

THURSDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2019/20

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 2019/20 Budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council reviews its spending, Council Tax and charges on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process to ensure that funding is focussed in priority areas. The views of residents, businesses and the voluntary sector are always an important part of this process and therefore, as in previous years, these groups were invited to share their views. The report at Appendix 1 summarises the views of those who participated. The key findings are summarised below:

The most popular response in 10 of the 12 major cost areas was for spending to remain the same. These responses ranged from 63% in 'refuse and recycling' to 44% in 'commissioning services from voluntary organisations/charities.'

In 7 of the 12 cost areas, spending less was the second most common response. 'Improved access to information/customer services' was the biggest priority for reduced spend (51%). This was also the most frequently identified cost area for savings (56%).

In one cost area ('tackling anti-social behaviour'), 50% of respondents chose the option to increase spending. One third or more also wanted increased spending in the areas of 'parks, open spaces and street cleaning' (37%) and 'improving the economic, physical, social and environment condition of Tamworth' (34%).

More than half of respondents chose to increase charges for 'leisure and other activities' (57%) and 'public spaces' (53%). Conversely, 65% of respondents chose the option to decrease charges for 'car parking.'

Regarding any increase to the level of council tax, the most popular option was Option A, the lowest proposed increase of 0.6%. This was selected by 44% of respondents. This was followed by option B (2.0% rise) selected by 26% of respondents. The maximum increase of 3.0% (option E) was selected by 15% of respondents. The maximum level of increase (3.0%) is still below the average level of increase witnessed for all authorities across the West Midlands (4.9%) according to CIPFA's (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) latest annual council tax survey.

Interestingly, in the individual responses raised, wider questions on council spend were raised – including the need to: 'scrutinise budgets'; undertake 'service reviews'; ensure 'efficient spend'; and 'income generating services and funding initiatives' and focus on 'core activities'.

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 2019/20 – Full report.