

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

Budget Timetable and Budget Consultation 2025/261. Purpose of Report

To advise on the budget consultation process for 2025/26 and to set out the proposed timetable and budget scrutiny process.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the budget setting process for 2025/26 and the Budget Consultation questionnaire be approved.

3. Detail

The proposed budget preparation timetable and budget consultation process for 2025/26 is set out in **Appendix 1**. This will culminate in the overall budget report being recommended to Council for approval in March 2025.

Under the Constitution, it is proposed that elements of the budget are reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for detailed scrutiny. An overall budget report will then be presented to Cabinet on 4 February 2025 for recommendation to Council on 5 March 2025.

The budget consultation process proposed for 2025/26 is similar to that adopted previously, using a web-based survey that is publicised through social media. The survey is attached at **Appendix 2** and includes questions relating to a resident's method of access of particular Council services, the preferred means of interacting with the Council and the impact of cost of living issues.

Promotional activity will include social media messages, 'email-me' bulletins, press releases, website promotion and direct engagement with groups, organisations and individuals on the Council's stakeholder map. All responders will be entered into a prize draw.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The budget consultation with local residents will provide useful feedback to inform the budget setting process that will culminate in the overall budget report being recommended to Council for approval on 5 March 2025.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a duty upon local authorities to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers before setting the budget. Whilst there is no specific statutory requirement to consult with residents, local authorities were placed under a general duty to 'inform, consult and involve' representatives of local people when exercising their functions by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. This was repealed and replaced by more prescriptive forms of involvement by the Localism Act 2011.

8. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The proposed survey includes consideration of the Council's approach to tackling climate. The survey will be available online although anyone who is unable to complete the form online can send their comments direct to the Finance Services team at the Council Offices in Beeston.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

13. Background Papers

Nil

Appendix 1

Budget Timetable and Consultation Process

Date/Period	Activity
8 October 2024	Online survey published on or around this date
4 November 2024	Deadline for capital and revenue submissions
14 November 2024	Online survey closes
During October and November 2024	Compilation of Business Plans and proposed annual revenue budgets and three-year capital programme (Financial Plans)
During November and December 2024	Scrutiny of Business Plans and Financial Plans by General Management Team
3 December 2024 and/or 7 January 2025	Results of budget consultation exercise and draft budget proposals to Cabinet along with the setting of the Council Tax Base
20 and 21 January 2025	Scrutiny of Business Plans and Financial Plans by Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4 February 2025	Budget proposals presented to Cabinet
5 March 2025	Budget approved by Council

Appendix 2**Proposed Budget Consultation Questionnaire 2025/26****“Help us with delivering and improving your community services**

Broxtowe Borough Council provides a wide range of services including housing, waste collection and recycling, health, leisure, business support, planning and much more. We are proud to serve our communities. Each year, we ask residents for their views as we start to prepare the budget for the new financial year. Please help us to deliver your services.

We aim to continually improve the services we offer to you. Your views are very important to us so please take a few minutes to complete the survey below. Your answers will help inform the budget process.

You can read more about our strategies, plans and policies on our webpage.

This survey will close on 14 November 2024.

Questions

1. What is your opinion of the following Council services over the last 12 months?

Options: Very satisfied / Satisfied / No opinion / Dissatisfied / Not used

- Household Waste Collection (black lidded bin)
- Garden Waste Collection (brown lidded bin)
- Kerbside Recycling (green lidded bin, glass bag or red-lidded glass bin)
- Street cleanliness (litter collection, graffiti removal, fly tipping, neighbourhood wardens)
- Parks and Nature Conservation (parks, open spaces)
- Leisure Services (leisure centres, arts and culture, sports development)
- Arts and Culture
- Planning (planning applications and planning policy)
- Economic Development (support to businesses, regeneration, town centre management, business growth)
- Public Protection (licensing, food hygiene inspections, nuisance complaints)
- Revenues and Benefits (housing benefit and council tax support payments, collection of council tax and business rates)
- Housing Services (housing options advice, homelessness, provision of affordable housing, tenancies)
- Public Car Parks
- Community Safety (anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, alcohol awareness)
- Electoral Services (elections, voting)

- Bereavement Services (crematorium, cemeteries)
2. What have we done to improve our services to you? Have we done something positive over the last year which has helped make a difference to you? For example, we have secured new community and sports facilities at Hickings Lane in Stapleford, added more homes through our ambitious council house building and acquisitions programme, progressed with the delivery of town centre development and regeneration, continued to invest in our parks and open spaces and our cultural heritage at Brinsley Headstocks. Please explain.

3. Do you pay Council Tax?

Options: Yes / No

4. Council Tax is an important way of raising income to provide the services that we rely on in the community. Please tell us what your preferred and least preferred approaches are to help us meet the needs of our community? For example, last year you told us to keep Council Tax low and increase fees and charges, so we took the decision to introduce a modest car parking charge to help protect services.

Options: Most preferred option / Second most preferred option / Third most preferred option / Fourth most preferred option / Least preferred option

- Increased council tax levels
 - Increased fees and charges
 - Provided fewer services
 - Generate income from commercial activity
 - Support Community Wealth building approaches to economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.
5. Of the following Council services, do you think we have the balance right or are there any you think should have their funding increased, decreased or stay the same?

Options: Significant increase / Moderate Increase / Stay the same / Moderate decrease / Significant decrease

- Household Waste Collection (black lidded bin)
- Garden Waste Collection (brown lidded bin)
- Kerbside Recycling (green lidded bin, glass bag or red-lidded glass bin)
- Street cleanliness (litter collection, graffiti removal, fly tipping, neighbourhood wardens)
- Parks and Nature Conservation (parks, open spaces)
- Leisure Services (leisure centres, arts and culture, sports development)
- Planning (planning applications and planning policy)

- Economic Development (support to businesses, regeneration, town centre management, business growth)
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6. We are still facing significant pressures on local government finances and Broxtowe remains amongst the lowest of all local authorities in the country in terms of reduced government funding. Despite this, we try our hardest to be a listening Council. Do you have any ideas about how we could increase income, reduce costs or make savings to help us balance the budget?
7. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with:
- a. The way in which the Council provides services
 - b. Your local area as a place to live
- Options: Very Satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Dissatisfied / Very dissatisfied
8. Do you feel that the Council listens to you?
- Options: Strongly agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
9. Thinking about cost of living issues, other than financial assistance, is there any further support you feel the Council could provide you with?
10. If the Council could do one thing to make a difference to you, what would it be?
11. We are a Council that is committed to tackling the climate crisis, and our last Local Government Association review said that our approach in this regard was trailblazing. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Council's approach to tackling climate change?
- Options: Very satisfied / Satisfied / Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied / Dissatisfied / Very dissatisfied
12. How frequently do you access Council services?
- Options: A few times a year / Monthly / Weekly / Daily

13. Overall, how satisfied are you with the way you can access Council services?

Options: Very satisfied / Satisfied / Neutral / Unsatisfied / Very unsatisfied

14. How do you prefer to conduct business with the Council? Please select your most preferred option and least preferred option.

Options: Most preferred / Least preferred

- Phone
- Email
- Social media
- Post
- In person
- Via a Councillor
- Other

15. Please explain why these are your most preferred and least preferred methods

16. The Council is reviewing its Digital Strategy as we look to continually develop and enhance our services to the community. Do you believe that the Council provides an appropriate level of digital accessibility? Please explain and outline any concerns you may have in terms of accessibility.

Tell us about you

We want to make sure that our services are provided fairly and to those who need them. The information collected helps us get a picture of who contacts us, uses or does not access our services, so will help us improve what we provide and reduce potential barriers to access.

Please answer the questions below by ticking the boxes that you feel most describes you. Some questions may feel personal, but the information we collect will be kept confidential and secure. The better the information is that we collect the more effective our monitoring will be.

16. Which of the following areas do you live in?

Options: Attenborough; Awsworth; Beeston; Bramcote; Brinsley; Chilwell; Cossall; Eastwood; Greasley; Kimberley; Nuthall; Newthorpe; Stapleford; Strelley Village; Toton; and Trowell

17. How would you best describe your gender?

Options: Male; Female; Another way; Prefer not to say

18. Which age group do you belong to?

Options: Under 18; 18-24; 25-29; 30-44; 45-59; 60-64; 65+

19. Ethnicity

Options: White – British; White – Irish; White - other background; Asian or Asian British – Indian; Asian or Asian British – Pakistani; Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi; Asian or Asian British - other background; Black or Black British – Caribbean; Black or Black British – African; Black or Black British - other background; Mixed - White and Black Caribbean; Mixed - White and Black African; Mixed - White and Asian; Mixed - other background; Chinese; Any other ethnic group

20. Do you consider yourself as disabled or have any long-term health problems that limit daily activity?

Options: Yes; No