

Results of Consultation with Public and Stakeholders

To date we have received several comments from local residents about the draft budget and the proposed efficiencies.

One resident felt we should be aiming to save more than £16 million because they recognised that Central Bedfordshire Council will receive less financial support from central Government next year.

Several residents expressed their frustration with current Highways related schemes which they felt were a waste of money; residents cited the busway, Court Drive and parking issues.

One resident expressed concern about the effect of back office efficiencies on the front line.

One resident felt that if the council is in a position to reduce council tax in the southern part of the authority, they would prefer this not to happen but to use the extra income to sustain and improve services instead.

Some suggestions for savings mirrored efficiencies that the council has already considered or implemented such as:

- § Pay should be frozen. This includes Councillors allowances.
- § Reduce accommodation costs by reducing the office space it occupies and reducing staff travel costs/time to move between offices in the course of their duties.
- § Charge staff for car parking.
- § A moratorium on all posts; no filling of vacancies.
- § To examine all contracts for "Value for Money", especially the Bedfordshire Highways/Amey contract.

There were also some new suggestions for making savings, such as;

- § Sharing back-office staff and administrative services with other local authorities.
- § Town and Parish Councils should also be equally prudent in their budget-setting and precept.

One resident called for us to benchmark; not just against other unitary authorities, but local government more widely as they believe Central Bedfordshire Council is still relatively expensive.