

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

(TELEPHONE SURVEY)

- Overall 58% recalled having recently received a personally addressed letter and leaflet from Buckinghamshire County Council, while a third (33%) could not. None of them had completed or returned the questionnaire that was part of the leaflet. (Q.2 / 3)

Education

- When informed that the County believes in raising achievement in schools and preventing schools failing was a top priority, and to achieve this they propose spending an additional £13.1 million in this area, which is an increase of 6.7%, 49% felt this was about the right amount. Some 6% said it was much too much with 9% saying it was slightly too much. A total of 11% felt it was slightly / much too little. (Q.4)
- Of those 4% who said it was much too little, the main reason given was that “there should be a lot more investment into schools given their current state” from 66% of them. A further 24% suggested they “should be doing their utmost to attract teachers, particularly special needs teachers”. (Q.5)
- They were then told that the County feels this additional money should be targeted in areas of greatest need such as failing schools or schools with challenging pupil needs. Almost two thirds (65%) either strongly or slightly agreed with this policy, while just 15% slightly / strongly disagreed. (Q.6)
- Of the 7% who strongly disagreed, their main reason given was that “funding should be spread evenly and not on selective schools” from 48% of them. The second most popular response from 11% was they “cannot see the reasoning in ploughing money into children who do not want to learn”; while another 8% suggested that “too much money is spent in this area” and 4% mentioning that “money is not the answer – more commitment from teachers and parents is essential”. (Q.7)

Transport

- Buckinghamshire County Council propose to maintain good transport links and especially good roads and pavements by increasing expenditure so that the total highway expenditure increases from £5.7 million to £9.45 million. Over three quarters (79%) either strongly or slightly agreed with this statement, while just 11% had an opposite view. (Q.8)
- Of those 5% who strongly disagreed, the top reason given from 28% was that “there is enough money being spent in this area already”. A further 22% suggested that “extra money should be spent on education and public transport”. (Q.9)

Council Tax

- Buckinghamshire County Council propose to increase Council Tax by around 5%. 13% strongly agreed with this, while another 34% said they slightly agreed with this statement. 16% disagreed slightly with a quarter (25%) disagreeing strongly. (Q.10)
- Among the 25% who strongly disagreed, the most popular reason given from almost half of them (48%) was that “we pay enough Council Tax currently”. Another 25% suggested that “communication needs to be improved to show residents where their money is going”. Some 16% proffered that “the services provided are very poor.” 14% said either that “It is unfair for OAP’s, single parents, the unemployed etc. given their low incomes” or “a rise in line with inflation would be more acceptable.” A further 13% mentioned that “every year Council Tax increase yet no improvements are seen.” (Q.11)

Social Services

- Currently Buckinghamshire County Council are spending 20% more on Social Services than the government allocates them and the Council propose to hold expenditure at this level. Over two thirds (67%) either strongly or slightly agreed with this statement, while only 15% had an opposite view. (Q.12)
- Of the 8% who strongly disagreed, there were two main reasons given. 39% said that “money is not being spent wisely”, with only slightly fewer (37%) suggesting that “more money needs to be invested in Social Services”. (Q.13)

Support Services

- Buckinghamshire County Council propose to invest in their support services to make the Council more efficient, making better use of new technology. Just over two thirds (69%) either strongly or slightly agreed with this statement, while again 15% had an opposite view. (Q.14)
- Of those 6% who strongly disagreed, there were clearly two main reasons given. The first from 44% was that “money is better spent elsewhere / taxpayers money is being wasted”. And secondly from a further 35% that “we are paying for their inefficiency”. (Q.15)