

Cotswold District Council

Budget Consultation Briefing Pack

Contains:

- Press Release
- Explainer leaflet (in separate file) <not ready yet>
- Survey – link to online survey and print version (PDF in separate file)
- Budget consultation call to action video <draft edit>
- FAQ's
- Social media advisory

Summary:

Cotswold District Council (CDC) is launching a budget consultation in January to gather views from residents and businesses as possible to help inform Council ahead of making a decision on the budget in February. The consultation will run for three full weeks from **Monday, 6th January to Sunday 26th January**.

Aims:

- To engage residents and businesses in the budget process, and gather responses to the proposals from as many different people and businesses within the Cotswold District as possible.
- To raise awareness of the current financial constraints placed on the Council among the public and the business community.

Key dates:

6th Jan – Launch of Budget Consultation

9th Jan – Drop-in consultation event in Tetbury, 4-7pm

14th Jan – Drop-in consultation event in Moreerton-in-Marsh, 4-7pm

16th Jan – Drop-in consultation event in Cirencester, 4-7pm

26th Jan – End of Budget Consultation

Press Release:



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

6 January 2020

Have your say on Cotswold District Council services

Residents and businesses in the Cotswolds are being urged to give their views on the District Council's spending plans as it prepares its budget for the next financial year.

The aim is to gather as much feedback as possible on key areas such as the waste service, parking, climate change, leisure, grants and changes to the district's local plan.

Three events will also be held in towns across the district in a bid to gather as much feedback as possible before a report detailing respondents' views is prepared for councillors to inform their Budget decisions.

Significantly, the budget is being prepared against a backdrop of continuing cuts in Government funding which have seen core funding fall from £5.9m in 2009 to £2.5m in 2019/20, a drop of 58.4 per cent. Further falls in Government funding are expected for 2021/22.

Councillors are keen to ensure that services will be maintained and enhanced while ensuring that the Council's finances are sustainable and resilient.

Planned developments are set to include an improved waste service offering a separate food waste collection and more recycling, increased parking provision in Cirencester and investments in facilities such as Cirencester's Corinium Museum.

The council's survey will also gather views on how the council can raise additional income from investing in local property; to a proposed Council Tax rise of £5 a year for a Band D household. It will also ask for opinions on proposals to raise parking charges and the cost of garden waste collections.

Cllr Mike Every, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "It remains a difficult climate for district councils with decreasing Government support and other financial pressures.

"However, we're committed to rebuilding your council, and this means not only maintaining services but enhancing and improving them. To do that we need as much feedback from residents and businesses as possible to ensure we have a sound budget in place for 2020-21 and beyond.

"I would encourage everyone to complete the consultation and help shape a sustainable and resilient financial future for the District. This is your Council's budget, and we want to get it right."

The drop-in events will all take place from 4-7pm at the Town Council offices in Tetbury on 9 January, Cotswold DC's Area Office in Moreton-in-Marsh on 14 January and the Bingham Gallery in Cirencester on 16 January.

Council officials will also be present in each town earlier in the day to distribute information and gather responses from residents.

For more information on the budget consultation, and to fill out the survey, go to www.cotswold.gov.uk/consultations

ENDS

Budget Consultation Survey:

Online version: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MJ6BWFM>

Print Version: Budget Consultation Questionnaire CotswoldDC.PDF (in separate file)

Budget Consultation Call to Action video:

https://youtu.be/Rv_DmMJ17_U

This video will be used to launch the consultation on 6th January and will be used throughout January for the social media campaign.

Drop-In Events:

We are hosting drop-in events from 4-7pm at the Town Council offices in Tetbury on 9 January, Cotswold DC's Area Office in Moreton-in-Marsh on 14 January and the Bingham Gallery in Cirencester on 16 January.

These events will be held as an informal Q&A drop-in session to allow residents to come along at their leisure and ask councillors and officers questions about our proposals face-to-face.

Alongside these events, councillors will also be hitting the streets in each town on the event days to engage with residents and visitors in person to encourage people to give their views.

We encourage all available cabinet members and councillors to attend and support engagement activities.

Below you will find Facebook events for each event
(*please share where appropriate*):

- 9th Jan – [Drop-in consultation event in Tetbury, 4-7pm](#)
- 14th Jan – [Drop-in consultation event in Moreton-in-Marsh, 4-7pm](#)
- 16th Jan – [Drop-in consultation event in Cirencester, 4-7pm](#)

Budget 2020/21 Consultation FAQ's:

Where does the council's money come from?

Council tax and business rates together make up local authorities' largest source of income. Central government has a significant degree of control over both council tax and business rates in England and sets the policy framework in which both operate.

Council Tax:

Each household will receive a council tax bill from Cotswold District Council. Council tax is set individually by each of the following authorities:

- Gloucestershire County Council,
- Cotswold District Council,
- Local Town/Parish Councils; and
- the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner,

It is Cotswold District Council's responsibility to collect all of the council tax on behalf of each body through the council tax bill.

Each individual authority is able to retain all of the funding raised from council tax in their area to support their budget. Cotswold District Council retains around 7.4% of the council tax it collects.

Council tax is charged on domestic properties, which are grouped into valuation bands, based on domestic property values from April 1991; these bands determine the level of tax charged. Some properties are eligible for discounts or exempt from council tax and people on lower incomes are able to apply for council tax support, reducing their council tax bill.

Business Rates:

Business rates are set by central government, which sets the multiplier (a pence in the pound value), which is then applied to the rateable value, which in turn is assessed by the Valuation Office. Properties with a rateable value of £12,000 or less are exempt from business rates and those up to £15,000 are eligible for small business rates relief. There are other reliefs and exemptions, including an 80 per cent discount for properties used by charities. For more details please see the following page on our website: <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/business/business-rates/>

Cotswold District Council expects to collect around £33 million of business rates income each year. The Council retains just £2.7 million (8%) of this income to fund its services. The County Council also receives £3.3 million (10%) of the income. The majority of the income £27 million 82% is paid to central government which

redistributes the income across English local authorities according to the assessed funding need.

The Government is currently planning to change the way that Business Rates funding is allocated across English local authorities. The changes are expected to come in to effect from April 2021 and represent a significant risk to the value of central government funding which will be available to this Council from April 2021.

How will you use my feedback?

Cotswold District Council is committed to gathering a wide range of views from as many different people and businesses within the Cotswold District as possible.

Alongside the online consultation, the council is holding three face-to-face events in key towns across the district to give people the opportunity to debate and discuss the council's current financial situation and present their views to councillors.

Following the consultation, the findings will be used to inform full Council ahead of making a decision on the budget in February.

When will the changes to the budget go live?

The consultation will run for three full weeks from **Monday, 6th January** to **Sunday 26th January** with the findings informing Council ahead of a decision on the budget in February.

Once a decision has been made by full council on an agreed budget for 2020/21, changes will come into effect in the new financial year which commences in April 2020.

What services is the district council responsible for?

These are the main services:

- Waste and recycling collection
- Street cleaning and litter bins
- Planning services, including development management, strategy, planning enforcement, etc.
- Environmental health services including food safety, health and safety, reducing pollution and licensing
- Helping the homeless and those at risk of homelessness
- Supporting the development of affordable housing

- Providing Housing Benefit and a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for low income households
- Public conveniences
- Supporting tourism, economic development and regeneration
- Supporting leisure, arts, sports and cultural activities, including local museums
- Provision of off-street car parking (car parks but not on-street car parking)
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and environmental crime
- Collecting Council Tax and local business rates

What services are the district council NOT responsible for?

- education
- transport – highways services which include repairs to potholes
- fire services
- social care – adult/children
- libraries
- waste management
- trading standards

Why can't you just use reserves?

Reserves are like household savings. The money has been put away to pay for something in the future or as a resource for emergencies.

There are two types of council reserves:

- Earmarked reserves – these are committed for expenditure on project such as the proposed review of the Local Plan and investment in priorities such as taking action to address climate change.
- General reserves – these are for responding to unexpected major events, such as the flooding experienced in the District in 2007, or smoothing out shocks to funding streams.

The amount of general reserves would be enough to fund the council for just 160 days if all funding was to stop. Also with reserves, you can only spend them once. If they are gone, the council would be exposed to the risk not being able to respond effectively to unplanned situations or needing to make reductions to services.

Social media advisory:

Cotswold District Council is running a social media campaign to support the budget consultation throughout January and encourages engagement from members, external stakeholders and the press.

You can find all of our content on social media, here:

Twitter: [@CotswoldDC](https://twitter.com/CotswoldDC)

Facebook: [@CotswoldDC](https://www.facebook.com/CotswoldDC)

Please like and share any relevant content for your audiences from our accounts or use the sample posts below to share your own tailored messages.

Sample Posts:

Here are some sample posts that you can use and edit as necessary

@CotswoldDC is running a consultation for the 2020/21 budget.

You can help to shape the district by giving your thoughts and feedback on the proposed changes for the year ahead.

Complete this survey to have your say: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MJ6BWFMI>

@CotswoldDC budget consultation is live until Sunday 26 Jan for you to have your say on the proposed budget for 2020/21.

You can provide your feedback by completing this easy 5 minute survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MJ6BWFMI> #RebuildingYourCouncil

Don't miss your chance to have your say!

@CotswoldDC survey is open until the 26 January and they want your feedback about the proposed 2020/21 budget.

For more information: www.cotswold.gov.uk/consultations #NewYearNewPlan

Hashtags:

#RebuildingYourCouncil

#NewYearNewPlan