Cyngor Tref Trallwng Welshpool Town Council

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# Document / Report #1103

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| Title | Budget 2027-28 - Consultation Report |
| Date | 3rd November 2026 |

## 1. Purpose

1. To present Members with the results of the public consultation undertaken on the Council's proposed budget for the 2027/28 financial year.

## 2. Background

1. The Council provided an online budget consultation facility through which members of the public could explore a range of potential changes to expenditure, income and financial provisions.
2. Participants were able to select different budget options and see the resulting indicative expenditure, income and precept figures. An opportunity was also provided to submit additional written comments.
3. A total of 13 responses were recorded in the final consultation dataset, with 6 respondents providing additional written comments.
4. The consultation closed at 12 noon on Tuesday 3 November 2026.

## 3. Overview

1. The 13 respondents generated indicative precept requirements ranging from £789,544 to £833,914.
2. The relatively small number of submissions means the findings cannot be considered statistically representative of the town's population. Nevertheless, they provide useful qualitative evidence of the priorities and concerns of those who participated.

## 4. Analysis of Budget Options

1. The following table summarises the number of respondents who selected a adjustment for each budget item.

| **Budget option** | **No of Responses** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| Cut Christmas lights | 10 | 77% |
| Increase allotment fees | 9 | 69% |
| Charge for Fireworks entry | 9 | 69% |

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| Fund free Saturday parking | 9 | 69% |
| Altering contribution to reserves | 9 | 69% |
| Cut in Special Projects | 9 | 69% |
| Remove playground fencing budget | 8 | 62% |
| Charging for parking at Maes y Dre | 8 | 62% |
| Town Ranger Ranger | 8 | 62% |
| Cutting bunting | 8 | 62% |
| General savings | 7 | 54% |
| Increase Town Hall fees | 6 | 46% |
| Increase Market fees | 6 | 46% |
| Charge for public toilets | 5 | 38% |
| Reduce Town Hall opening hours | 3 | 23% |
| Carnival enhancements | 2 | 15% |
| Winter Festival enhancements | 2 | 15% |

2. Individual Themes
    1. Christmas lights attracted the most consistent response, with 10 of the 13 participants selecting the £3,500 reduction option.
    2. Eight respondents selected a reduction in playpark fencing expenditure, comprising five selecting a £5,000 reduction and three selecting a £10,000 reduction.
    3. Eight respondents selected a £2,000 reduction relating to bunting and flags.
    4. Nine respondents selected a reduction in the proposed transfer to reserves, while nine also selected a £3,000 reduction in the special projects provision.
    5. Seven respondents selected the additional £2,000 general efficiencies option.
3. These findings suggest an interest among respondents in examining discretionary expenditure and financial provisions before increasing the precept. However, reducing reserve contributions would affect the Council's financial resilience rather than necessarily represent an operational saving.
4. Income and charging
    1. Nine respondents selected the £100 adjustment relating to allotments.
    2. Eight respondents selected the £1,000 Maes y Dre parking option.
    3. Six respondents selected the £750 Town Hall fees option, and six selected the equivalent market fees option.
    4. Five respondents selected the £1,000 public toilets option.
5. The results indicate that a number of participants were prepared to consider income-generating measures. Any proposals involving new or increased charges would require separate consideration of their financial, legal, operational and community impacts.
6. Parking and town centre

1. Saturday parking attracted a range of responses with 5 selecting all year round free parking and 4 selecting Apr-Sept free parking.
2. The Town Centre Ranger option also produced varied responses with 3 selecting full time all year round ranger and five selecting half yearly ranger.

7. These responses demonstrate differing preferences concerning the scale and funding of town centre services. The consultation does not establish a clear consensus on either proposal.
8. Events and tourism
    1. Only two participants selected an adjustment for the Carnival and two for the Winter Festival.

9. The relatively low frequency of adjustments to these items should not be taken as evidence of widespread support or opposition. It indicates only that most respondents retained the default settings for those particular options. Written feedback included an explicit call for more town centre events and continental markets, recognising their potential contribution to visitor numbers, local spending and town centre vitality.

## 5. Written comments

1. Six respondents submitted additional comments. These covered a wider range of issues than those included within the budget simulator. These included:
    1. Town Centre appearance - respondents raised concerns about the appearance of commercial premises, including vacant or poorly maintained shopfronts. Suggestions included working with Powys County Council to encourage improvements and considering additional trees on Broad Street.
    2. Community Safety - suggestions included improved CCTV coverage, closer partnership working with the Police, dog control measures and traffic speed reduction initiatives.
    3. Property & Assets - one respondent suggested reviewing surplus assets, alternative office accommodation and opportunities for staff to work from existing Council premises or remotely.
    4. Events - one respondent encouraged the Council to expand town centre events and continental markets, arguing that additional activity could attract visitors and support local businesses.
    5. Staffing & Financial Management - one respondent advocated a substantial reduction in staffing costs, more flexible working arrangements, extended public opening hours and additional professional financial support. The same respondent suggested considering a charitable management structure for the Town Hall and Market.
    6. Consultation Design - one respondent suggested that future consultations should place greater emphasis on the largest areas of expenditure and income, to help participants understand where the most significant financial decisions arise.

## 6. Advice

1. The consultation highlights several themes that Members may wish to consider during the remaining budget-setting process.
2. There is evidence of a preference among respondents for examining discretionary spending, identifying efficiencies and considering additional income before increasing the precept.
3. However, the responses also demonstrate support for investment in town centre activity, community safety and the appearance of public spaces and commercial premises.

4. Members should distinguish between proposals capable of being implemented within the 2027/28 budget and longer-term suggestions requiring further development.
5. Although participation was limited, the responses provide useful information to inform the Council's consideration of the 2027/28 budget.

## 7. Links to Strategic Objectives and Interim Strategic Plan

1. FS2 - Benchmark administration costs against other towns and identify efficiencies
2. FS4 - Develop a three year budget to balance savings with new income generation

## 8. Recommendation

1. None

## 9. Decision

1. To note for information only.