



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 10 JANUARY 2022
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 7
Subject	BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: Mike.Evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jenny Poole, Deputy Chief Executive Email: Jenny.Poole@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report provides feedback to Cabinet from the recent consultation on the Administration's budget proposals.
Annexes	Annex A – Responses to the online survey Annex B – Comments on Council Priorities or any other aspect of the Council's spending and service delivery Annex C – Email and letter responses to the budget consultation
Recommendation/s	<i>That Cabinet considers the feedback from the consultation.</i>
Corporate priorities	The budget set out the financial envelope for the Cotswold District Council Corporate Plan, which details how the Council will deliver against all of its adopted aims, priorities and principles.
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The Council used a wide range of communications channels to share the key budget messages and highlight the consultation to as many residents, businesses and community organisations as possible, encouraging them to take part. This included: a) An edition of Cotswold News which was delivered to all households across the District b) The use of social media including Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor and local social media groups c) The use of a video with the Deputy Leader explaining the Council's budget d) The use of an animated video explaining budget proposals e) Promotion via the Council's website homepage and banner



	<p>f) Media engagement with a release at the start and end of consultation</p> <p>g) A bespoke webpage covering key messages and linking to an online survey</p> <p>h) Promotion through Town and Parish Councils</p> <p>i) Promotion in the Council's new E-newsletter</p> <p>j) Promotion to staff and Councillors through internal communications and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>This was complemented by engagement, both online and in person including:</p> <p>k) A budget special edition of the regular CDC Live programme</p> <p>l) A webinar with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>m) Opportunity for discussion at the Parish Council fora</p> <p>n) Stands in Cirencester, Bourton-on-the-Water, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury.</p>
--	--

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1.** Cabinet considered a refresh of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and draft budget proposals for 2022/23, as a basis for consultation with the community, on 4 October 2021. This report sets out feedback from the consultation for Cabinet to consider.
- I.2.** In October 2021, the Government announced the outcome of the Spending Review 2021. The Spending Review covers the three year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The Spending Review sets out the spending limits for Government departments and enables the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) to determine the funding for individual local authorities. This funding was set out in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 16 December 2021 for 2022/23, a one year settlement. Following a four week consultation period, DLUHC will issue the Final Local Government Finance Settlement in January 2022.
- I.3.** In January 2022, the Chief Finance Officer will update the MTFS and 2022/23 budget with the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement, along with any further adjustments identified since Cabinet considered the draft budget in October.
- I.4.** Cabinet will consider the MTFS and 2022/23 budget on 7 February 2022. Cabinet will recommend the MTFS, 2022/23 budget and the associated Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies to the Council on 16 February 2021.

2. MAIN POINTS



- 2.1.** Consultation on the draft budget proposals ran from 5 October to 19 November 2021. The Council used a wide range of communications channels to share the key budget messages and highlight the consultation to as many residents, businesses and community organisations as possible, encouraging them to take part. This included:
 - 2.1.1.** An edition of Cotswold News which was delivered to all households across the District
 - 2.1.2.** The use of social media including Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor and local social media groups
 - 2.1.3.** The use of a video with the Deputy Leader explaining the Council's budget
 - 2.1.4.** The use of an animated video explaining budget proposals
 - 2.1.5.** Promotion via the Council's website homepage and banner
 - 2.1.6.** Media engagement with a release at the start and end of consultation
 - 2.1.7.** A bespoke webpage covering key messages and linking to an online survey
 - 2.1.8.** Promotion through Town and Parish Councils
 - 2.1.9.** Promotion in the Council's new E-newsletter
 - 2.1.10.** Promotion to staff and Councillors through internal communications and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2.** This was complemented by engagement, both online and in person including:
 - 2.2.1.** A budget special edition of the regular CDC Live programme
 - 2.2.2.** A webinar with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
 - 2.2.3.** Opportunity for discussion at the Parish Council fora



- 2.2.4. Stands providing an opportunity for the community to discuss the budget consultation in Cirencester, Bourton-on-the-Water, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury.

Budget Consultation Outcomes

- 2.3. The Council received 432 responses to the consultation, an increase of 106 responses from the consultation last year. Feedback to the quantitative survey questions is included at **Annex A**. Comments on the Council priorities or any other aspect of the Council's spending and service delivery is included at **Annex B**. In addition to the online survey, the Council has also received various other correspondence, included at **Annex C**.
- 2.4. The main findings from the consultation are set out below.

Question 1

- 2.5. *Over the next three years, the Council expects the Government to cut the Council's funding. At the same time, there will be unavoidable increases in costs such as nationally agreed staff pay rises which the Council will have to fund. Our approach to the Council's finances is to improve our services while delivering on our priorities of doing our part to tackle the climate emergency, delivering homes local people can afford to rent and supporting our economy recover from the impact of Covid-19, all whilst balancing the ongoing budget. That will require small increases in Council Tax (see question 3) together with generating more money from new investments and by applying a principle of setting our fees and charges to ensure they are not subsidised by other taxpayers. Where the Council does decide to subsidise some fees and charges, the reasons for this will be clearly set out. To what extent do you agree with this approach?*
- 2.6. The response was positive to this question. 43% agreed or strongly agreed with the Council's approach. This compares with 37% who disagreed or strongly disagreed and 20% who neither agreed nor disagreed.

Question 2

- 2.7. *The Council is planning to invite local people and communities to invest directly in initiatives in the Cotswold District that address climate change by lending funds to the Council for a specified period of time and at a specified rate of interest. Amongst other things, this could include investment in renewable energy which could provide a financial return for local communities and actions to reduce the energy use of our homes. Do you think this is a good idea?*
- 2.8. The response was positive to this question. 57% agreed this was a good idea, 29% disagreed and 14% did not know.



Question 3

- 2.9. *To support our priorities, and help close the expected funding gap from the Government, we plan to increase Council Tax by 10p a week (£5 a year) for a Band D property (£3.33 for Band A – up to £10 for Band G). Do you agree with this approach?*
- 2.10. The response was positive to this question. 56% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed Council Tax increase. 34% disagree or strongly disagree while 10% neither agree nor disagree.

Question 4

We have reviewed charges and charging periods in our car parks in light of our overall charging policy and identified the revenue we could generate where we are currently providing free parking – under our ‘Free After Three’ scheme running in six car parks across the District (£350,000), on Sundays at all our car parks except ones in Bourton-on-the-Water and Stow-on-the-Wold (£150,000), and during evenings and overnight in all our car parks (£100,000). Our 2022/23 proposed budget includes increased revenue of £300,000 from our car parks to help us balance our budget. Could you tell us your view on potential changes to charging periods by selecting one of these statements?

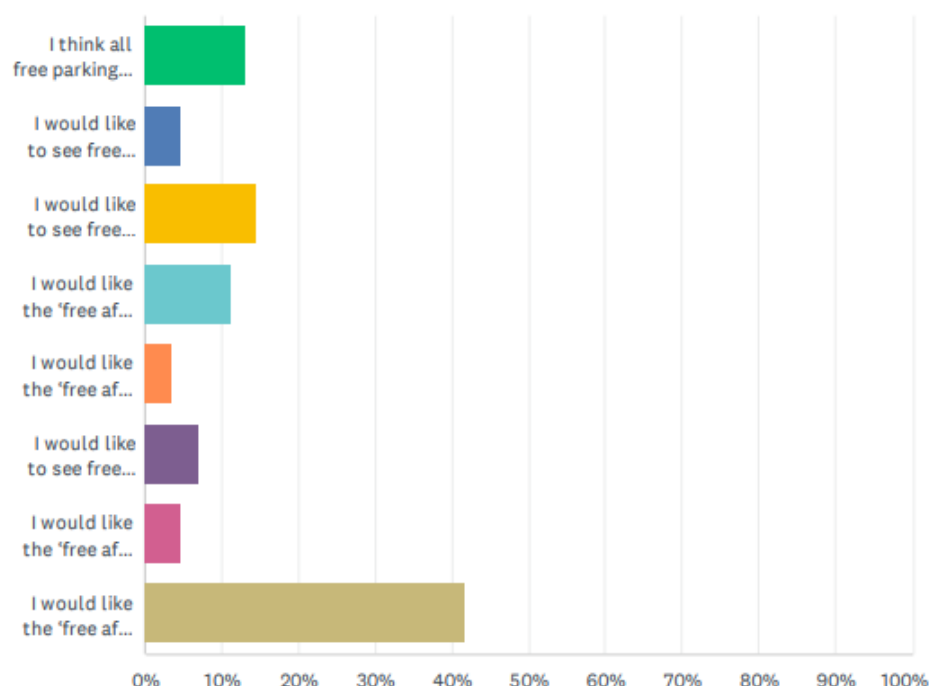
- a. I think all free parking in the Council’s car parks should be removed
 - b. I would like to see free Sunday parking remain but think charges should be made after 3pm in all car parks and during evenings and overnight
 - c. I would like to see free parking remain on Sundays, during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm in all car parks
 - d. I would like the ‘free after 3pm’ scheme and free evening and overnight parking to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays
 - e. I would like the ‘free after 3pm’ scheme to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays and during evenings and overnight
 - f. I would like to see free parking remain during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm and on Sundays
 - g. I would like the ‘free after 3pm’ scheme and free parking on Sundays to remain but I think charges should be made during evenings and overnight
 - h. I would like the ‘free after 3pm’ scheme to continue and for parking to remain free on Sundays and during evenings and overnight
- 2.11. The table below sets out the responses to this question and the response information is also illustrated graphically.



	Answer Choice	Response %	Response No.
a	I think all free parking in the Council's car parks should be removed	13.02	56
b	I would like to see free Sunday parking remain but think charges should be made after 3pm in all car parks and during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
c	I would like to see free parking remain on Sundays, during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm in all car parks	14.42	62
d	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free evening and overnight parking to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays	11.16	48
e	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays and during evenings and overnight	3.49	15
f	I would like to see free parking remain during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm and on Sundays	6.98	30
g	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free parking on Sundays to remain but I think charges should be made during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
h	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue and for parking to remain free on Sundays and during evenings and overnight	41.63	179
	Responses		430



Answered: 430 Skipped: 2



2.12. While 42% of respondents wanted no change to the current car park charging periods (answer h) 58% of respondents supported a change. The options for change, listed in order of the number of responses, are set out below:

	Answer Choice	Response %	Response No.
c	I would like to see free parking remain on Sundays, during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm in all car parks	14.42	62
a	I think all free parking in the Council's car parks should be removed	13.02	56
d	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free evening and overnight parking to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays	11.16	48
f	I would like to see free parking remain during evenings and overnight but think charges should be made between 3pm and 6pm and on Sundays	6.98	30
b	I would like to see free Sunday parking remain but think charges should be made after 3pm in all car parks and during evenings and overnight	4.65	20



g	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme and free parking on Sundays to remain but I think charges should be made during evenings and overnight	4.65	20
e	I would like the 'free after 3pm' scheme to continue but think charges should be made on Sundays and during evenings and overnight	3.49	15

- 2.13.** The budget consultation requested feedback on options for removing free car parking in the evenings and overnight, between 3 pm and 6 pm and on Sundays. The number of respondents supporting each of these options is set out below :

	Charge for evenings and overnight	Charge between 3 pm and 6 pm	Charge on Sundays
c		62	
a	56	56	56
d			48
f		30	30
b	20	20	
g	20		
e	15		15
	111	168	149

- 2.14.** The option which had the greatest support from respondents was to charge between 3 pm and 6 pm in all car parks with support from 168 respondents. Charging on Sundays in all car parks received support from 149 respondents with 111 respondents supporting charging during evenings and overnight.
- 2.15.** Proposals for changes to the Council's car park charges, to come into effect from April 2022, will be considered later in this meeting of the Cabinet.
- 2.16.** A response from Fairford Town Council is included in **Annex B** (line number 4). Responses were also received from Tetbury Town Council, two Tetbury Town Councillors, Weston sub Edge Parish Council and a Cirencester resident. Details of these responses are included at **Annex C**.



3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1.** There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any changes to the 2022/23 budget arising from consideration of the consultation feedback will be included in the report to Cabinet on 7 February 2022.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.** A detailed risk assessment will form part of the Cabinet report in February 2022 regarding the MTFS and 2022/23 budget proposals.

6. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1.** There are no direct climate or ecological implications arising from this report. The budget proposals are related to the Council priorities which include the climate and ecological emergency declarations.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1.** This report provides the Cabinet with the opportunity to consider amendments to the budget proposals for 2022/23 or longer term in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Any changes to the 2022/23 budget arising from consideration of the consultation feedback will be included in the report to Cabinet on 7 February 2022.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1.** None