

Appendix K

Update on Budget consultation February 2017

Brent Connects

- 1.1. Five consultation events were held between 12 January 2016 and 3 February 2016 at locations throughout the borough. The meetings had the following levels of attendance:

Date	Location	Attendance
11 January	Brent Connects Wembley	47
18 January	Brent Connects Harlesden	32
24 January	Brent Connects Kilburn	22
7 February	Brent Connects Willesden	36
8 February	Brent Connects Kingsbury & Kenton	23

- 1.2 The Leader of the Council delivered a presentation outlining the financial position and the difficult budget choices faced by the Council. The Leader and deputy Leader then took questions from the audience and provided answers, supported by senior officers where appropriate for matters of technical detail.
- 1.3 Feedback and opinions offered from these events varied considerably. As an example of the range of opinions expressed:
- one resident stated it felt like they were paying for care twice, once through charges, and also through council tax rises;
 - whereas another thought the council was between a rock and a hard place, and had no choice but to raise council tax.

Have your say pop up sessions

- 1.3 In addition to the Brent Connects consultations, three pop up sessions were held in supermarkets across the borough for residents to comment on the budget proposals and ask questions. Again, these sessions were led by the Leader and supported by senior officers.

Online consultation

- 1.4 The online consultation closed on 3 February 2017 and 84 people responded. Their responses have varied considerably from person to person. Taking the council tax increase as an example, several people have expressed support for

it, others have opposed any rise, a handful have proposed that council tax rises should be limited to just inflation and some have made no comment either way. It is important to note that some of the proposals made could not be legally implemented by the council as they would breach the council's obligations or the council lacks the legal powers necessary to implement some of the suggestions, such as new taxes. Overall, no clear themes emerge from the responses to the consultation.

- 1.5 All of these consultation responses are important. Members need to have regard to them, but are not obliged to follow the suggestions made, and members could not legally implement some of the suggestions made. It is relevant to note that the consultees are, statistically speaking, "self selecting" and therefore not necessarily reflective of opinion in the borough as a whole, nor are they necessarily statistically significant. On the other hand, the people who have responded have chosen to take the time to review the council's proposals and to contribute their thoughts, and often their views will be representative of the views of a much larger number of people.