



Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)**

**Date: 9 October 2024**

**Subject: Pre-Budget Engagement 2025/26**

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### **1 Purpose of the note**

- 1.1 Local Authorities are required to set a balanced budget prior to the beginning of each financial year. Historically in Coventry, members have approved a pre-budget report in December each year following which a formal public consultation process happens to inform the final budget setting proposals in February. This note proposes a pre-budget consultation process for 3 weeks in October 2024 to inform member choices in the December pre-budget report.

### **2 Recommendations**

Members of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the proposed pre budget engagement included at Appendix A.
- b) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) to consider as part of the proposed pre budget consultation proposed to take place in October 2024.

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 All Local Authorities must legally set a balanced budget prior to the beginning of each financial year. Coventry City Council has historically approved a final budget and set Council tax in February each year, following a pre-budget report in December, and a formal eight week consultation between December and early February.
- 3.2 In previous years, the formal engagement process has taken the form of public meetings, workforce meetings, and online surveys. Historically however, public engagement has been limited. This additional process aims to improve the level of engagement from residents.

- 3.3 Given the decreasing real terms resources for local government as a sector, and the widespread activity and inflationary pressures across all services, particularly social care and homelessness, this has meant steady year on year reductions in resources for non-statutory service areas. At the same time, there has been a steady increase in the amount that residents and businesses pay for services through Council Tax and Business rates.
- 3.4 The squeeze on public finances has left little or no room for policy choices to invest in many of the services which both the people of Coventry and elected members value greatly, often resulting in disinvestment in many cases.
- 3.5 The City Council has a formal medium-term plan which sets out its priorities, called the One Coventry Plan (2022-2030), which was recently refreshed and approved in March 2023, following its own consultation process. There are strong links between service priorities and the Councils medium term financial sustainability set out in the plan.
- 3.6 It is proposed to create even stronger links between the Council priorities in the One Coventry Plan and the budget setting process by carrying out a pre-budget engagement exercise in October, which would inform the proposals to elected members in the pre-budget report in December
- 3.7 The exercise would not include any financial proposals, but would seek views on what taxpayers in the city value most from their Council, and how they would prioritise services, such that members and officers can better shape budget proposals for the following financial year.
- 3.8 Attached is a draft survey, which is proposed to be publicised following Scrutiny Board. It is hoped that by promoting the survey widely, this will attract more members of the public and other stakeholders to take part in shaping how the City spends and deploys its resources.
- 3.9 Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board is requested to consider the draft documents and provide feedback to the Cabinet Member of Strategic Finance and Resources, in order to inform the process to aid its effectiveness.

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## APPENDIX A

As we shape our financial plans in Coventry, we want to hear from local people about their views and values.

We would be really keen to hear your views about:

- the things that concern both you and your family; and
- where we should focus resources as we work to improve lives across our city.

### 1. Which of the following are you concerned about? (please select up to three responses)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My physical health and fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Levels of crime in my town/neighbourhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My mental health and wellbeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-social behaviour in my community    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being lonely                   | <input type="checkbox"/> The local environment/ pollution         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness of street and local area     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing security               | <input type="checkbox"/> Condition of roads and pavements         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing affordability          | <input type="checkbox"/> Community relations                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment security            | <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Future job prospects           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paying bills                   | <input type="radio"/> None of these                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational provision          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raising children               |   |

### 2. Coventry City Council has set out a range of commitments that it will deliver over the next six years. Which of these should the council prioritise? (Please select up to four responses)

Good local jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attract new investment for businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invest in new technologies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enable more 'sustainable' and active travel	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grow the 'green' economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support communities to tackle climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve energy efficiency in homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minimise the amount of waste generated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote biodiversity and green spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage healthier lifestyles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help vulnerable people to live independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tackle violence and abuse in all forms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve standards in education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide support to struggling families	<input type="checkbox"/>	Protect vulnerable children		Increase digital inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>

**3. How strongly do you agree or disagree that Coventry City Council should do each of the following when faced with financial pressures? (Select one per statement)**

	<b>Agree strongly</b>	<b>Agree slightly</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree slightly</b>	<b>Disagree strongly</b>
Introduce charges for some services which are currently free/subsidised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduce or stop delivering some services to protect others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage local people and communities to deliver certain services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help people to help themselves more so they have less reliance on publicly funded services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritise spending to protect services for the most vulnerable and those without choice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use / partner with other organisational bodies to provide services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Please rank the following Council services in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important and 12 being the least important.**

- Adult Social Care (for example support for carers and specialist equipment to help people live at home)
- Schools (special needs support and help with school admissions)
- Childcare and Early Years (provide parents to be and expectant parents with extra support)
- Environment and Waste (Tackling fly tipping and waste collections)
- Highways and Lighting (Road maintenances and street lighting)
- Public Health (Helping with stopping smoking, alcohol and drugs prevention and mental health support)
- Housing and Homelessness (Improving access to social housing and support for homeless families)
- Sport and Leisure (increasing access to sports activities and facilities)
- Library Services (availability of library services near where you live)
- Economic Development (helping regeneration, jobs and skills)
- Street Cleaning (Reducing litter on streets)
- Parks (Better access to and facilities at local parks)

**5. If you have any suggestions how we might do things differently, please tell us below.**



**Please select which area of Coventry you live or work in (please select one)**

- Bablake
- Binley and Willenhall
- Cheylesmore
- Earlsdon
- Foleshill
- Henley
- Holbrook
- Longford
- Lower Stoke
- Radford
- St Michaels
- Sherbourne
- Upper Stoke
- Wainbody
- Westwood
- Whoberley
- Woodlands
- Wyken
- I do not live or work in Coventry
- Other

**Tell us about yourself.**

**These optional questions help us to understand how different people are affected by the proposals:**

- How did you find out about this survey? (please select one)
- Councillor
- Facebook
- From a friend/family member
- From a Voluntary, Community Sector Organisation
- From Coventry City Council's website
- Newsletter from Coventry City Council
- Newsletter from Let's Talk Coventry
- Newspaper
- Poster
- X (Twitter)
- Other

**What age group are you in?**

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 or over

**How would you describe yourself?**

- Male
- Female
- In another way
- Prefer not to say

**Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?**

- Yes
- No, write in gender identity
- Prefer not to say

**Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?**

- Straight/Heterosexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation, write in
- Prefer not to say

**Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?**

- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- White Roma
- Other White Background
- Mixed White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed White and Black African
- Mixed White and Asian
- Other Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Background
- Asian or Asian British Indian
- Asian or Asian British Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi

- Asian or Asian British Chinese
- Other Asian Background
- Black or Black British African
- Black or Black British Caribbean
- Other/Black/African/Caribbean background
- Arab
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**What is your religion?**

- No Religion
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Atheist
- Prefer not to say
- Other

**Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?**

- Yes
- No