

THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2019

## REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

## BUDGET CONSULTATION 2020/21

**EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None.

**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**

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet endorse the report,
2. Cabinet take account of the findings, along with other sources of information, when setting the 2020/21 Budget.

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

The general consensus from respondents was very much in support of the revised vision 'To put Tamworth, its people and the local economy at the heart of everything we do' and this was reflected in respondents' comments.

**People and place priorities**

Support was also evident for the four priorities which come under the heading people and place.

- To meet housing needs through a variety of approaches and interventions – seen as important by 71% of respondents,
- To facilitate sustainable growth and economic prosperity - seen as important by 89% of respondents,
- To work collaboratively and flexibly to meet the needs of our communities - seen as important by 81% of respondents,
- To create a new and developing vision for the continued evolution of Tamworth, including a town centre fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century - seen as important by 80% of respondents.

## **Organisation priorities**

Support was also evident for the four priorities which come under the heading people and place.

- To be financially stable - seen as important by 87% of respondents,
- To ensure our employees have the right skills and culture to help our residents, visitors and businesses- seen as important by 77% of respondents,
- To ensure our service delivery is consistent, clear and focussed - seen as important by 70% of respondents,
- To ensure our decisions are driven by evidence and knowledge - seen as important by 76% of respondents.

## **Spend on services**

It was most common for respondents to say they would prefer that current levels of spend remained the same; this was the case in 9 of the 12 major cost areas. Respondents most wanted to see maintained level of spend on 'sports and leisure services' (62%).

The three areas where respondents wanted to see more spend were 'improving the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of Tamworth' (50%), 'parks, open spaces and street cleansing' (48%) and 'tackling anti-social behaviour' (47%).

Spending less was generally respondents' second most common response. Around a third of respondents wanted to see less spend in the following areas 'improved access to information/customer services' (33%), 'business support and advice' (32%) and 'grants for voluntary organisations' (31%).

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. 58% of respondents would support increased charges for this. Conversely, decreasing charges for 'car parking' would be a popular move. Two thirds of respondents (67%) said that they would like to see these decreased.

The largest proportion of residents (46%) would prefer the lowest level of Council Tax increase (a 0.57% increase). The second lowest level of increase (a 1.99% increase) was the second most popular option; 28% 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.

Whilst it is recognised that the number of responders are low this consultation process should not be used in isolation. Other research and data collected from consultation processes such as Tamworth Listens and Tamworth What's Next provide more qualitative data.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report. Given the low number of responses the Council will next year, expand its approach to consultations across the authority to ensure increased participation.

## **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**

Budget Consultation 2020/21 – Full report.

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