

Cotswold District Council

Budget Consultation Briefing Document

Contains:

- Press Release
- Explainer leaflet (PDF in a separate file)
- Survey – link to the online survey
- Budget consultation video
- FAQ's
- Social media advisory

Summary:

Cotswold District Council (CDC) has launched a consultation to gather views from residents and businesses to help inform a decision on its budget for 2021/22 at a Council meeting on 24th February 2021. The consultation will run for five full weeks from **Wednesday, 4th November to midnight on Tuesday 8th December.**

Town and Parish Council leaders and representatives are invited to attend an online Town and Parish Council meeting hosted by Cotswold District Council. You will find more information detailed later in this document.

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 wider public.

Key dates:

4th November – Launch of Budget Consultation

24th November - Town and Parish Council live Q&A session | 7:00 - 8:30 pm.

8th December – End of Budget Consultation

Press Release:



4 November 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 housing, climate change and changes to the district's local plan. The budget consultation is being held over five weeks from Wednesday 4 November to midnight on Tuesday 8th December.

The budget is being prepared against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic, which has had a significant impact on the District as a whole, as well as the Council's finances.

The Council's Cabinet is keen to ensure that key services are maintained and, where possible enhanced while ensuring that the Council's finances are sustainable and resilient.

Plans include developing better and greener ways to travel around the District, reviewing open spaces on new developments and providing help for individuals with complex needs who are facing homelessness.

The Council's survey will also gather views on the Council's plan to raise additional income from a new 'Recovery Investment Strategy' and a proposed Council Tax rise of £5 a year for a Band D household.

Cllr Mike Evely, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "It remains a difficult financial situation for district councils due to the ongoing pandemic. At the beginning of 2020, no one could have foreseen the impact that Covid-19 would have on our businesses and communities - our very way of life.

"A key focus in the coming months will be to provide all the support we can to businesses and households in the district, to recover from these impacts and flourish once more.

"While our proposed budget for 2021/22 is naturally set against a backdrop of Covid-19's financial impact, it maintains the Council's commitment to real action on climate change,

protection for our most vulnerable, and delivering homes for people who need them at rents they can afford.

“I would encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation. Your views and your feedback will be key to ensuring we are delivering what our communities want and need at this most challenging of times. ”

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

ENDS

Budget Consultation Survey:

Online version: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/58MBK5N>

Print Version: Cotswold District Council Budget Proposals 2021-22.PDF (in a separate file)

For more information on the budget consultation www.cotswold.gov.uk/budget

Budget Consultation Call to Action video:

https://youtu.be/n-6jM_d6ffl

Town and Parish Council Webex

As part of the Budget Consultation, Cotswold District Council would like to invite Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks to a live Q&A session about the proposed 2021/22 budget with Cllr Mike Evely, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Jenny Poole, our Chief Finance Officer.

The web meeting will be held on Tuesday 24 of November between 7 pm and 8:30 pm.

Town and Parish Council members can join the meeting online here:

www.signin.webex.com/join and enter the meeting number and password below.

Meeting number (access code): 137 728 6126

Meeting password: pfV8Tww3qN4

If you cannot join online you can **join the meeting by phone:**

+44-20-7660-8149 United Kingdom Toll

Or Join by Skype for Business:

Dial - 1377286126@webex.com

You can also dial **62.109.219.4** and enter your meeting number.

Cotswold District Council – Budget 2021/22 Consultation FAQ's

Where does the council's money come from?

The Council charges for some of the services it provides. For example car parking, planning and collection of garden waste. Income from fees and charges fund nearly half of the Council's annual costs. The other half of the Council's income comes from Council Tax and Government funding. The main source of Government funding comes from a small share (10%) of Business Rates collected by the Council being retained by the Council. Other Government funding is from grants which either reflect the cost of delivering services in a rural district or reward the Council for delivering against the Government's national home building priority. The grants are short-term in nature and cannot be relied upon as a long-term source of funding for the Council.

The 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:

Council Tax is set by each individual authority and authorities are able to retain all of the funding raised from their share of the Council Tax raised in their area to support their budget. The Council Tax bill includes Council Tax set by Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, this Council and Town and Parish Councils. Of the total Council Tax bill, the District Council's share is just 7.4%.

Council tax is charged on domestic properties. Each property is assessed by the Valuation Office and allocated into a valuation band. The bands reflect property values and range from band A for the lowest value properties to band H. These bands determine the level of Council 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 Government, which sets the multiplier, a pence in the pound value which is then applied to the rateable value - this is set by the Valuation Office, and reflects an estimate of the open market rental value a property could achieve on a specified date.

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. Further information on reliefs and discounts is available on the Council's website at

www.cotswold.gov.uk.

How will you use my feedback?

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

Following the consultation, the findings will be shared with all councillors before they make decisions on the budget for 2021/22 at a Council meeting on 24th February 2021.

When will the changes to the budget go live?

The consultation will run for five weeks from **Wednesday, 4th November** to **Tuesday 8th December** and the findings will be shared with all the councillors before they make decisions on the budget at a Council meeting on 24th February 2021.

Once a decision has been made by the Council on the budget for 2021/22, any changes will be implemented in the new financial year starting in April 2021.

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, heritage and conservation and tree protection.
- Environmental health services including food safety, health and safety, reducing pollution and licensing
- Council managed Leisure centres and swimming pools
- Helping the homeless and those at risk of homelessness
- Supporting the development of affordable housing, including council housing
- Providing support with rent payments and Council Tax for low income households
- Public conveniences
- Supporting tourism, economic development and regeneration
- Supporting arts, sports and cultural activities, including local museums
- Operating Council managed car parks
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and environmental crime
- Collecting Council Tax and local business rates

What services is the district council NOT responsible for?

- Education
- Transport & Highways
- County planning services
- Fire and public safety
- Adult and Children's social care
- Libraries
- Waste disposal
- Trading Standards

These services are run by Gloucestershire County Council.

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 already committed to be spent.
- General reserves – these are for responding to unexpected events such as Covid-19
- With reserves, you can only spend them once. If they are gone, the council would be exposed to the risk that if some serious unexpected expenditure is necessary, the money just won't be there.

Social media advisory:

Cotswold District Council is running a social media campaign to support the budget consultation and encourages engagement from members, external stakeholders and the press. The consultation will run for five full weeks from 4 November to 8 December.

You can follow Cotswold District Council on social media, here:

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

LinkedIn: [@CotswoldDC](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cotswold-district-council)

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

Instagram: [@CotswoldDC](https://www.instagram.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:

@CotswoldDC is running a consultation for the 2021/22 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: www.cotswold.gov.uk/budget #BuildingBackBetter #NewYearNewPlan

@CotswoldDC budget consultation is live until the 8th of December for you to have your say on next year's proposed budget.

You can provide your feedback by completing this easy 5-minute survey:
www.cotswold.gov.uk/budget #BuildingBackBetter #NewYearNewPlan

Don't miss your chance to have your say!

@CotswoldDC survey is open until the 8th of December and they want your feedback about the proposed 2021/22 budget.

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

Hashtags:

#BuildingBackBetter

#NewYearNewPlan