

## APPENDIX B



# The Future of Council Services-

2018/19 Budget Consultation



## Background

The Council delivers a vast range of services to over 127,000 residents. Our budget is reducing year on year whilst the demand for services, such as education and social care, is increasing. We will need to make difficult decisions on how we prioritize spending.

Each year when setting our budget for the next financial year we invite residents and other key stakeholders to have their say on the decisions that are likely to affect them.

## Methodology

The Future of Council Services 2018-19 budget consultation ran from 08 December 2017 until 19 January 2018. The consultation was promoted online and to our key partners and stakeholders. A video explaining the Council's current financial position was published on Youtube, on the Council's website and promoted via social media. The aim of the video was to inform residents of the current financial situation in a short and simple format to encourage an informed response to the consultation. In addition to the video there was a Frequently Asked Questions section on the consultation page which explained the Council's financial position in more detail.

Residents, Council staff and other key stakeholders were invited to share their views either by responding to an online survey or in writing to the Council's engagement officer.

## Results

There were 310 responses to the consultation. 225 from local residents, 64 from Council staff, 10 from local councillors, 3 from town and community councils and 5 from other stakeholders. 3 respondents did not provide this information.

### Profile of Respondents

Of the 243 respondents to the external stakeholder survey, 52% were male and 47% female.

2% of respondents are aged under 18, 5% are aged 18 – 24, 13% are aged 25 – 34, 31% are aged 35 – 54, 42% are aged 55 – 77 and 7% are aged 75 or older.

3% of respondents stated that their day to day activities are limited a lot because of a disability, 12% are limited a little, 80% are not limited and 5% would prefer not to say.

53% of respondents described their national identity as Welsh, 12% English, 1% Scottish and 30% said British. 3% chose not to disclose this information.

92% of respondents described themselves as White – Welsh/ English /Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British. 6% preferred not to say, 1% said ‘any other white background’ and 1% said Asian/ Asian British – Pakistani.

When asked about religion, 41% of respondents stated that they have no religion, 46% are Christian, 2% are Jewish, 1% are Muslim and 8% did not disclose this information.

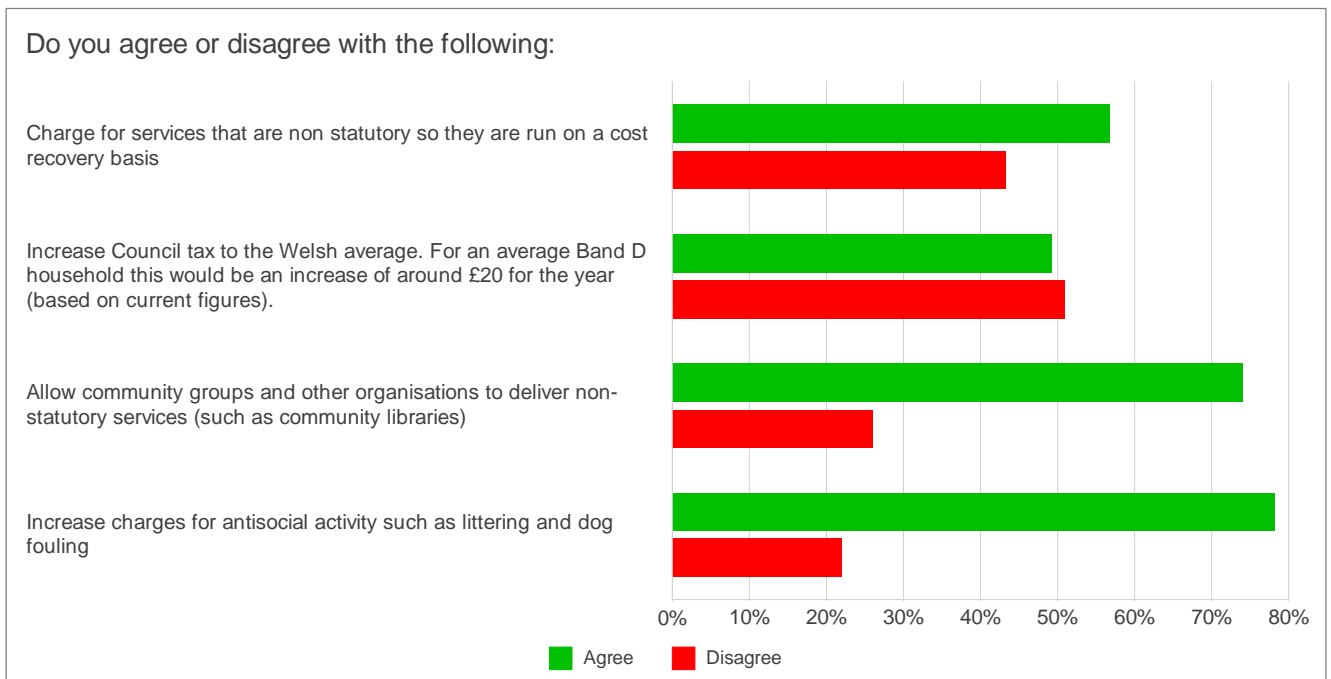
61% of respondents are married, 17% are single, 5% are widowed, 4% are divorced and 1% are in a registered same-sex civil partnership. 12% of respondents did not disclose this information.

Finally, when asked about pregnancy, 3% of respondents stated that they are currently or have been pregnant within the past year, 85% are not and 12% preferred not to say.

### Stakeholder Survey Responses

The first question asked if respondents felt that significant changes are needed in the way the Council operates in order to make the required savings in the next financial year. 80% of respondents agreed, 20% disagreed.

Respondents were then asked about proposals to help meet the cost of delivering services, the chart below shows how they responded.



The majority of respondents, 78%, were in favour of increasing charges for antisocial behavior. 74% also agreed with allowing community groups and other organisations to deliver non-statutory services.

Fewer respondents, 56%, agreed with charging for services that are non-statutory so that they are run on a cost recovery basis.

51% of respondents disagreed with increasing Council tax to the Welsh average.

23 respondents, 9%, confirmed that they are part of a community organization that could help to deliver services going forward. The various organisations are listed below:

- Community Council
- Housing trust
- Chapel
- Youth forum
- Town Council
- Third sector organization
- 50+ Forum
- Community group

Finally, there were 153 suggestions to help the Council to generate income and meet the savings target for 2018-19. The most frequent suggestions include:

- Reduce councillors pay and expenses; (22 mentions)
- Do not increase council tax but make cuts (21 mentions)
- Cut back on projects like 20mph zones and cycle lanes; (20 mentions)
- Reduce senior management roles and salaries; (18 mentions)
- Increase fines for antisocial behavior and actively pursue them; (10 mentions)
- Remove free parking in town centres; (9 mentions)
- Dispense with community councils mayors and chauffer driven cars; (5 mentions); and
- Operate more shared services with neighbouring authorities; (4 mentions)

### Written Responses

Llandough Community Council responded to the consultation with a list of points for consideration as follows:

- Protect the budget for education;
- Increase Council tax to the Welsh average;
- Avoid cuts to services for the elderly, children and other vulnerable people;
- Review councillor allowances and expenses;
- Increase penalty charges for antisocial behavior;
- Nominal charges for parking should be considered;
- Do not reduce funding for voluntary groups;
- Do not sell off assets;
- Obtain maximum income from adult sporting groups using Council facilities;
- Consider investment in infrastructure projects, such as Dinas Powys Bypass and assess any adverse impact on on-going revenue commitments; and

- Form a Think Tank involving representatives from the Council and the voluntary and business sector to look at innovative ways to manage current and future budget reductions.

Welsh St Donats Community Council confirmed that the consultation had been considered but they had no specific comments to make.

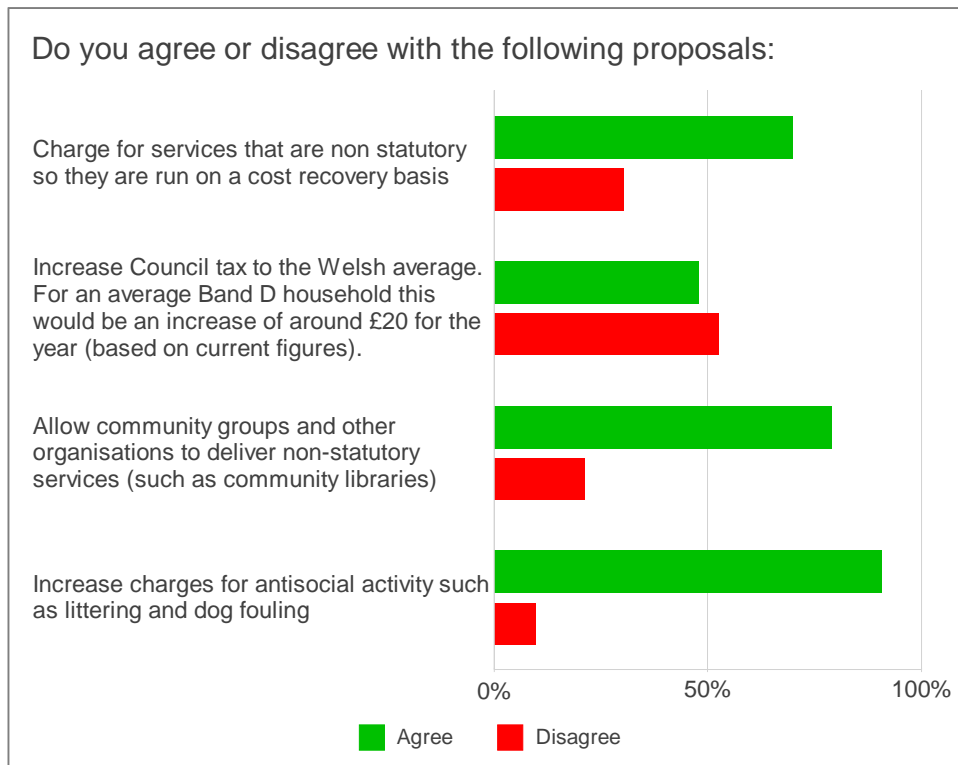
Barry Town Council wrote to share the views of their Working Party. They noted:

- Agree that significant changes are required;
- Agree in principal with charging for non-statutory services but require more information;
- Members considered the question about Council tax to be political decision and therefore did not respond;
- Consider community groups delivering services on a case by case basis;
- Make effective use of current measures for antisocial behavior
- Community groups, including this one, could deliver services on behalf of the Council;
- Suggestion for meeting the savings target: ensure that the Reshaping programme is progressed quicker and more effectively.

### Staff Survey Responses

86% of the 64 respondents agreed that significant changes are needed to the way the Council operates in order to meet the required savings in the next financial year.

Staff were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following proposals:



91% of staff agree with increasing charges for antisocial behavior, 79% agreed with allowing community groups and other organisations to deliver non-statutory services, and 70% agreed with charging for services that are non-statutory so that they are run on a cost recovery basis. As with the external stakeholder survey, 52% disagreed with increasing Council tax to the Welsh average.

Staff suggestions for generating income and meeting the savings requirements include:

- Reducing the number of Councillors, abolishing the role of Mayor, abolishing Town & Community Councils; (5 mentions)
- Creating more arm's length businesses in order to sell services; (5 mentions);
- Do not increase Council tax; (4 mentions);
- Reduce senior manager roles and salaries (3 mentions) and
- Using Council assets for weddings and events to increase income; (2 mentions)

A number of respondents also used this opportunity to raise concerns about increasing Council tax, respondents have noted that because of the cuts residents are paying increased rates but seeing fewer services.

Staff were not asked any equality monitoring questions to ensure that their responses were anonymous.

## Meeting with Vale Youth Cabinet

The Council's engagement officer attended a meeting of the Vale Youth Cabinet during the consultation period. The budget explanation video was shown before we discussed ways of generating income and young people's priorities and opinions. The following points were raised:

- The Council should look to challenge Welsh Government on the amount of funding it receives for education;
- Reasonable charges for events, some events are good enough to pay to attend and some aren't;
- Alternatively stallholders should be charged a small fee for their pitch at a Council run event;
- Increase the amount of seasonal events offered, e.g. Halloween at Cosmeston, Easter egg hunt on Barry Island;
- Some youth services should be run on a cost-recovery basis; and
- Increase charges for hiring Council buildings.

## Budget Consultation Trends

Question	2018-19 result	2017 – 18 result	2016 – 17 result	2015 – 16 result
Do you agree that significant changes are needed to the way in which the Council operates if we are to make the savings required for next year's budget?	83% agree	Not asked	83% agree	Not asked
Charge for services that are non-statutory	64% agree	66% agree	57% agree	59% agree
Increase Council tax to the Welsh average	48% agree	68% agree	Not asked	35% agree
Allow community groups and other organisations to deliver non-statutory services	77% agree	83% agree	66% agree	75% agree
Increase charges for antisocial activity such as littering and dog fouling	84% agree	Not asked	81% agree	Not asked
	307 responses	1000 respondents (POS)	209 responses	407 respondents

Although these figures are not like for like in that the exercises in which they were captured were slightly different from year to year and the wording of the questions was slightly different, they do demonstrate that responses are consistent.

## Conclusions

There is support for increasing fines for antisocial behavior, allowing community groups and other organisations to deliver non-statutory services and introducing charges for non-statutory services. The majority of respondents did not support the proposal to increase Council tax.

There were also a number of comments regarding Councillors pay and expenses and that the Council should seek to reduce this. The same applies to senior management roles and salaries, a number of suggestions to reduce these. There were also a number of comments regarding projects such as cycle lanes and 20mph zones, residents in particular see these as a waste of money.