

BUDGET CONSULTATION – FINDINGS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to work with, as well as for, the people of Argyll and Bute. We therefore held a consultation exercise seeking the views of our citizens on priorities for the council.
- 1.2 We received 1,399 responses from across Argyll and Bute from residents aged 11 – 75+. We received responses from Community Councils, Community Groups, School Parent Councils and Youth Forums.
- 1.3 This report outlines the feedback they provided for elected members' consideration.

BUDGET CONSULTATION – FINDINGS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report summarises the feedback provided by local communities to the council’s budget planning consultation, for consideration by elected members.

3.0 DETAIL

Consultation approach

- 3.1 The council carries out budget consultation exercises to ensure that communities have the opportunity to get involved in the process of setting the council budget.
- 3.2 This year’s consultation asked people to tell us about their priorities for the work of Argyll and Bute Council, and their views on a number of savings options.
- 3.3 It was promoted in a variety of ways, from social media and website links, to email, in council customer service points, and via the Citizen’s Panel.
- 3.4 People could give views on the council’s website, in printed copies available in libraries and council offices, through our Youth Services, and via our Citizens Panel (a representative section of the local population).
- 3.5 We received in total 1,399 responses from residents aged 11 – 75+ across Argyll and Bute, and from Community Councils, community groups, School Parent Councils and Youth Forums.
- 3.6 As well as giving views on specific question fftheant

The role and services of the council

3.8 We asked people what for them is the most important role for the council?

- The majority of respondents stated that it is to 'deliver the services I use.'
- Comments given under the 'other' option stated that the council should deliver all services used by the community.

3.9 We asked people which services they use most:

- The most used service category is 'Economy, Environment and Customer Services.'
- The services highlighted as most used via 'other' are part of this category - refuse and recycling, roads and ferries.

3.10 We asked people to indicate the service categories in which they would most support reductions in funding.

- Customer support/information services;
 - Education for adults; and
 - Economic development/business support services.
- Most common responses given under the 'other' category are: reduce consultants, councillors, senior/middle management; reduce salaries and expenses; reduce travel/make better use of VC facilities

3.11 We asked people to indicate their top three priorities:

- Education for children;
 - Environmental services; and
 - Roads/harbours
- Priorities indicated via 'other' comments are: refuse and recycling, roads and social care.

Savings options

3.12 We asked people to comment on a list of savings options. A number said that they agreed with/did not oppose them.

3.13 The most recurring objections were received to these proposals:

- ED20 – Pupil support assistant
- RAIS09 – Public conveniences
- ED03 – Psychological services
- RAIS02 – School crossing patrollers
- All Education proposals
- ED15 – Additional support needs
- ED14 – Swimming pool subsidies

3.14 We received a lower level of comments opposing additional proposals and cuts to services, primarily waste (increase to/introduction of uplift charges), community learning and development, early years services, ferries, and youth services.

3.15 We received suggestions to mediate some of the savings:

- Means test the increase in burial charges
- Public conveniences to be run privately or by local communities
- Campaign for more council funding

Ferry

will provide an outline of how findings from this consultation contribute to budget decisions, once the Council has set its budget.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Many people gave time and thought to this year's consultation. This report and Appendix 1 set out findings for consideration by elected members.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy/Financial: Feedback from the consultation is set out in this report for elected members to consider in setting the council's budget
- 5.3 Legal: None
- 5.4 HR: None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: The consultation was designed to reach a wide range of people in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: As above
 - 5.5.3 Islands: As above
- 5.6 Risk: None
- 5.7 Customer Service: Providing feedback on actions taken as a result of this consultation will highlight the value of citizens taking the time get involved in setting the council's budget

Interim Executive Director Kirsty Flanagan

For further information contact:

Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services
Jane Jarvie,

Appendix 1: Ideas