

## **Addendum: Policy and Resources Finance and Business Planning Report, Updates for Consultation Section 5.9.4 - 5.9.22**

This addendum provides an update on the consultation section included in paragraphs 5.9.4 - 5.9.22 of the Policy and Resources (P & R) Committee, Finance and Business Planning Report.

The updates reflect the consultation findings that have been incorporated into the Final Consultation Report (Appendix H). The consultation received an additional three responses since the interim draft consultation report was published with the P & R papers last week and the overall response has gone up from 81 to 84.

The consultation has now closed, and this is the final set of results for the general budget consultation on the council's budget proposals for 2022/23.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

#### General Budget Consultation 2022/23

##### ***Overview***

- 1.1.1 The general budget consultation began after Policy and Resources Committee on 9 December 2021 where the committee agreed to consult on the council's budget proposals for 2022/23.
- 1.1.2 The consultation opened on 21 December 2021 and concluded on 1 February 2022.
- 1.1.1 In terms of service-specific consultations the council has a duty to consult with service users where there are proposals to vary, reduce or withdraw services. Where appropriate, separate service-specific consultations have already taken place. The outcomes of these consultations are being reported into the committee decision making process.
- 1.1.3 The following paragraphs set out the headline findings from the general budget consultation 2022/23 which is presented to this Committee and then subsequently Full Council on 1 March 2022. The detailed findings can be found in Appendix G.

##### ***Summary of consultation approach***

- 1.1.4 The 2022/23 general budget consultation asked for views on the:
  - Overall budget, and savings and income generation proposals for 2022/23
  - Proposal to increase General Council Tax by 1% or by up to 1.99%<sup>2</sup>
  - Proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 1% to help pay for adult social care.

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<sup>1</sup>The launch of the consultation was delayed until after the Government Financial Statement to see if there were any other implications that could affect the budget.

<sup>2</sup> Option on supporting an increase in general Council Tax by up to 1.99 % in 2022/23 was added to the questionnaire

1.1.5 The consultation was published on Engage Barnet together with a summary consultation document and the full Finance and Business Plan.

- Respondent’s views were gathered via an online questionnaire.
- Paper copies and other alternative formats of the consultation were made available on request.
- As part of the council’s statutory duty to consult with National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) Payers, letters were sent out to all the council’s NNDR payers inviting them to take part in the consultation.
- The consultation was widely promoted via the council’s residents’ magazine (Barnet First delivered to all households), the council resident’s e newsletter, the council’s website, local press, Twitter, Facebook, and posters in libraries and other public places.
- Super-users, i.e., users of non-universal services, were also invited to take part in the consultation through the Communities Together Network Newsletter, schools parent newsletter and service area newsletters/circulars and super-user mailing lists.

**Response to the consultation**

1.1.6 A total of 84 questionnaires were completed – all were submitted online.

1.1.7 The table below shows the profile of those who responded to the consultation. It is broken down by the number responses that were received before the additional option of increasing general Council Tax by up to 1.99 % was added to the consultation on the 7 January, and then the response to the consultation after this additional option was added.

1.1.8 It should be noted that the vast majority of responses were from residents.

| Stakeholder                                      | 21/12/2021-07/01/22 |           | 07/01/22 onwards <sup>3</sup> |           | Total       |           |
|--|---------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|  | %                   | Base      | %                             | Base      | %           | Base      |
| Barnet resident                                  | 100%                | 17        | 86%                           | 42        | <b>89%</b>  | <b>59</b> |
| Working within the London Borough of Barnet area | 0%                  | 0         | 0                             | 0         | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0</b>  |
| Barnet business                                  | 0%                  | 0         | 4%                            | 2         | <b>3%</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| Representing a voluntary/community organisation  | 0%                  | 0         | 0                             | 0         | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0</b>  |
| Representing a public-sector organisation        | 0%                  | 0         | 6%                            | 3         | <b>5%</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| Representing a school                            | 0%                  | 0         | 0                             | 0         | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0</b>  |
| Other  | 0%                  | 0         | 0.                            | 0         | <b>0%</b>   | <b>0</b>  |
| Prefer not to say                                | 0%                  | 0         | 4%                            | 2         | <b>3%</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Total who answered this question</b>          | 100%                | 17        | 100%                          | 49        | <b>100%</b> | <b>66</b> |
| Not answered                                     |                     | <b>11</b> |                               | 7         |             | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Total response to the consultation</b>        |                     | <b>28</b> |                               | <b>56</b> |             | <b>84</b> |

<sup>3</sup> Option on supporting an increase in general Council Tax by up to 1.99 % in 2022/23 was added to the questionnaire

## ***Calculating and reporting on results***

1.1.9 The results for each question are based on “valid responses”, i.e. all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question.

1.1.10 Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding.

1.1.11 Due to the small total sample size the findings have been reported on in terms of percentages and numbers.

### Summary of key findings

#### ***Views on the budget for 2022/23***

1.1.12 Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposed budget for 2022/23:

- A third of respondents agree (32%, 27 out of 84 respondents) with the council’s proposed budget for 2022/23 (6%, 5 out of 84 respondents strongly agree, and 26%, 22 out of 84 respondents tend to agree).
- Two fifths of respondents disagree (42%, 35 out of 84 respondents) with the council’s proposed budget for 2022/23 (21%, 18 out of 84 respondents tend to disagree, and 20%, 17 out of 84 respondents strongly disagree).
- The remainder were either neutral (21 %, 18 out of 84 respondents) or said they did not know or were not sure (5%, 4 out of 84 respondents).

#### ***Views on proposals to increase both general Council Tax by 1% or up to 1.99% and to apply a 1% Adult Social Care precept to Council Tax 2022/23***

1.1.13 Overall, in terms of supporting both a general Council Tax increase and applying a Social Care Precept increase in 2022/23, just under half of respondents (48%, 33 out of 68 respondents) support both an increase in general Council Tax (either 1% or up to 1.99%) and the proposal to apply a further 1 % Adult Social Care Precept increase.

- Just over a quarter, 29% of respondents (20 out of 68), support both an increase in general Council Tax of 1% and the proposal to apply a further 1% Social Care Precept in 2022/23.
- Fewer respondents (19% of respondents, 13 out of 68) support both an increase in general Council Tax of up to 1.99% and the proposal to apply a further 1% Social Care Precept in 2022/23.
- Just over a third of respondents (35%, 24 out of 68 respondents) do not support any increases in general Council Tax or the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax 1% in 2022/23.

- 15%, 10 out of 68 respondents only support the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1% and not a Social Care Precept increase in 2022/23.
- None of those responding to the consultation support the proposal to increase general Council Tax by up to 1.99% and not a Social Care Precept increase in 2022/23.
- 2% (1 out of 68 respondents) only support the proposal to apply a Social Care Precept 1% and not a general Council Tax increase in 2022/23.

### ***Savings and income proposals for 2022/23***

1.1.14 Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the savings and income proposals identified for each of the theme committees in 2022/23:

- **Children’s, Education and Safeguarding Committee (CES) received the highest level of support**, with half of respondents (51%, 36 out of 71 respondents) indicating they agree with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee for 2022/23.
- **Public Health (PH) - Health and Wellbeing Board**, which had no savings or income generation proposals, received **the second highest level of support**, with two fifths of respondents (41%, 29 out of 70 respondents) agreeing
- **Adults and Safeguarding Committee had a similar level of support as Public Health** with again two fifths of respondents (40%, 29 out of 72 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee for 2022/23.
- **Housing and Growth Committee (H & GC) and Environment Committee (EC)** also both had similar levels of support, with around **a third of respondents agreeing** with the saving and income proposals identified within these committees for 2022/23; and Housing and Growth Committee 34% agreed (23 out of 68 respondents) and Environment Committee 31% agreed (22 out of 70 respondents).
- **Community Leadership and Libraries Committee** received slightly less support for their saving and income proposals compared to H & GC and EC, with just over a quarter of respondents (28%, 20 out of 71 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income generation proposals identified within this committee for 2022/23.
- **Policy and Resources Committee** received the **least support** for their saving and income proposals, with a quarter of respondents (23%, 16 out of 69 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income generation proposals identified within this committee for 2022/23.

### **Further comments on theme committee saving and income proposals for 2022/23**

1.1.15 Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the saving and income proposals identified for each theme committee for 2022/23. Of those who responded to the consultation, 39 out of 84 gave a response to this question.

1.1.16 The responses to this question were varied and the most common themes, with a response of four comments or more, have been summarised below. Percentages are based on those who answered this question.

- *Policy & Resources Committee budget too excessive /Would like to see what is spent in Policy ad Resources Committee (Eight comments)*
- *Disagree with any cuts in Children, Education, and Safeguarding Committee (CES) / More should be spent in CES (Five comments)*
- *Agree with Council Tax increases (Four comments)*
- *Disagree with Council Tax Increases / Can't afford Council Tax increases (Four comments)*
- *Environment Committee should be allocated more budget / should be a priority area (Four comments)*

### **Further comments on the overall budget for 2022/23**

1.1.17 Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make about the councils proposed budget for 2022/23. Of those who responded to the consultation, 36 out of 84 gave a response to this question.

1.1.18 Again, the responses to this question were varied and the most common themes, with a response of four comments or more have been summarised below:

- *Disagree with Council Tax Increases / Can't afford Council Tax increases (Seven Comments).*
- *Agree with Council Tax increases with Council Tax Increases. (Five comments).*
- *Too much wastage / Unnecessary expenditure (Four comments)*

1.1.19 Further details of the types of comments received can be found in Appendix H Section two.