

## **Cabinet 9 February 2017 – Tabled Papers**

### **Agenda Item No.7 – Budget 2017/18**

Please see the attached comment received as part of the budget consultation exercise.

**Keith Fearon**  
**Member Services Manager**

## Tabled Paper – Item 7 - Budget 2017/18 – Consultation response

1. The Budget went out for public consultation in early January with a deadline of 8 February 2017. There was one response from the public consultation for the Cabinet to note below in paragraph 3.
2. The Budget was also presented at the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) in February, and they were broadly supportive of the budget.
3. Email response to consultation:

Dear Mr Lockwood,

I am responding to the request for comments from residents on the draft 2017/18 budget.

I have seen the information presented in the Kentish Express and the summary document published on the ABC website.

Whilst I do not feel able to pass any comment on the detail, I feel strongly that the emphasis given to keeping council tax ‘the lowest in Kent’ is totally inappropriate. Cllr Clarkson is quoted, in the KE (Dec 15th) as saying that “...if it meant making cuts to ensure that council tax, that will happen”.

Obviously, if people are asked if they would be happy to pay more for something then most would say no, unless they really understand the consequences.

However, the strong impression given by ABC is that the boast of being the council with the lowest tax is more important than maintaining, or even improving, services.

Would it not be far better for ABC to be able to boast that it is maintaining or improving services in these difficult times, with only a modest increase in council tax?

Unlike the effects of inflation on most other services and commodities, where the public has no choice but to pay the increased cost, at least with council tax those least able to pay have some protection.

Given the choice of a reasonable annual increase in council tax or the progressive erosion of services, most residents would opt for the former.

Yours Sincerely