

## **Appendix 2 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Tranche 1**

Tranche 1 of the Medium Term Financial Plan was put out for consultation at the meeting of Cabinet on the 10th December 2024.

In the intermediate period however, there has been a consultation running on Tranche 1 of the budget. This supplemental paper updates Cabinet on the results of that consultation.

### **Tranche 1 Consultation**

The Council has consulted on its Tranche 1 budget. This budget consultation opened on Thu 5 December 2024. An email invite was sent to the Bromsgrove Community Panel. The survey was also promoted on a variety of social media channels.

The survey closed at 12noon on Thursday 2 January 2025. The response rate for the community panel was 48%. There were a total of 278 valid responses received.

Question 2 gives a split of the consultation responses by location with the highest percentage of returns coming from Aston Fields, Belbroughton and Romsley, and Bromsgrove Centre.

Question 16 gives the splits of Age Ranges of the people who filled out the questionnaire. The vast majority were over 50.

The survey asked respondents to rank the three most important services they felt the Council should invest in. These were:

- Local Economic Development and Employment (47.1% of respondents).
- Community Safety (44.6.% of respondents).
- Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment (43.8.% of respondents)

Each question had the following Questions asked had the following possible responses.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

In those questions, 6 had responses well over 50% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and only two had responses lower than 50% - these being

- Do you agree that the Council should invest more in our front-line services to cover increases in fuel at a 49.6% approval rate.
- Do you support fees and charges (this excludes parking) rising by 4% to keep them in line with inflation and rising staffing costs at a 40.2% approval rate.

The highest approval rating, at 86.2% was the question - Do you agree that the Council should invest in economic development in order to support local businesses, start-ups, the town and local centres and to prioritise local skills.

Two further questions were asked on what level of increase to Bromsgrove District Council's proportion of Council Tax do you support?

- 61.5% agreed or strongly agreed with a 1.99% increase.
- This dropped to 45.8% at 2.99%.

There were 2 free text questions:

- Please let us know your suggestions for investing in the district to increase prosperity and enhance appeal for residents and businesses alike?
  - There were 178 responses to this question.
  - Responses to this question provided many suggestions and comments regarding the district. The top three themes were Bromsgrove Town Centre, supporting businesses and the importance of infrastructure, from roads to public transport. These themes had many cross overs, from the impact of traffic, encouraging a diverse range of businesses into the town and reducing costs to visitors and businesses alike.
  - Suggestions included:
    - Reducing business rates / relief
    - Reducing parking costs
    - Supporting independent retailers
    - Bringing in key major retailers
    - Understanding offer on High Street- too many charity shops, cafes, hair & vaping businesses
    - Utilise empty shops- for small businesses, new start-ups, housing, community use
    - Improve the market- quality, offer, number of days
    - Make the town vibrant, attractive & distinctive- develop attractions, encourage visitors
    - Improve the appearance & maintenance of the high street
    - Improved public transport
    - Support active travel
    - Access grants wherever possible
    - Ensure a district-wide view
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- Please let us know any other comments on the budget or ideas for reducing costs or increasing income to ensure Council services remain sustainable?
  - There were 118 responses to this question.
  - Of the responses to this question, the largest category fell into the theme of efficiency and value for money. Other themes included infrastructure, focusing on those in need, ensuring transparency and accountability asset utilisation, and the town centre.
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- Suggestions included:
  - Reviewing salaries
  - Ensuring right skills within the council
  - Outsource some functions
  - Explore alternative methods of delivery e.g. co-operatives, partnerships
  - Reduce use of consultants
  - Review fees & charges
  - Commercial opportunities e.g. logs, compost or specific services
  - Turn off lights / utilise smart sensors
  - Reduce events
  - Promote events better to increase revenue
  - Community use of buildings
  - Energy generation e.g. solar panels in car parks
  - Convert buildings into housing e.g. multi-storey by Asda
  - Increase enforcement fines e.g. fly tipping & littering
  - Support the voluntary sector
  - Reducing business rates / relief
  - Review council tax
  - Better coordination around highways and roadworks

The Spreadsheet sets out the overall summary and a breakdown by question.