

Council Budget and Council Tax 2021/22 Consultation Summary



To:	Cabinet and Council
Contact Officer:	Kathy Hoyle, Community Engagement Manager
Date:	16 February 2021
Title:	Budget consultation 2021/22 summary

Background

The consultation for the 2021/22 budget was undertaken as part of the Bury 2030 Strategy consultation and additional, targeted work with residents, business groups and community groups.

Introduction

In 2019 the Council embarked on a large-scale consultation to shape the borough's Community Strategy for the next ten years. This involved over 1000 individuals and over 50 partner agencies providing their feedback on their priorities for the borough and what they hoped to see in future plans.

This work has been refined through a period of co-design with community representatives and public service organisations via the Team Bury partnership in order to influence and shape the final Community Strategy: Let's Do It and the next medium term final strategy.

To complete the process a follow up engagement exercise was completed at the end of 2020. Although it was not possible to do the widespread face-to-face engagement that was done in 2019, various techniques were used to consult on the final document and implications for budget setting.

The main engagement tool was a survey was developed and hosted on-line on the 'One Community' webpage, the Council's engagement and consultation tool. This can be accessed via a mobile phone or computer. People responding via the online survey could do so anonymously or alternatively by signing in or registering on the system.

Face to face engagement was carried out online with a number of community groups.

Online media was also used to inform as many people as possible, with adverts appearing on people's phones and other technology during games and website viewing. Other methods including links to survey in newsletters, inclusion on agendas at meetings and sent out via online group's message boards.

Process

The final engagement exercise ran from 22nd October 2020 to 31st January 2021, allowing for Christmas and the likelihood of covid restrictions impacting on the time people had available. The target audience were people that lived, worked, visited or studied in the borough, business owners or those part of a local group/organisation.

Responses:

- 90 responses have been received via One Community.
- 3 community groups have been engaged via online meetings.

Budget Consultation Findings

Respondents to the online survey were asked the extent to which they agreed with the principles used for budget setting. Their responses have been ranked by the strongest level of agreement.

- Using evidence to make sure money is spend where it is needed most: 80 respondents strongly agree/agree
- Encouraging more people to adopt healthy lifestyles to reduce demand for future care: 78 respondents strongly agree/agree
- Changing our fees and charges to encourage people to reduce harm to the environment: 62 respondents strongly agree/agree
- Moving more services on-line and using more technology in how we do things: 55 respondents strongly agree/agree
- Do more to increase income from business rates: 34 respondents strongly agree/agree
- Raise more income through council tax: 23 respondents strongly agree/agree

The Community Strategy, Let's Do It!, sets out the Council's priority to maintain support for the most vulnerable whilst ensuring balanced budgets and good financial management. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed with this approach and their responses have been ranked by the strongest level of agreement:

- I am aware of the need for the council to change the way it delivers it's services: 67 respondents strongly agree/agree
- I understand my role in helping reduce demand for services: 56 respondents strongly agree/agree
- I accept that budget reductions have to be made by the council: 46 respondents strongly agree/agree
- I believe the council is doing its best under difficult circumstances: 29 respondents strongly agree/agree
- I feel able to influence how the council spends its money: 7 respondents strongly agree/agree

Budget consultation with the Business community

A separate letter was sent to the business community through the Bury Business Leaders Group to encourage them to take part in the consultation, with a closing date of the 22nd February 2021. Any comments received will be reported to Cabinet.

Report Date:
16th February 2021