

Bowmar Budget Consultation 10/01/18

General

Biggest cut in 1 year, this year need £10.3million

Education and social services – been more protected up to now, this year proposal on savings.

Even within legal requirements, there are discretionary decisions e.g. provide “adequate” libraries for them to decide what is adequate.

Questions

‘Around the proposal – If people seen’

SC – In pack

‘What does saving mean for halls?’

SC – Staff, running, takes into account loss of earnings

‘Sale?’

SC – No would be premature

‘Attainment fund – shows we need money in education, why now taking it away?’

AP – Pupil equity fund, goes directly to head teachers and they decide how to spend, explained need to make the decisions – need to come from somewhere. Have to look at 6%, 10% and 12% reduction, the 12% would push out-with the legal requirement of what needed to provide’

‘Have to think of costs as a whole’

‘Attainment of jobs/further education etc. lower here. How can you take away subjects – puts at disadvantage’

AP’ Needs to think about other options, about high quality for majority, it may only be 3 pupils in advanced higher engineering – takes a lot of resources’

Spoke of impact of people in classes – if 2 pregnant, 3 not showing up etc. it has a huge impact.

‘Son has mental health issue – how making sure level of care is good – Also learning assistants 35 – need to strip back to what have to provide by law.

Breakfast Clubs – Low uptake in primaries - Alva 3% One school did have a 21% uptake though.

Psychological Services – AP – Not affected

CG – Funding separate NHS Forth Valley

Income in Bowmar

Boxing Club 15 years

SC £83,000 – Staff & Costs £13,000 income, £70,000 difference

‘What are plans for Bowmar?’

SC – Proposal at this stage, no decision, mentioned asset transfer – CTSI Ses

‘Would they take suggestions on costs?’

SC – Absolutely

Julie – ‘Funding out there if Community wanted to think about ownership, can get feasibility studies’

SC – Also a fund in Council

Music Tuition – ‘How many teachers and what levels?’

AP – 1.6, Deerpark 0.2, music teaching part of the curriculum, Strathdevon 2 days, Tillicoultry 2 days, 1 other 1 day’

‘Class teachers get 2 hours per week to prep, was time filled by specialist teachers and PE Teachers’

‘Used to be swimming etc., just can’t do it, too many specialists’

‘Music – skills learned give them academic advantage in maths etc.’

‘Where does the money go?’

AP – To sit Nat 5/higher need 2 instruments, hired specialist tutors, don’t have to by law’

‘So, want to abolish every pipe band in Scotland’

AP – no, it’s a choice that cost. If people want it, they need to pay for it.

‘Taking away choices and doesn’t seem bothered’

AP – Trying to be pragmatic, tough choices’

‘Arguing that dumbing people down – if take away choices from children that would achieve. Not letting them, they are already paying for subsidised lessons’

AP - £258.50 10 in Alloa Academy paying for lessons, 26 pupils in Alva Academy, and 12 in Lornhill’

‘Is this a quick-fix – will there still be wider implications, do officers have a holistic approach.... single parent, couldn’t cope without breakfast club, have they thought about the impact? Bowmar take it away, take the community away, should be last on the list’

AP – has been money redirected directly to schools. Not part of this equality impacts, but look at legislative obligations, a lot of things money is just not there for. If council not paid to do it, we can’t do it’

‘198 pupils benefit from the private lessons; will they be gone?’

AP – yes, unless other alternatives

‘Useful to have total figures and how relevant to each other, bigger pictures- how do officers put weight to each item on proposal? How can you defend cutting education over management efficiencies?’

SC – More information , we will work on efficiency being a real focus, not replacing positions etc., now at a stage where something needs to give, the department took 15% cut a few years ago now looking at another 12%, we also need to try and balance his service, total 7 million so couldn't say let's close and not touch education, it wouldn't cover it, efficiencies take time to happen and have savings e.g. taken 18 months to move to new financial systems, now big difference, so not always balancing impact right now, but long term efficiency.

'Women's Crisis Service what happened? Has assessment been done?

SC – yes, likely to be impact will get a copy to her.

Women's Aid Rape Crisis – 20% savings

'Will these organisations be able to speak to chief officers?'

SC – Yes

'How can you have done an impact assessment when not contacted us? or the survivors either' (rape crisis)

SC – Should have been, apologies if they haven't been, stage 1 done, stage 2 will include consultation

'So vulnerable people only have until February for this?'

SC – Yes, I told someone to contact. They contacted them but the person was off sick.'

'Music – Could people pay more?'

AP – looking at options

'Big Noise?'

AP – No

'IJB options – when will this be out?'

CG – Separate consultation, Not sure when out.

'Transport – How will it affect Children (St Mungo's)'

AP – Most authorities deliver transport above expectations, high school 3 miles' ad primaries 2 miles, what Clacks Council does is high school 2 miles and primaries 1 mile'

'So 8-year-old meant to walk 2 miles – council wont grit roads, what if you have 1 in primary and 1 in secondary? Who is meant to take them?'

AP – That's the law, St Mungo's if you go for non-religious and choose to place elsewhere, up to you to get them there.

'Pathways – reduce salting'

AP – not saying it won't be, just reduced

'Pay more council tax, yet we are getting less, where is the money going?'

People spoke over each other about food waste gritting etc.

'Reserves of council, not paying workers properly, how close are the council to going bust?'

AP – not sure, on TV said after March 2019, may struggle, it's really serious, 3 years has to balance budget.

SC – Reserves come in to equation, but have to set a balance budget.

'Impact of freezing council tax'

SC – difficult to answer, from Central Government, very complex formula

'Appreciate it's difficult to answer – it should be Councillors answering'

*explained that Councillors make decisions, officers make proposals'

'Do officers have any say to bridge the gap, boost revenue?'

SC – Can do, for example in his service, brought in leisure passes, work with University etc., we can only do so much

'Assessment done to say investments needed, now saying new assessment pulling investments, seems like mismanagement own up to fault'

AP – Doesn't want to cut, but has to contribute to savings, look at what we have to provide.

'Digitisation'

SC – Didn't put a figure to, more internal running and interact differently. Looking at how to do more online. Need to invest to save.

'A lot of passion/frustration what can communities do to help?'

SC – Get views across at consultation to elected members. Suggest alternatives

'What is the right route to approach people?'

SC – Local Councillor, complete consultation, outline priorities, scale of challenge enormous, tough choices something has got to give.

'No parent wants to see cuts, going on over years, seems a lost cause will schools be able to input? Would it be an option to pay for example the breakfast club, people would be stuck, parent council might be able to do something, some areas might be low uptake, maybe have other options, some don't, don't make sweeping assumptions, also the survey is only online, it's not reaching most vulnerable. Also say talk to local rep, they are not very present, give more info and breakdowns.'

AP – Needs to be sustainable options, breakfast clubs become childcare, if need to be it won't be cheap, meeting chairs of parent councils in couple of weeks, this is still on-going.

'Breakfast Clubs are there to make sure vulnerable kids get a breakfast'

AP – Not there to care for kids

'More would attend if it was 8am not 8.30am'

AP – Care point again, it's there to educate kids.

'How will people be kept up to date with how this progresses?'

SC – Need to think about, formal budget paper, but not most accessible, social media coverage, newspaper.

AP – Statutory process, feedback from each session, collated, goes to elected members.

‘Active Start all to stop?’

AP – Yes, its non-statutory

‘Public Vote’

AP – That’s why we have elected members

‘Alloa Community Council have own meeting, different format, more about ideas and top priorities’

‘Once top 500 pieces of feedback done, will these opinions be public?’

AP – Themes coming out will be public

‘When will budget be decided?’

AP – End of February

‘Car parking charges, if 900 spaces, £6.30 maximum charge, it would be a clear profit of over £1million, why are you not looking at that?’

AP – It is in the budget proposal.

SC – Been in several budgets, it’s up to the elected members.

‘Who is blocking it?’

AP – No-one blocking. Decisions made once know all facts.

‘Boxing Club weren’t even notified of this meeting, will they hear about the decision before in paper?’

AP – Public apology will note that need urgently notified

‘Previously told parking charges not profitable, what’s changed?’

AP – Don’t know, joked that would need to be asked through headline’

‘Teacher Cuts?’

AP – Generous teacher allocations, there are ways to be smarter, mixed classes etc.

‘Music Tuition, tutors go above and beyond, also other group tuition saying only a handful of children affected which isn’t true, this will be the death of music in Clackmannanshire’

AP Thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.