Appendix 2

CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21

JANUARY 2020

1. Introduction

1.1. Between November 2019 and January 2020, the Council undertook an eight-week period of consultation on its budget proposals for 2020/2021, prior to making the final decisions on its budget.

1.2. The Council reported on its priorities, the budget setting context and local financial position and gave an outline of the proposals to balance the Council's 2020/2021 budget. The Council asked for views on its proposals for delivering services in the future while achieving the savings needed.

2. Consultation Process

2.1. The Council hosted a survey on its engagement platform Let's Talk Coventry asking for people's views on the budget proposals. This survey was publicised through the Council website, Facebook and Twitter pages. There was a total of 117 respondents as well as several emailed comments. The results of the survey are summarised in section 3.

2.2. In addition, a meeting was held with the Chamber of Commerce during January to understand the views of local businesses on the Council's budget proposals. The issues raised during the meeting are summarised in section 4.

2.3. The Trade Unions were also consulted on the draft budget proposals and the Council continues to consult with the Trades Unions on the impact and implementation of the Council's budget.

3. Outcomes of the Consultation on the Council's Budget Proposals

3.1. The main points that were raised through the public consultation on the Council's budget proposals are set out below. A table is included at the end of this report that provides a selection of the comments made during the consultation by key theme and the profile of respondents.

3.2. In addition to survey responses written responses were received from the TUC Trades Union, Unison and the Federation of Small Businesses

3.3. A full list of comments from the meetings, online survey and written feedback can be received by contacting paul.jennings@coventry.gov.uk.

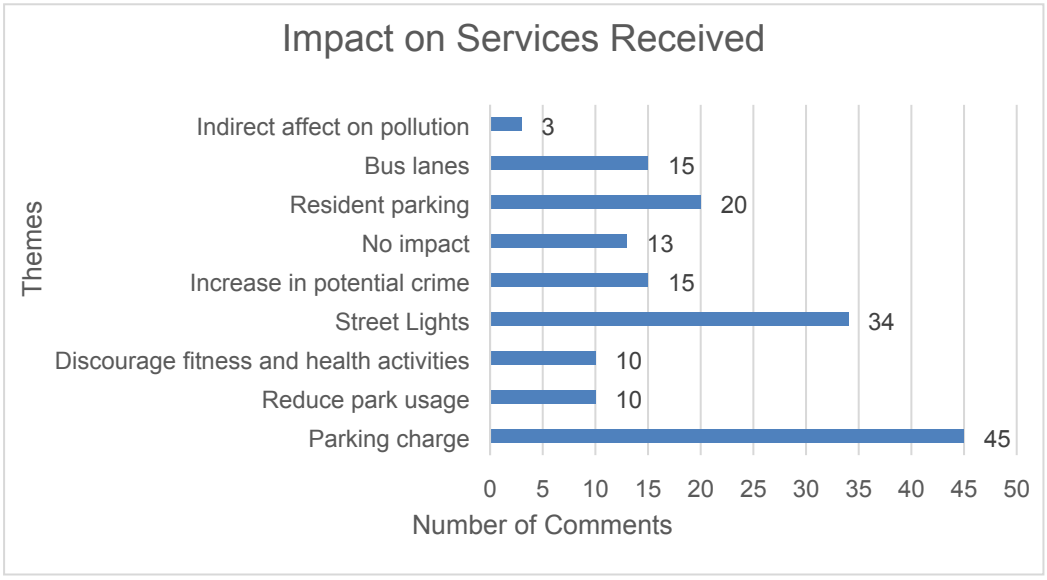
Feedback from the on-line survey and written feedback

3.4. Comments were received from respondents on specific proposals included in the pre-Budget Report. The graph below shows the comments received by theme. The majority of comments focused on the possibility of charging to park at the War Memorial Park, out of 45 responses only 1 of the respondents was in favour of this proposal. A large number of respondents pointed to the fact that the park is used for

health and recreational purposes and introducing a charge would reduce people's ability to use the park.

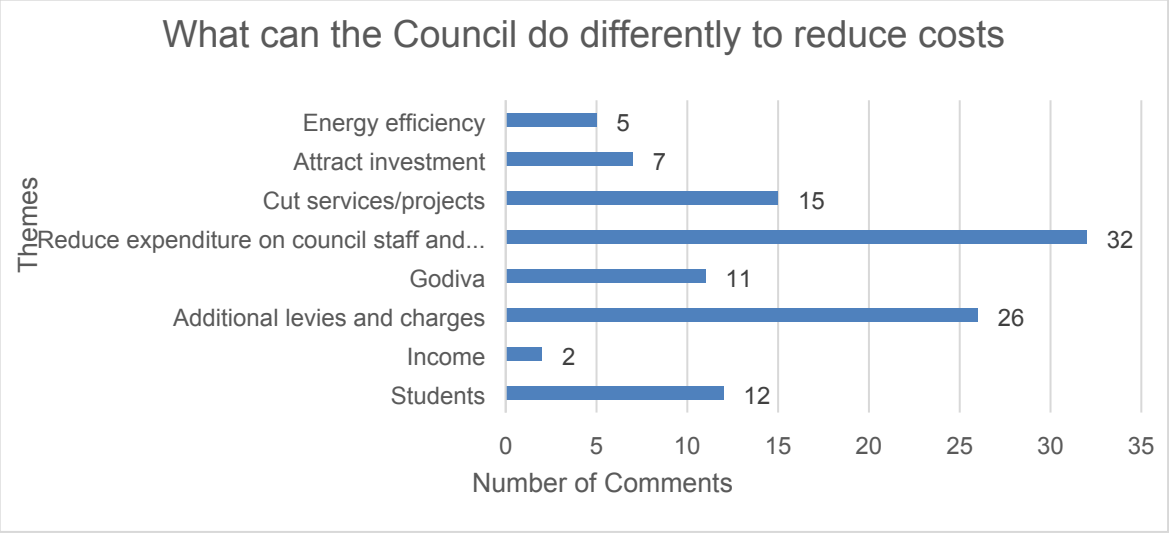
The proposal to turn off street lighting received the next highest amount of comments (34), all responses were not in favour of the proposal the majority stating that it would lead to increases in crime and perceptions that this would negatively affect personal safety.

In terms of the residents parking proposal there was a feeling that more information was needed before comments could be made as to what the impact would be.



3.5. Respondents were asked what impact they though the proposal might have on different equality groups, a large number of respondents felt that they would impact equally on all groups. The elderly (18) and the disabled (15) were mentioned as being potentially more affected by the proposals.

3.6. Respondents were asked what they thought the Council could do differently to reduce costs. The majority of comments centred on reducing expenditure on Council staff and Councillors.



Support was given to raising money through additional levies and charges, a number felt that there should be sliding scales of charges, where appropriate, and that those that can afford it can offer to pay more, others felt more should be done with ensuring council tax is collected and an additional strongly felt view was that students should pay council tax.

A number of respondents suggested that the city should be looking forward, rather than cutting costs, it should be making use of the two universities and investing in new technologies as well as investing in the city centre to make it an attractive destination for both businesses and residents.

3.7. A response from the Federation of Small Businesses supported the proposals around increased recovery of parking and bus gate fines, especially where illegal parking is causing obstruction to premises. In relation to parking charge increases they expressed concern about the impact this would have on high street retailers and independent businesses and suggest any changes should be undertaken in consultation with business owners. FSB does welcome the fact that the city has a number of free parking spaces after 6pm and would like to see enhanced signage and promotion of these. Concerns were also raised about the proposal to reduce the Highways maintenance budget and the impact this would have on small businesses that are heavily reliant on the local road network, potholes are a major concern and the FSB would like to see the budget maintained so repairs can be undertaken quickly. The FSB would welcome ongoing engagement with the Council.

3.8. The response from UNISON expressed concern over: the modelling of residential care provision especially the staffing model. They stated they would not support the removal of provision of corporate mobile phones as there should be no compunction to utilise personal devices for work purposes. A number of questions and requests for information were raised: how savings can be made with already stretched staffing in housing/HR and transformation staff, what the impact on staff will be with the potential rationalisation of space at Friargate, concern at the potential risk to health and safety with a reduction in cleaning staff, the impact on reduction to migrant services and removal of blood borne virus testing and whether the Coventry Warm scheme will cease or be funded by alternative partners.

3.9. The response from Coventry TUC suggested the Council should reject all spending and saving proposals and instead contact other Labour authorities and convene a conference to campaign for higher funding settlements. They also suggested that in the immediate future city council reserve and borrowing powers should be used to obviate the need for any cuts or increases in charges.

4. Feedback from Consultation Meeting with the Chamber of Commerce – January 15th

4.1. A presentation was given on the Council's financial proposals and future. Discussion and questions included issues around the redevelopment of the city centre and plans to attract new retail. Comments were supportive of the redevelopment of City Centre South and the idea that a new model focusing on leisure and housing needs to be looked at. Questions were raised about the supply and demand of student accommodation and whether supply might outstrip demand and information on the possibility of the introduction of a potential congestion charge.

Examples of Comments by Theme – January 2020

A full list of comments is available on request.

Priority / Theme	Comments
Charging at the War Memorial Park	• If you are going to introduce charges for parking at memorial, a number of people will park on surrounding streets which will increase difficulty parking for local residents • Charging for car parking at War Memorial Park should be free to users of the Park. At least 400,000 people use the Park annually (Citivision summer 2019). This is Coventry's best-used park, providing sport and recreational space for Coventrians of all ages and all ethnicities and a memorial to the 2,600 men of Coventry who gave their lives in World War 1 and those men and women who have died in all the armed conflicts since. It is of immense value to Coventry. The Park should be free at the point of use. • A car parking charge for all park users would discriminate against all residents of Coventry who are unable to access the Park by foot or bicycle. It would, in effect provide a high-quality park principally for the residents of Earlsdon and Cheylesmore. This cannot be equitable. • The implementation of parking charges will reduce overall use of the Park by the community it is meant to serve, which will adversely impact the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Coventry and surrounding areas. We believe that any such parking charges should be either zero or very nominal for the first 2-3 hours of parking at any of the War Memorial Park's car parks.
Street Lighting	• Turning off street lights will increase crime even further in coventry city. • Street lighting is essential especially in isolated area's the number of lamppost's has been reduced already and the ones that are left are in areas where they are needed. Surely with the amount of crime, stabbings, and rape in the Coventry area you should be looking at installing more street lighting not cutting down on it. As one of the older generation of this city I consider being able to see who is around and about my property at night and in the early hours is essential to my feeling safe and secure.
Residents Parking	• i would agree with all of the above proposals apart from residents parking charge! you are increasing council taxes how on earth can you propose residence have to also pay for the pleasure of parking in a road where they live! this is total madness. • resident parking charges - your report doesn't actually say what the changes are
Additional charges and levies	• It seems unfair to introduce cost-saving measures that penalise residents who have done nothing wrong. However, charges for incorrect use of bus lanes etc seems a fair way to raise revenue. • Chase up unpaid council tax - should be able to deduct @ source for those constantly offending • Start charging students Council Tax. The amount of student accommodation continues to increase, they should contribute towards to operation of our society. • Introduce a Pollution Tax to all city petrol stations. Lobby central government for an Emergency Fund to tackle Coventry's illegal air pollution levels. Improve and subsidise (ideally free) electric bus services and re-green areas of the city.

Priority / Theme	Comments
	• Have optional charges for things e.g. donate £5 for the bin collections etc. Donate £10 to improve parks. • Don't waste any more money on vanity projects • Stop wasting money on a variety of levels of management, stop duplication of activity with Council management • Please do protect the vulnerable - old people, children, single mothers, the disabled and refugees especially. I would willingly pay more council tax to help them and keep our remaining libraries and the Herbert Museum open too.
More information	• To take residents with you, is there a cheap way to let people know why savings are needed, constraints on what can be done etc.? • Not everyone is digitally active. Not everyone visits council premises on a regular basis to get a paper form. How else do they find out about Surveys and have the chance to participate? Have Outreach stands in supermarkets, the city centre, Wasps games, Blaze Ice Hockey Matches, etc., where people can complete paper forms. Have more Community Noticeboards - in the town centre etc, where honest information about the proposals/implications can be show in a visual manner, encouraging participation. Not everyone is aware of the nature of the reduction in Council Funding - they only hear about what they are going to lose. Not the background as to why. Find a way to let people know why the savings are needed. • It is interesting to note that there is no inclusion of the financial pressures that will result as part of the transition to a low carbon future. I would expect the council to have included budget allocation to deal with the climate crisis as it will impact every part of the council's services. • I would like to see Cllr's more involved in how funding is spent in each of their areas, they could how quarterly community sessions where residents too have some input in to how the funds were spent in the area. I would like to see more information on what is being done to improve our streets, be informed how we are supported business in the city new and old. I like that you are asking for opinions from residents - it would be nice to see a response from CCC to the comments.
Other Comments	• The City has 'Peace and Reconciliation' as its strap-line, but apart from the Cathedral and a few minor charities/ enterprises, it's not nearly well known enough. As a nation, many say we are divided and in need of a bold new way. Coventry has, time and time again, proven itself to be innovative and at the forefront of new ways of thinking and acting. Can we reclaim and capitalise on the legacy of Peace and Reconciliation in this time of national tension? • There is a real risk that some of the proposals will have a very detrimental effect on the quality of lives of many people. Reducing access to the War Memorial Park for the socially isolated and inflicting traffic and parking on the local residents changes one of the gems of the City to a public nuisance. Turning off lights will make all

Priority / Theme	Comments
	people feel less safe and less comfortable but will have a disproportionate effect on the elderly. These seemingly minor changes will have adverse impacts which are disproportionate to any financial gain for the Council. • Capitalise on the two Universities' reputation for technology by promoting the City as a high-tech, sustainable and environmentally innovative centre. This is where the future of investment and economics is heading.

Profile of Respondents

How are you responding to this consultation?

As a member of the public: 113
As a representative of an organisation: 3

How would you describe yourself?

Male: 48
Female: 53
In another way: 2
Prefer not to say: 8

Is your gender different from the gender you were assigned at birth, or are you in the process of reassigning it?

Yes	3
No	88
Prefer not to say	13

What age group are you in?

25-34: 17
35-44: 26
45-54: 23
55-64: 21
65-74: 20
75-84: 3
85 or over: 1

Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

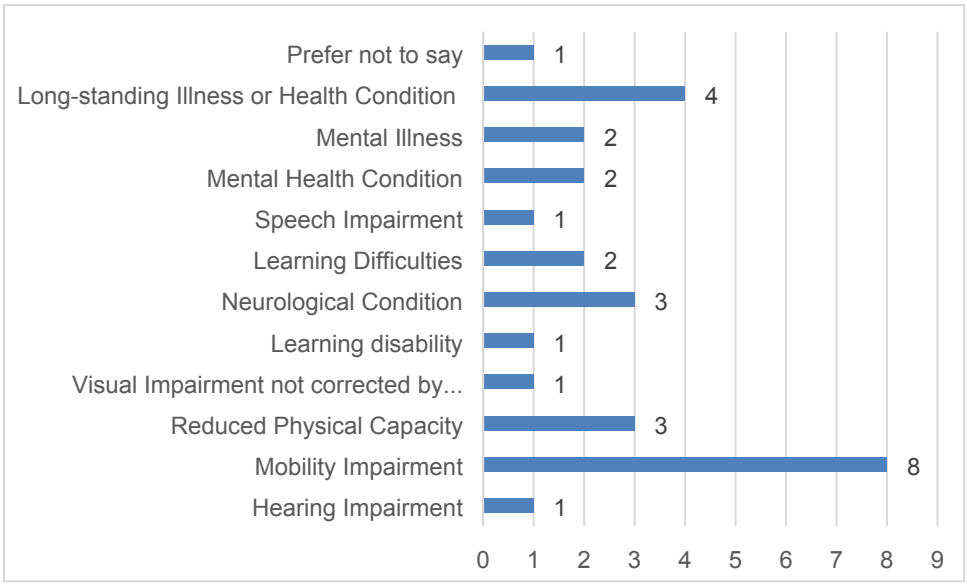
White British: 76
Asian or Asian British Indian: 4
Other Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background: 3
Other White Background: 2
White Gypsy or Irish Traveler: 2
White Irish: 1
Arab:1
Other: 4
Prefer Not To Say: 13

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

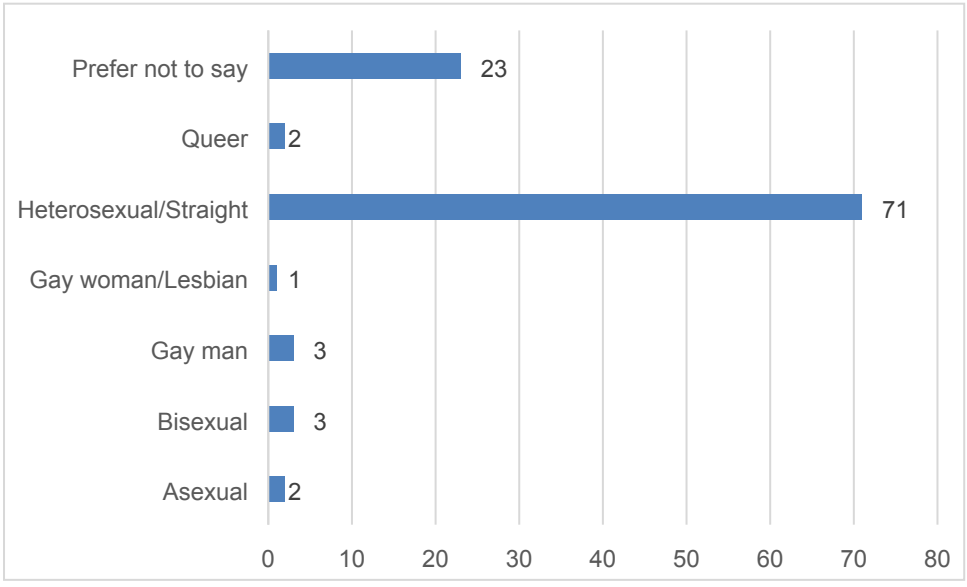
Yes: 13

No: 91

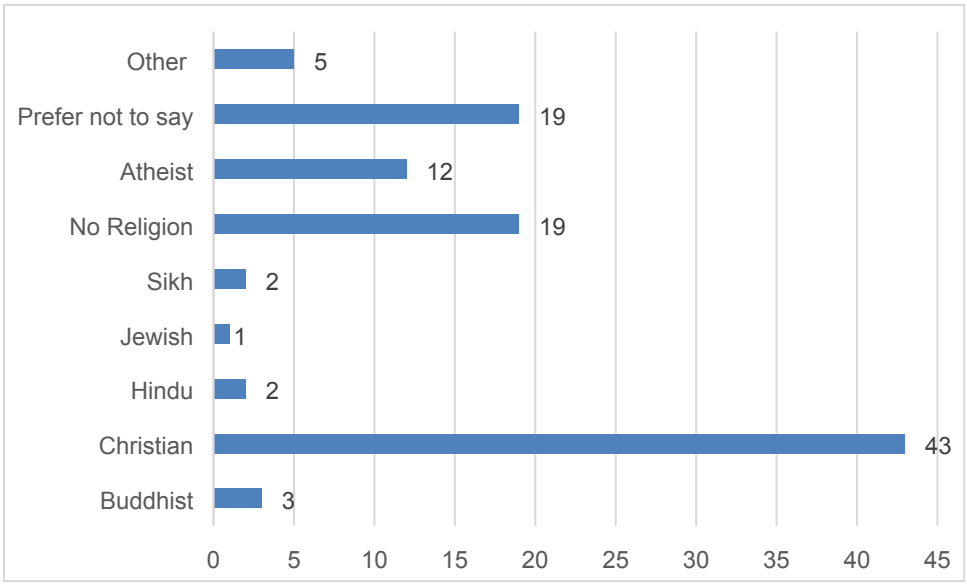
How would you describe your impairment? (Please choose as many as apply)



What is your sexual orientation?



Do you consider yourself to be?



Are you, or will you soon be, a care leaver?

Yes	6
No	99