

Third Addendum to the Report of the Interim Assistant Director, Policy, Programmes and Change to the meeting of the Executive to be held on 23rd February 2016.

Subject:

Engagement and Consultation Programme in relation to the budget proposals for the 2016-17 and 17-18 Council budget - report addendum

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report of the Interim Assistant Director, Policy, Programme and Change was published on 1st February 2016 and presented to the Executive at their meeting on 9th February 2016. The report included information from the public engagement and consultation programme in relation to the budget proposals for the 2016-17 and 17-18 budget. The report gave details of information as follows:
- the public consultation and engagement sessions to the end of 31st January 2016,
 - the written sessions both postal and via the website to the end of 31st January 2016
 - the responses from Council Officers until the end of 31st January 2016.
- 1.2 The public consultation and engagement programme continues until 25th February 2016 meaning that there is an ongoing requirement to provide both the information gathered and the Council Officers' responses. The first addendum to the report was presented to the Executive on 9th February 2016 and published on 9th February 2016. The first addendum provided an update on feedback received through the budget consultation programme from 1st February 2016 to 4th February 2016.
- 1.3 The second addendum to the report presented on 9th February 2016 was published on 15th February 2016 for consideration at the Executive on 23rd February 2016 and contains an update on feedback received through the budget consultation programme from 5th February 2016 to 12th February 2016.
- 1.4 This third addendum provides an update on feedback received through the budget consultation programme from 13th February 2016 to 22nd February 2016.
- 1.5 The public consultation and engagement programme continues until full Council on 25th February 2016. Further details of the public consultation and engagement programme will be presented to the full Council meeting scheduled for 25th February 2016. Any additional feedback received from 23rd February 2016 will be provided to the full Council meeting on 25th February 2016.

2. Participation

- 2.1 There have been no further dedicated consultation sessions with community of interest groups since the second addendum was published.
- 2.2 There was however a significant increase in the overall number of written responses received between 13th February and 22nd February 2016. In the period in question 671 additional written responses were received which takes the total from 813 on 12th February 2016 to 1484 on 22nd February 2016. The total 1,484 submissions have raised 1,801 concerns against budget lines. Of these 689 were received through the online survey, 770 were received via post, which includes 38 individual organisational representations and 25 via email.
- 2.3 The written responses relating to the proposals have been reported back to the departments. The Strategic Director (SD) or other appropriate Chief Officer (CO) has responsibility for ensuring that the proposals for their department or service area are reviewed and that the proposals, along with the relevant Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) are updated as appropriate.
- 2.4 Revised versions, version 4 of the EIA's, were published alongside the second addendum of the report. The feedback received from the consultation process has been reviewed by the relevant Strategic Director (SD) or other appropriate Chief Officer (CO) who has confirmed that the no additional issues have been raised which require further amendment of the version 4 EIA's.

3 Additional Consultation Feedback Received

- 3.1 An additional 671 written responses were received between 13th and 22nd February 2016. This is shown in Appendix one which details the total written responses received both through the web and post since the consultation began on 1st December 2015 until 22nd February 2016. The graph is colour coded to service area and/or department.
- 3.2 The additional written responses have included letters from three schools accompanied by 141 letters and representations from pupils in relation the potential impact of the proposal 3E18: Libraries (the proposal to increase the number of libraries managed by local communities) on the pupils' attainment levels in reading and literacy skills.

Paragraph 3.9 in the second addendum, referred to the Library Service undertaking a detailed consultation for the budget proposal in relation to the Library service (3E18) and identified that at the 12th February 2016 there had been 139 responses received as part of the specific consultation on that proposal. At 22nd February 2016 that number had risen to 456 with respondents continuing to raise similar issues in respect of various libraries across the District.

- 3.3 As can be seen from the graph, the highest number of responses received now relate to the proposal 3E27: Youth Provision. In the period 13th to 22nd February 2016 an additional 465 written responses were received about this proposal, predominantly through the post as opposed to on-line. The objections continue to focus on the loss of critical face to face support services. There has been a significant increase in the number of returns raising objections and particular reference has been made to the potential effect of any changes on the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the Keighley Youth Information shop.

3.4 There has been an increase in concerns raised in respect of proposal 3E22: Review of the Tourism budget. A consultation process undertaken by the service in relation to this specific proposal raised concerns about the possible closure of the Tourist Information Centres (TIC's) across the District. Hoteliers, businesses, visitor attractions and local residents all contributed to the consultation process and raised concerns that at a time of new regeneration and growth activity and increased visitor numbers across the District, this could be undermined by the potential closure of TIC's and could send out the wrong message to potential visitors.

Concerns were raised about the impacts on businesses in the areas affected as well as the loss of support to specific events where the TIC's are seen as central points for enquiries for visitors.

3.5 From 13th to 22nd February 2016 there has been an increase in the number of written responses in relation to proposal 3F4: Reduce Expenditure on Support for Business Rates and 3R6: Remove or Reduce Rental subsidies. Whilst the issues raised in relation to these proposals continue to be about the sustainability and financial viability of organisations currently in receipt of the subsidies should subsidies be withdrawn, the organisations responding previously were predominantly community or sporting groups. Similar concerns have now been raised by cultural, arts and community of interest organisations about the potential loss of activities in those services and communities.

3.6 In the period in question, concerns continue to be raised in relation to proposal 3E24: Community Development. Previous reports have referred to concerns expressed about this proposal at dedicated consultation meetings with the Voluntary and Community Sector. In addition representations have now been received from community groups regarding the support they receive from community development workers without whom there are concerns that small community initiatives and activities would cease and community centres would close.

3.7 In the period 13th to 22nd February 2016, two additional petitions have also been received in relation to proposal 3E18: Library Service, one each in relation to the potential closure of Laisterdyke and Thornbury libraries as a result of this proposal.

3.8 In summary it is necessary to ensure that the Executive have comprehensive information when considering the recommendations to make to Council on the budget for 2016 -17 and the budget savings proposals for 17-18. It is a legal requirement that Elected Members have regard to all the relevant information and accordingly Elected Members are referred to the additional information in this addendum and in the equality impact assessments with updated equality evidence and the relevant Council department responses. Version 4 of the equality impact assessments can be found at:

http://www.bradford.gov.uk/bmdc/government_politics_and_public_administration/council_budgets_and_spending/equality_impact_assessments/budget_eias_2016_17

4 Appendices

Appendix One: Budget proposals for 2016-17 and 17-18 - Details of the information gathered from the total written response both through the web and post since the consultation began until the 22nd February 2016.

