision' could be totally coordinated, bringing together priorities across all areas to do with quality of life, growth and services"*.

Support was also evident for the three strategic priorities which underpin the vision; 'living a quality life in Tamworth', 'growing stronger together in Tamworth' and 'delivering quality services in Tamworth'. Endorsement was provided through respondents' views on the priorities themselves and also reflected in resident's outlook on what is important and what needs improving in the local area.

All priorities under 'living a quality life in Tamworth' were given a high importance rating by half of all respondents or more. The most important priority was 'working together with residents to maintain and improve a safe, clean and green environment' with 82% giving this a high rating.

Similarly, all priorities under 'growing stronger together in Tamworth' were considered important with three quarters or more giving a high importance rating to each of the priorities. Considered most important was 'working with businesses and developers to create a vibrant and sustainable town centre' where 83% gave this a high importance rating.

Over half of all respondents or more also gave a high importance rating to all the priorities under 'delivering quality services in Tamworth'. Of the five priorities, 'demonstrating value for money' was the most important priority with 82% giving this a high importance rating.

Spend on services

Respondents expressed a high level of support for maintaining current levels of spend and this was the case in 11 of the 12 major cost areas. Respondents most wanted to maintain spend on 'refuse and recycling services' (71%). Maintaining current spend was not the main priority for 'tackling anti-social behaviour'; over half (51%) wanted to see more spend on this cost area.

Spending less was generally residents' second priority for spend. Respondents would most prefer to see less spend in each of the following areas; 'grants for voluntary organisations and charities', 'improved access to information/customer services' and 'business support and advice'. 28% said they wanted to see less spend in each of these areas.

If the Council were to consider changes to the charges it places upon its services, increasing charges for 'leisure and other activities' would be met with least resistance. 61% of respondents would support increased charges for this. Conversely, decreasing charges for 'car parking' would be a popular move. Three quarters of respondents (76%) said that they would like to see these decreased.

The largest proportion of residents (45%) would prefer the lowest level of Council Tax increase (a 0.62% increase). The second lowest level of increase (a 1.98% increase) was the second most popular option; 38% of residents chose this option.

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

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

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