

Performance and Finance Select Committee

5 October 2018

What Matters To You? survey findings 2018

Report by Head of Communications and Engagement

Summary

Findings from the 2018 What Matters To You? survey project are attached for consideration and to help inform Member decision-making around future priorities and the setting of future council tax rates.

The focus for scrutiny

Review of the feedback from residents on the West Sussex County Council priorities and Council Tax levels for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Recommendation

The committee is asked to review the findings of the 2018 What Matters To You? survey and make representations to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to consider as part of the 2019/2021 budget process.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 Biannually the County Council seeks the views of residents and business owners on council priorities and various aspects of the Council's budget and council tax. This survey is an historical statutory consultation requirement and there is a specific duty to consult businesses with regards to business rate setting for businesses under s.65 Local Government Finance Act 1992. While consulting other members of the public is not statutory, results from the survey will help to inform member decisions on the priority areas of the budget. Members want to understand the priorities of residents to help inform their decision-making around future priorities and the setting of future council tax rates.
- 1.2 The primary aims of the survey were to:
 - Raise the profile of West Sussex County Council and what it delivers for its residents, businesses and local communities.
 - Increase public awareness of the West Sussex council priorities, and seek views on the priorities contained within it for longer term planning considerations.

- Raise awareness of the annual County Council budget process and provide an opportunity for residents and businesses to comment on their service priorities.
- Provide an opportunity for businesses, organisations and residents to share their views on potential Council Tax levels for 2019/20 and 2020/21
- Reach a wide range of interested stakeholders, and engage with those we often find it 'difficult to engage'.
- Collaboration with District and Borough colleagues to help reduce workloads and avoid duplication of data collection.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 For the Performance and Finance Select Committee to review the findings of the 2018 What Matters To You? survey and make representations to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to feed into the 2019/2021 budget process.

3. Resources

- 3.1 The costs of the survey was:
- Full survey printing cost - £974
 - Youth Survey printing cost - £236
 - Charitable donation as part of prize draw - £500.

Factors taken into account

4. Issues for consideration by the Select Committee

- 4.1 This is an information report of findings from the What Matters To You? survey 2018 for consideration and feeding into budget setting and decision-making about future priority setting.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The 2018 What Matters To You? survey project was live from April 2018 to July 2018. The main survey tool was an [online survey](#) for residents, business owners and staff, which participants could access via the West Sussex Have Your Say Consultation Hub. A survey for [children and young people](#) was also created. Paper copies of these surveys were made available at libraries, Children and Family Centres, and at some District and Borough Offices, as well as other local venues. An accessible [easy read version](#) was also created online and other formats were available upon request.
- 5.2 Stakeholder mapping identified key stakeholders and the Communications and Engagement Team collaborated with District and Borough Councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups as well as internal teams across West Sussex County Council (e.g. Trading Standards, IPEH, Partnerships and Communities, Community Safety and Wellbeing) to reach as wide an audience as possible, including voluntary and community sector organisations and those who are generally considered 'difficult to engage'.

- 5.3 As a result, 2,136 respondents participated in the full survey version, 253 responses came via the children and young people's version and 7 responses were collected via the easy read version.
- 5.4 The findings from these surveys are supplemented by data from two focus groups involving 57 minority ethnic women and results from social media 'Quick Polls'.
- 5.5 A slide-set of key results forms Appendix 1 to this document, but headline results from the 2,136 respondents taking part in the of the main survey are as follows:

- The service area most commonly selected as a priority was A Strong, Safe and Sustainable Place, followed by A Council that Works for the Community
- 939 (44%) of respondents were in favour of 'An increase somewhere between 2.1% and 4.98%' and 31% favoured 'An increase in line with the maximum of 4.99%'.
- Common themes for what is important to respondents for the future of West Sussex were improving highways throughout the county, carefully considering areas used for development and improving infrastructure to ensure services are available for new and existing residents.

- 5.6 Key findings from the 253 who took part in the children and young people's Survey include:
- The most commonly selected service priority areas were, 'Giving our children the best start in life', followed by 'Making West Sussex a safe and environmentally friendly place to live', then 'Making West Sussex a great place in which to live, work and visit'.
 - Common themes for respondents in this survey revolved around looking after/enhancing the environment, more careful consideration of new development, improving existing infrastructure and the provision of more social or leisure facilities for younger and older residents alike.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 Potential reputational risk where findings do not influence budget setting process.

7. Other Options Considered

- 7.1 No other options were considered as the Council is committed to undertaking a survey every other year.

8. Equality Duty

8.1 A full equalities analysis has yet to be completed, but our current analysis showed differences between some protected characteristic groups:

- Children and young people were more likely to put 'Giving our children the best start in life' in the children and young person's version.
- Those identifying as LGBT were more likely to select a Strong, Safe, Sustainable Place as a priority.
- Crime and feeling unsafe was a particular issue for respondents undertaking the children and young people's version of the What Matters To You? 2018 survey Best start in life '.

9. Social Value

9.1 None

10. Crime and Disorder Implications

10.1 None

11. Human Rights Implications

11.1 None

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Key Results of the What Matters to You? survey

Background Papers

None