



Powys County Council

## Budget Simulator Public Consultation 2019-20

### Communications and Overview of Findings

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### **1. Background:**

Over the past few years the council has sought to engage residents in the decision making process around setting its budget. The views of residents have been sought through surveys, workshops, a citizen panel and a previous budget simulator exercise in 2015/16.

The latest budget simulator exercise has been undertaken as part of the consultation process to support the 2020/2021 budget process which requires cost reductions of £13m to achieve a balanced budget.

### **2. Purpose of report:**

The purpose of this report is to bring together the findings from the consultation to allow the Council decision makers to view the findings and ensure they are considered as part of the final budget decision making process. The appendices provide all the public comments made through the simulator exercise, in terms of their overall views and more specifically, each service area that offered cost reductions. The comments are provided in full for transparency and it is hoped that salient points can be gleaned from the detailed list and used where needed to support impact assessments and other narratives.

### **3. Communications**

The Communications team set out the communications for the budget consultation approach as a three phased plan:

Phase I - Information Giving. Promote the new animations available on the website around council tax and how the council receives its money. (May/June)

*Over 900 visits to the website have been made through this period*

Phase II - Pre-engagement. Correspondence from the leader to councillors, employees and town and community councils to explain the budgetary position and to promote the forthcoming exercise and to seek initial qualitative feedback via a set template. Also engaged with disability and carers groups, primary and secondary Heads presented with key facts and asked about pupil engagement re- (July/August)

- *Handful of responses received from TCCs and Cllrs*
- *Feedback from meeting of town clerks held by Ness Young to seek to improve relations/understanding between parties*
- *Feedback from two sessions run with PDSL and LD & Carers groups to explain budget position and get their input as more vulnerable groups*
- *Follow up session booked to help PDSL members to complete the exercise*
- *Lack of response from schools*

Phase III – Feedback on Phase II (September)

Phase III – Launch budget simulator, promote via mix of methods (social media, media, direct comms, posters, PAVO etc, staff intranet, all cllrs, TCCs etc and invite feedback on the service reductions listed in the simulator by Sunday 3 November. (October/November)

*580 responses received – 574 English 6 Welsh of which 482 provided demographic data and 298 responded with comments, we know that at least double that figure clicked on to the simulator but didn't complete the exercise.*

Phase V – Analysis (November/December)

*Draft report and presentation now available*

Phase VI – Due regard. Consideration of feedback ahead of finalising and setting the budget and council tax levels. (December/January)

The engagement process through the Simulator Consultation is summarised in the table below:

Actions	Outcomes
Press releases issued at start /mid-point of exercise.	Some good coverage overall – Front-page County Times
All staff emails, intranet article and reminders	Good engagement and response by our employees
Posters and flyers distributed to all libraries, given to staff to put up or hand out in their local community. Example: officer handed out flyers at Aldi on a Sat am.	Number of flyers given out and posters visible in certain communities but no countywide staff distribution network exists
Posters and flyers dropped off in advance of countywide community connectors meeting at PAVO	Unsure how and if connectors distributed, talked to people about the exercise - tbc
Social media posts and gifs produced and promoted	Lots of comments and engagement received via clicks to exercise
All PCC social media account holders asked to share the exercise via their pages – tenants, YIS etc.	Some evidence of some sharing/liking the posts
Links with other existing channels – Tenant 100 panel	Tenants emailed and invited to take part.
Key partner asked to invite their employees to take part	PTHB circulated to all staff.
Schools emailed following secondary school heads meeting to remind them re- pupil involvement opportunities during Local Democracy week, PSE lessons	Little indication that any of school worked to encourage their pupils to do the exercise in school time. See demographics.
TCC reminder emails issued	Little evidence of TCCs sharing with their communities etc.
Cllr reminder emails issued	Some liked or shared link from our site via their own social media accounts.
Drop in session held in Ystradgynlais and Brecon library to support non IT residents (others cancelled due to purdah) Prior to organised session officer handed out flyers and put posters up in Tesco, Welfare Hall & Volunteer Centre in Ystradgynlais, Morrison's in Brecon.	Good for promoting exercise, handing out flyers, talking to those using the library, but no one turned up for specific help to access the exercise re- IT literacy issues/disability See demographics.

#### 4. Budget Simulator Findings

The budget simulator findings are shown below, and show the mean values of all respondents and the budget adjustment acceptable to achieve a balanced budget: Schools have the lowest reduction of just 0.55%, whilst central support had a much larger figure of 5.83%. The public suggested that council tax could be increased above the 5% set as the base, mean averages from the 580 respondents suggest a 6% increase would be palatable. Note: majority of respondents were in higher council tax bands. Only 45 respondents were in C Tax Bands A-, A or B.

<b>Highways Transport and Recycling</b>	
Waste and Recycling Services	-2.84%
Highways, Grounds Maintenance and Streetscene	-2.27%
Transport	-3.30%
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	
Support for service users in their own home	-2.38%
Residential Placements	-3.40%
<b>Children's Services</b>	
Keeping children in Powys safe	-2.66%
<b>Education</b>	
Central schools support and school improvement	-5.35%
Youth Services	-4.81%
Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion	-3.78%
<b>Schools</b>	
Schools	-0.55%
<b>Culture and Recreation</b>	
Catering and cleaning services	-5.41%
Library and cultural services	-5.03%
Countryside services	-5.12%
Economic Development and Regeneration	-5.46%
<b>Regulatory and Property Services</b>	
Planning Services	-4.72%
Property Services	-4.98%
<b>Central Support Services</b>	
Central Support Services	-5.83%

The budget simulator comments, and suggested budget reductions will form part of the budget setting process, and be evidenced through the final decisions made on the budget reductions. The findings should also be reflected on the Impact Assessments where relevant.

### 5. Demographics

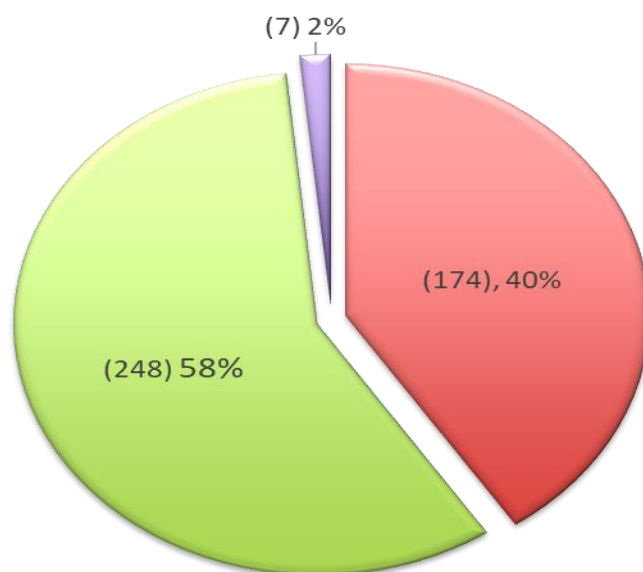
The following tables and charts present the demographic information gathered from those who completed this section in the budget simulator.

#### Gender

436 out of a possible 580 respondents gave their gender. Of these, more women appear to have responded to the exercise than men.

Comparison:            Population of Powys 2018 = 132,447  
                                  Female = 66,856 (50%)  
                                  Male = 65,591 (50%)

Source: ONS Mid year estimates.

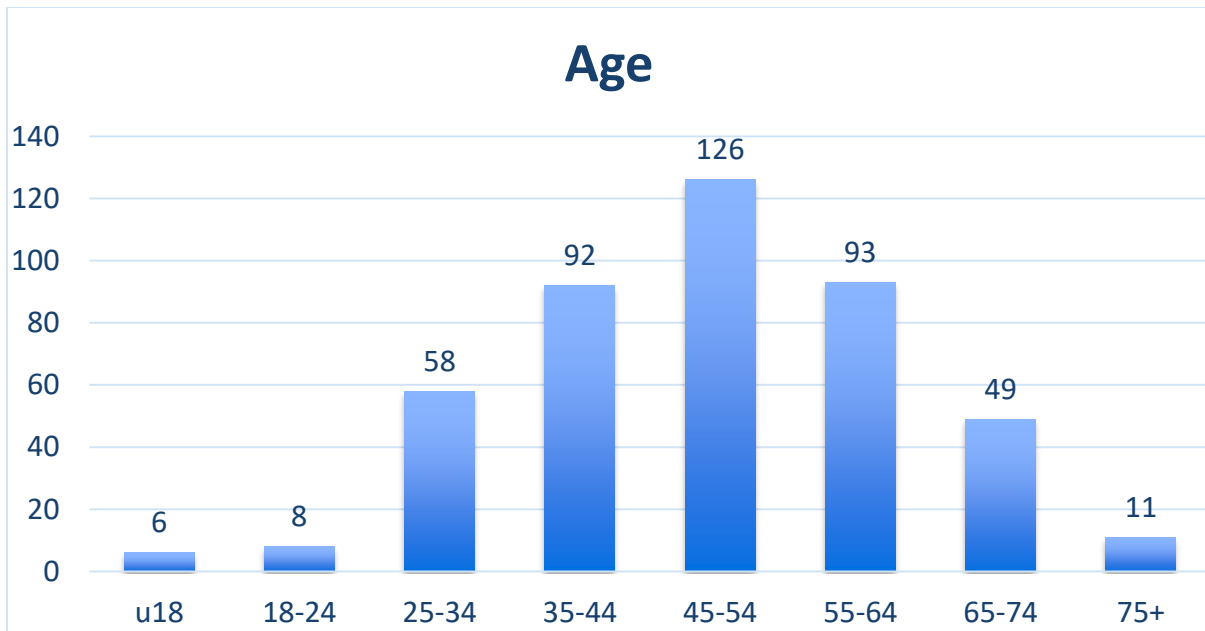


**Gender**      ■ Male    ■ Female    ■ Other - Gender fluid

#### Age

443 out of a possible 580 respondents gave their age details. The views of people under 24 years of age and those over 75 are less represented.

u18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
6	8	58	92	126	93	49	11

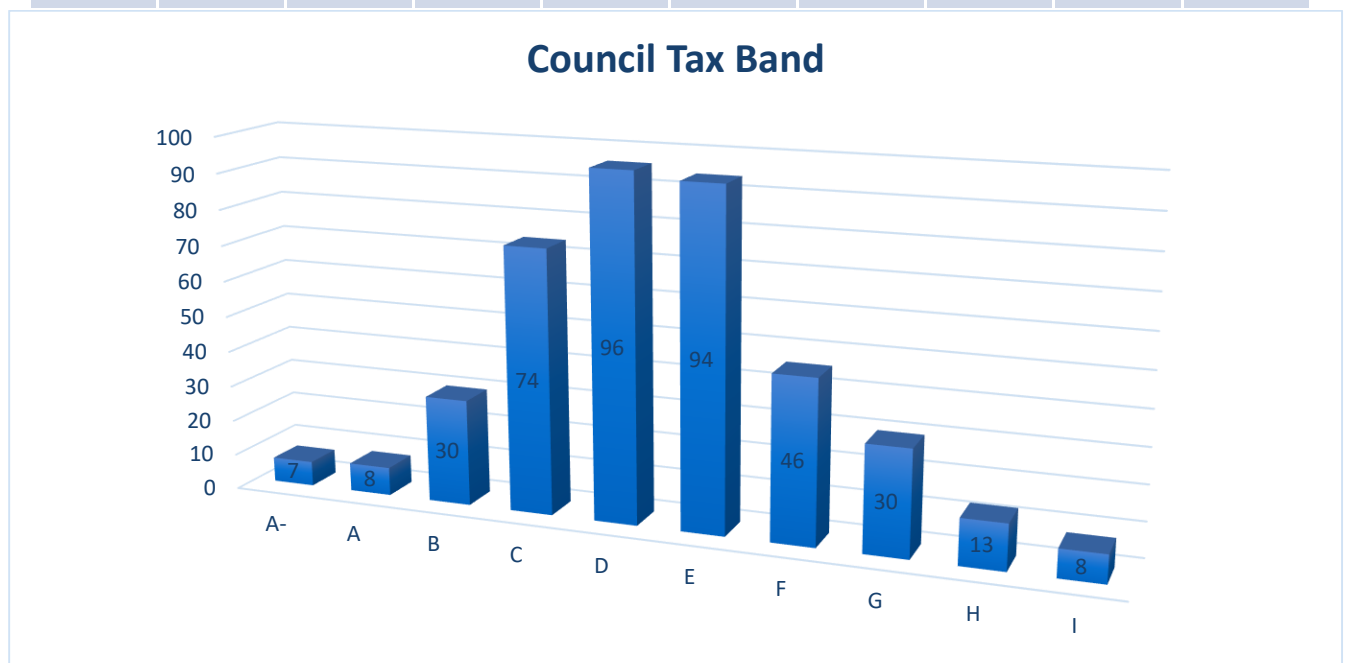


Council Tax Band

The majority of respondents were in either C, D or E council tax bands, this mirrors the overall Powys picture. Only a handful of respondents were at either end with seven people in Band A-, eight in Band A and eight in Band I.

Comparison - In Powys we have over 62,517 properties listed.

A-	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
7	8	30	74	96	94	46	30	13	8



## Appendix H

### Postcodes

383 respondents gave their postcode. The highest response rate was from people living in the LD1 area which covers homes in Llandrindod, Howey, Hundred House etc.

Brecon, Newtown, Builth and Ystradgynlais were next in terms of number of responses. The lowest responses were from Coelbren, Pont Nedd Fechan and Llanbrynmair where for each only one person had left their postcode details.

Some postcode areas saw no responses e.g. SY5 and NP7

HR3	LD1	LD2	LD3	LD4	LD5	LD6	LD7	LD8	SA9	SA10
13	74	28	52	4	6	9	8	6	23	1
SA11	NP8	SY10	SY15	SY16	SY17	SY18	SY19	SY20	SY21	SY22
1	10	4	14	48	7	20	1	13	23	18

### Other

We also captured information on

Ethnicity - 394 Responses

White	Asian	Black	Gypsy Traveller	Mixed	Other	Other ethnic
394	2	1	3	6	7	1

Disability – 69 Responses

Hearing Loss	Physical Disability	Mental Health	Dexterity	Stamina	Visual	Learning Disability
13	11	9	9	8	7	3

Employment status – 94 Responses

Working	Retired	Sick / Disabled	Other	Volunteering
67	20	3	3	1