



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th OCTOBER 2018

2019/20 BUDGET CONSULTATION REPORT

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERIM
HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES 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 2019/20 budget.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the success of last year's 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 and community roadshow events
 - A young person's consultation event
 - Consultation with OPAG
 - A Cabinet Engagement event
 - Use of social media to promote engagement and capture feedback
- 2.3 Note that the budget consultation will run for 6 weeks from the 5th November to the 17th December 2018.
- 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 Instruct the Head of Democratic Services to inform the Chair Persons of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Finance and Performance Committee of the approach and the continuation of a single continuous phase.
- 2.6 Agree to the publication of the budget consultation details and engagement opportunities on the Council's website.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide residents with the opportunity, via a range of methods, to feedback to Cabinet on the 2019/20 budget setting process.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In previous years the Council has undertaken a two phase approach to budget consultation, however due to the timing of the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in 2015 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 the budget consultation for that year.
- 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 set the budget according to their priorities.
- 4.3 Since its introduction for 2016/17, the revised approach has led to increased resident engagement when compared to budget consultation carried out in previous years. The use of a variety of engagement methods has seen the number of people engaged in the process rise from 144 in 2016/17 to 1560 for the 2018/19 budget setting process.
- 4.4 It is therefore proposed that the approach outlined in section 5 is utilised for the 2019/20 budget consultation process.

5. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 5.1 The 2019/20 budget consultation will include:
- 5.2 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. The simulator will include a survey to collect responses on Council Tax levels and the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

- 5.3 Town centre, library and leisure centre roadshow community drop in 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.
- 5.4 Engagement with young people via Rhondda Cynon Taf's county wide youth forum.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Engagement with older people via OPAG.
- 5.7 A Cabinet engagement event.
- 5.8 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/ 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 and Corporate Plan.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The revised approach undertaken in the last few years has led to increased engagement in the budget setting process through a more interactive and varied approach which takes advantage of technologies available.

11.2 The proposed approach for the 2019/20 budget consultation seeks to ensure residents and service users have every opportunity to provide feedback on this important issue via a range of methods.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview & Scrutiny & Finance and Performance

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