

**BUDGET CONSULTATION –FINDINGS REPORT**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Argyll and Bute Council aims to work with, as well as for, the people of Argyll and Bute. We therefore held a consultation exercise seeking the views of our citizens on priorities for the council.
- 1.2 More than 1,500 people responded, almost twice as many as last year.
- 1.3 This report outlines the feedback they provided for elected members' consideration.

## BUDGET CONSULTATION –FINDINGS REPORT

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report summarises the feedback provided by local communities to the council's budget planning consultation, for consideration by elected members.

### 3.0 DETAIL

#### Consultation approach

- 3.1 The council carries out budget consultation exercises to ensure that communities have the opportunity to get involved in the process of setting the council budget.
- 3.2 This year's consultation asked people to tell us about their priorities for the work of Argyll and Bute Council.
- 3.3 It was promoted in a variety of ways, from social media and website links, to email, in council customer service points, and via the council's Youth Services.
- 3.4 People could give views on the council's website, in printed copies available council offices, through our Youth Services, and via our Citizens Panel (a representative section of the local population).
- 3.5 We received 1,500 responses from across Argyll and Bute and from residents aged 12 – 75+. This is almost twice as many as last year.
- 3.6 People were free to respond to all or only parts of the consultation.

#### Key findings – the role and services of the council

- 3.7 Respondents were asked what mattered most to them about the role of the council:
- The overall priority is that we deliver a wide range of services
  - This is the first choice preference for all respondents other than young people, whose first priority is that the council is a major employer in the area.
  - The top three priorities given via 'other' comments are that: we care for vulnerable people, deliver value-for-money, statutory services, and provide environmental services.

3.8 We asked people which services they use most:

- The most used service category overall is roads/harbours
- This is also the first choice for all respondents other than for young people, who most use education services.
- The most used via 'other' comments are: social care services, leisure services and toilets.

3.9 People were asked to indicate their priorities for 2019/20:

- Overall priorities are:
  - education for children;
  - environmental services; and
  - roads/harbours
- These three categories were first, second and third choice for all respondents other than for young people, who chose education for children, roads/harbours and public transport.
- Priority given via 'other' comments are: social care services for vulnerable people, care for the elderly and support for community groups.

### **Key services: transforming our work**

3.10 Respondents were asked for their ideas on making savings/raising income. Recurring ideas include:

- reduce management costs
- close small schools
- reduce bureaucracy

3.11 What council services or processes would people use if they were available?

- The majority of people said they would use any service on-line as long as it's easy to do
- A minority number of people said they need face-to-face and/or telephone services rather than on-line

3.12 More detail on ideas for making savings/raising income, and any other comments on the role and services of the council, is set out in Appendix 1.

3.13 In line with council practice, and in support of the comment from a number of respondents that the council should 'listen to local people', we will provide an outline of how findings from this consultation contribute to budget decisions, following the Council meeting in February.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Many people gave time and thought to this year's consultation. This report and its appendices set out findings from this consultation for consideration by elected members.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1/2 Policy/Financial: Feedback from the consultation is set out in this report for elected members to consider in progressing planning our future.
- 5.3 Legal : None
- 5.4 HR : None
- 5.5 Equalities :The consultation was designed to reach a wide range of people in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.6 Risk: None
- 5.7 Customer Service: Providing feedback on actions taken as a result of this consultation will highlight the value of citizens taking the time get involved in setting the council's budget.

### **Executive Director Douglas Hendry**

#### **For further information contact:**

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#### **Policy Lead: Councillor Rory Colville**

#### Appendix

Appendix 1: Ideas on making savings/ other comments

## **Appendix 1: Ideas for savings / other comments on the role and services of the council**

### **Question 4: Any other comments on the role and services of the council?**

Additional comments include:

- Reduce senior and middle management costs
- Reduce staff/councillor costs
- Reduce the number of primary schools
- Maintain roads and infrastructure
- Better public transport and annual travel pass for young people
- Support island as well as mainland communities
- Support community groups
- Listen to local people

### **Question 5: what suggestions do you have for raising income or making savings?**

Comments include:

- Run a lottery
- Reduce management costs
- Full recovery of council tax
- Close small primary schools
- Reduce agency staff/consultants
- Use volunteering where you can
- Stop Gaelic bi-lingual signs
- Develop marine-based businesses
- Set public service level agreements so people know what to expect
- Promote tourism/events
- Wind turbine / renewable energy / hydro schemes / solar panels
- Address depopulation
- Ensure value for money from external suppliers
- Bring families to the area by showing community spirit and quality of life
- Sell unused buildings
- Use council assets for commercial contracts
- Stop non-statutory functions
- Use waste: charge for collecting garden waste; run a waste incineration plant that generates power and income
- Charge campervans and lorries for overnight stays