

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th OCTOBER 2016

2017/18 BUDGET CONSULTATION REPORT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CABINET AND PR IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR M WEBBER

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2017/18 budget.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the success of last year's revised approach to budget consultation
- 2.2 Endorse the proposed approach to budget consultation which will include:
- The use of an online budget simulator
 - Town centre roadshow events
 - A young person's consultation event
 - Consultation with OPAG
 - Use of social media to promote and capture feedback
 - Community engagement.
- 2.3 Note that the budget consultation will run from November 7th 2016 – December 19th 2016.
- 2.4 Note that the Council's statutory requirements regarding consultation on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax levels will be met via the proposed approach.

- 2.5 Inform the Chair Persons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and Performance Committee of the approach and the continuation a single continuous phase.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide residents with the opportunity, via a range of methods, to feedback to Cabinet on the 2017/18 budget setting process.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In previous years the Council has undertaken a two phase approach to budget consultation but due to the timing of the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the impact it had on Welsh Government releasing provisional and final settlements for 2016/17, the Council adopted a revised, single phase approach for last year's budget consultation.
- 4.2 The revised approach saw the introduction of town centre roadshows and use of an online budget simulator which gave residents and service users the opportunity to balance the budget according to their priorities.
- 4.3 This approach led to more than 500 people providing feedback as part of the consultation process, more than in previous years utilising the two phase approach.
- 4.4 Following on from the success of last year's one phase approach it is proposed that this be continued for the 2017/18 budget consultation process alongside the use of the budget simulator, road show events, consultation with young people and older people and engagement via community meetings.

5. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 5.1 Use of an online budget simulator providing information on the services the Council provides and the potential consequences of increasing or reducing funding to services to set a legally balanced budget.
- 5.2 Town centre roadshow events which will give residents the opportunity to engage with and speak to Cabinet Members and senior officers regarding the Council's budget and investment priorities.
- 5.3 It is proposed to make use of the County Wide Youth Forum to engage with young people regarding the budget.

- 5.4 Use of social media to provide information to residents and service users and encourage engagement and feedback regarding the Council's budget and investment areas.
- 5.5 It is proposed to make use of OPAG to consult with older people regarding the Council's budget and investment areas.
- 5.6 Engagement in the community including attendance at community group meetings of Cabinet Members and Senior Officers will provide a variety of community groups with the opportunity to discuss priority areas, the Council's budget and investment priorities.
- 5.7 The proposed approach will ensure the Council's duty to consult regarding Council Tax and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme are met as well as providing residents and service users with the opportunity to feedback on the Council's investment priorities.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Opportunities to get involved in the budget consultation will be provided via a range of methods including online, at roadshow events and specific engagement for young people and older people.
- 6.2 The online budget simulator is accessible on mobile phones and tablet devices and residents without internet access or smart phone/tablet devices can visit a local library to access the online budget simulator or request a hard copy of the budget consultation questionnaire.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The recommendations outlined in the report seek to ensure a range of engagement opportunities are provided to residents and service users as part of the budget consultation process.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications for this revised approach.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to consult on Council Tax and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which will be met under the revised approach to budget consultation outlined.

10 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP / FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

10.1 The budget setting process clearly impacts on the delivery of all Council services which contribute in turn to the delivery of Council's Corporate Priorities, Corporate Plan and Single Integrated Plan.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The proposed approach to consultation in respect of the budget setting process seeks to ensure residents and service users have every opportunity to provide feedback on this important issue.

11.2 The approach also seeks to build upon last year's revised, one phase approach and use of a budget simulator to ensure the Council consults with residents in an engaging and interactive fashion taking advantage of technologies available.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Finance and Performance

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Item:

Background Papers

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