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Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Rebecca Greally

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Tel direct: 01670 622616

Date: Friday, 2 September 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OSC** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND, NE61 2EF** on **MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2022** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Rick O'Farrell
Interim Chief Executive

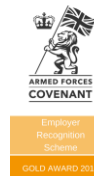
To Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC members as follows:-

D Bawn (Chair), J Beynon, L Dunn (Vice-Chair), P Jackson, M Murphy, N Oliver, A Wallace, C Taylor, M Robinson and P Ezhilchelvan

Portfolio members: R Wearmouth



Rick O'Farrell, Interim Chief Executive
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
T: 0345 600 6400
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AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 1
- 8)

Minutes of the meetings of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC held on 11th July 2022, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a. Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b. Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c. Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d. Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e. Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registrable Interest or Non Registrable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify

the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

4. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS (Pages 9 - 16)

To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the Committee.

5. BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY (Pages 17 - 28)

To provide Members with:

- An overview of progress on all broadband / connectivity projects
- Details of forthcoming projects and their likely impact.

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services is requested to attend for this item.

6. BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24 (Pages 29 - 58)

At its February 2022 meeting, Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report summarising the results of the Budget Consultation undertaken as part of the 2022/23 Budget setting process. At that meeting, Members requested that the Committee have the opportunity to input into the development of the Budget Consultation for the next year (2023/24).

To help the Committee to do this, this report provides a summary of results from the last budget consultation undertaken between 10th December 2021 and 21st January 2022, setting out each of the questions asked (Appendix 1). The report also includes summary demographic information in relation to the respondents (Appendix 2).

Councillor Richard Wearmouth, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services is requested to attend for this item.

7. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 59 - 64)

The Committee is asked to review and note the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the 2022/23 council year.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

PART II

It is expected that matters included in this part of the Agenda will be dealt with in private. Reports referred to are enclosed for members and officers only, coloured pink and marked "Not for Publication".

9. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee is invited to consider passing the following resolution:

- (a) That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the Agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and
- (b) That the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Items	Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A
10	3 - Contains information relating to business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
AND	The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure because disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person / organisation and could adversely affect commercial revenue.

10. TRADING COMPANIES FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies and of any relevant issues arising.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

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Agenda Item 2

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF on Monday, 11 July 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillor D Bawn
(Chairman in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Beynon, J.
Dunn, E.
Murphy, M.

Oliver, N.
Robinson, M.
Taylor, C.
Wallace, A.

OFFICERS

Angus, C.
Earl, R.

Furnell, L.
Greally, R.

Johnston, N.
Roberts, M.

Teasdale, K.
Willis, J.

Scrutiny Officer
Chief Operating Officer of Advance
Northumberland
Interim Service Director for HR/OD
Assistant Democratic Services
Officer
Project Manager
Senior Climate Change and
Sustainability Manager
Recovery Manager
Executive Director of Finance
(Section 151 Officer)

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P. Ezhilchelvan and P. Jackson.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M. Murphy declared that she was on the board for Advance. She confirmed that she would remain present during the item but would not contribute.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 April 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

20. FORWARD PLAN OF CABINET DECISIONS

The Forward Plan of forthcoming Key Cabinet decisions was reported to the Committee. (Report enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan of key decisions be noted

21. ANNUAL WORKFORCE REPORT

L. Furnell, Service Director, introduced the HR & OD annual update for workforce report to the committee. The following parts of the report were highlighted to Members:-

- It was confirmed that there was a short-term strategy in place until April 2021 and then a four year strategy would be in place that was aligned to the Administration cycle.
- The strategy was a 5-pillar strategy and each pillar had workstream leaders to oversee it.
- The Authority had successfully TUPE'd over 623 NHS staff. There was a lot of preparation involved for a smooth transfer including inductions to make staff welcome. There had been no complaints from staff that Officers were aware of.
- Officers highlighted that there were 600 apprenticeships across the Authority. It was noted that these ranged from level 1-7. There were also 2 graduate programmes and an MBA programme available in the Authority. It was noted that the pandemic had affected the apprenticeship programmes
- The labour market was challenging. The Authority had recently created a recruitment task and finish working group to improve the market position for Northumberland County Council.
- The whistleblowing policy had been review in April 2022 and the name had been changed. It was confirmed that Members concerns were to be reported to the Monitoring Officer whereas staff concerns would be reported through the channels explained within the policy.
- The equality and diversity networks were working really well and there were two new networks created: Armed Forces and Apprenticeships.
- A new leadership programme had been introduced called 'Living Leader' it had a train the trainer approach and was very successful so far.

The following comments were made in response to Member's questions:-

- Members noted that Service Directors and Heads of Service were given the opportunity to use the Work Smart reviews in a way which met the needs of their service. It was noted that it was not a one size fits all approach. The general desk ratio for County Hall was 3 to 10 and service leads had delegated responsibility to structure this in the best needs of the service
- It was confirmed to Members that the membership to Stonewall was historical and there were no membership fees being paid currently.
- Members were assured that although performance appraisals would never achieve 100%, those who had been missed due to sickness or maternity leave would be picked up at another time. Support meetings with service leads were in place to improve compliance in areas that had struggled.
- Members were assured that through talent management and recruitment drives that the apprenticeship uptake would be improved. It was important to illustrate to prospective employees that apprenticeships offered were not just at entry level. The Authority were striving to recruit apprentices for an onward career path within the Council.
- The wage for apprenticeships had been raised at JCC meeting the Authority were looking into it as the cost-of-living crisis would have an affect but the Authority were also mindful about what it could afford. There is ongoing work including finance colleagues to take this forward.
- Members were assured that staff turnover was sometimes a good thing to bring in new talent. It was noted that that there was not a big uptake on exit questionnaires, but any information gathered was acted upon. This is being factored into the recruitment and retention task and finish work.
- It was confirmed that all Local Governments had similar issues with recruitment and retention of staff, this is a national issue across many sectors.
- Members suggested that the Authority used different tactics to attract different demographics to apprenticeships such as in schools but also in playgroups to attract people for possible career changes. Officers took these suggestions on board.
- Officers recognised suggestions for performance indicators from previous years to also be included in the report so Members could compare figures and identify services needs.
- It was confirmed that the staff bank was used in a way that resembled an internal agency where staff could register and be assigned work on an ad hoc basis. It was a good way to cover staff shortages internally at a lower cost than external agencies.

RESOLVED members agreed to note and support the recommendations in the report.

22. DEBT RECOVERY UPDATE

J. Willis, Section 151 Officer, introduced the report to committee. It was acknowledged that there were still repercussions from the pandemic and the cost of

living crisis. The report gave an overview of debt recovery by the Authority including write offs, sundry debts and Council Tax.

The following comments were made in response to Member's questions:-

- Members were informed that there were a number of prescribed phrases that had to be included in the debt recovery process due to legislation including the 'committal to prison' option for non-payment of Council Tax. However, it was anticipated that the legislative writing was due for review.
- Officers confirmed that there was an assumption made about debt recovery when budgeting. Annually the Authority outperform the assumption and any surplus money was then shared between Council Services. Apart from Business rates which were pooled nationally.

RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted.

25 GREEN HOMES GRANT

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. M. Roberts, Senior Climate Change and Sustainability Manager and N. Johnston, Project Manager gave an overview of the report; The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy introduced a series of funding streams to improve energy efficiency of low income and low energy performance homes with a focus on energy performance certificate (EPC ratings of E, F or G). This would help reduce fuel poverty and delivery towards the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050, and the NCC's commitment for net zero by 2030.

The NCC had been successful in drawing £11.8 million across four rounds of funding to support domestic retrofit. The first round of funding known as Local Authority Deliver Round 1B (LAD1B) had been partially delivered by Eon as a turnkey solution. The future delivery of the scheme would be managed in-house with a collaborative approach between the Climate Change Team and the Housing Team. The in-house approach would allow NCC to work directly with residents and communities to identify the best solutions to support them.

The initial phase of work delivered energy saving measures into 137 low-income, energy inefficient homes with Eon. The funding that the climate change team had brought in could facilitate another 853 homes by 31st March 2023.

The following comments were made in response to member's questions:-

- Members were assured that there was enough demand to meet the deliver all the funding that had been secured. The services were still working on marketing campaigns to increase uptake. Officers confirmed that the programme benefitted from Member's highlighting areas and residents who would benefit from the scheme.
- Advance confirmed that they were ready and willing to help with the scheme and would liaise with Officers from the climate change team.

- Officers acknowledged concerns over the uptake from private landlords. It was noted that it was a national problem and other Local Governments were faced with the same problem but no solution had been found.
- Eligibility for the scheme included having an EPC rating of D or below and having a combined household income below £30,000.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

24. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received an update on its Work Programme for the 2022/23 council year.

RESOLVED that this information was noted.

25. URGENT BUSINESS

ADVANCE NORTHUMBERLAND LTD AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES–REQUEST FOR RESERVED MATTER APPROVAL

J. Willis, Section 151 Officer, introduced a report; ‘Advance Northumberland Ltd and its subsidiaries–Request for Reserved Matter Approval’ (attached with signed minutes). The day to day running of Advance Northumberland Ltd and its subsidiaries was the responsibility of the Board of Directors, but there were certain matters of corporate governance that could not be executed by the Directors without the consent of the Shareholder. These matters were known as “Reserved Matters”. The Shareholder of Advance Northumberland Ltd is Northumberland County Council, but the exercise of Shareholder rights and powers is an Executive function and so it is for Cabinet to give approval of “Reserved Matters”. The report requested Cabinet to approve a new set of Articles of Association, the key public governance document.

The following comments were made in response to member’s questions:-

- Members were assured that the Shareholder representative would not be part of the decision-making processes but would be present to express shareholders views to board members. Members suggested that the clause in appendix G be amended to clarify board members would be the decision makers.
- It was explained that Directors of the company were duty bound to act in the best interest of the company.
- Members felt that it was beneficial for a shareholder representative to be present at meetings and express the views of shareholders. They also expressed their contentment at Senior Officers working collaboratively with Advance.
- Advance Ltd was the holding company for Advance Northumberland which was split into five subsidiary companies. The board of Advance Ltd can give direction to the subsidiary companies.
- The reserved matters was not a different system but would stop the current system getting clogged up. It would help ensure there was stronger

governance over the wholly owned company which was highlighted in the Caller report.

- Members asked if mechanisms were in place to ensure the proposal could not be overridden in the future. Although there was no guarantee that it would not be overridden in the future there was a need for appropriate member scrutiny and greater transparency.

RESOLVED to advise the Cabinet that it supported the recommendations contained in the report on the condition the following are included:

1. With regards to the Shareholder Representative Role Profile, the wording be amended to provide greater clarity on the role the Shareholder Representative should carry out at board meetings. Members suggested the wordings to be:

iii. To attend and play an active role at board meetings of the Company whilst recognising the authority to make decisions lies with the board of the Company.

2. The Committee would like a further report in 6 months, if appropriate, to review the implementation of the proposed new Articles of Association and the Shareholder Representative Role Profile.

26. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that

- (a) under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the Agenda as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act, and
- (b) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:-

Agenda Item	Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A
12	3 - Contains information relating to business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
AND	The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the interest in disclosure because disclosure could adversely affect the business reputation or confidence in the person/organisation, and could adversely affect commercial revenue

27. TRADING COMPANIES' FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2021-22 – POSITION AT THE END OF MARCH

The confidential report, which was considered by Cabinet on 6 June 2022, was introduced to committee by J. Willis, Section 151 Officer. Members welcomed the report and the improvements in evaluations due to improvements in commercial valuations post pandemic. It was noted that Advance was undergoing a strategic review to ensure financial arrangements align with an effective Business Model.

Members were reminded that the loan arrangements between Advance and Northumberland County Council were interest only. The Council was required to offer commercial loans and it was unlikely that Advance could access a loan from a third-party company for a better rate.

It was confirmed to Members that NEHL was dormant and not trading at the time. Following the S114 and Caller report it was highlighted the need for transparency and strong governance. Cabinet had asked for a report regarding the future of the company which was invited to come to scrutiny.

RESOLVED the committee agreed to note the report.

Chairman

Date

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**FORWARD PLAN FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS:
AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2022**

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p>Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas”, but, more than that, a conservation area appraisal is a tool to help people understand what is important about a place and manage change within it. Bamburgh Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) provides an evidence base for managing change. By adopting a conservation area appraisal, planning authorities are better placed to give due and proportionate weight to the special interest of conservation areas. This will, in turn, result in better informed and balanced decisions in relation to the historic environment. An appraisal can also be used to support potential strategic plans and policies for the area, and to promote its conservation and regeneration. (C. Horncastle/S, Rushton 01670 622650)</p>	N/A	13 September 2022
<p>Energising Blyth: Culture and Placemaking Programme This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval and key decisions regarding the development and delivery of the Energising Blyth Culture and Placemaking Programme (CPP). The CPP is a package of culture and placemaking measures in Blyth. This aims to catalyse Blyth’s cultural revival, supporting the benefits of the wider investments in the town. This project is part of the Energising Blyth Regeneration Programme including projects supported by the Future High Streets Fund and Blyth Town Deal. (W. Ploszaj/Lara Baker - 07919 217457)</p>	N/A	13 September 2022
<p>Energising Blyth: Energy Central Campus Phase 1: Learning Hub This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval and key decisions regarding the development and delivery of the Energy Central Campus</p>	N/A	13 September 2022

<p>Phase 1: Learning Hub. The Energy Central Campus (ECC) is a transformational, business-led skills, education and innovation development supporting growth in the low carbon energy sector in Blyth and the wider Northeast. This project is part of the Energising Blyth Regeneration Programme including projects supported by the Future High Streets Fund and Blyth Town Deal. (W. Ploszaj/Lara Baker - 07919 217457)</p>		
<p>Energising Blyth: OREC Technology and Innovation Centre This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval of the Business Case and other key decisions regarding the development and delivery of the OREC Catapult new Centre. This is a business-led skills, education and innovation development adding to the cluster of facilities at OREC's site at the Port of Blyth and supporting Research and Development and growth in the low carbon energy sector in Blyth and the wider Northeast. It will be a key national asset driving forward the Government's Zero Carbon agenda and will generate. This project is part of the Energising Blyth Regeneration Programme including projects supported by the Future High Streets Fund and Blyth Town Deal. It is also being funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority, Innovate UK and OREC (W. Ploszaj/Lara Baker 07919 217457)</p>	N/A	13 September 2022
<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of June 2022 The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 30 June 2022. (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	13 September 2022
<p>Food & Feed, Safety & Standards Service Plan 2022/23 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet, for its consideration and endorsement, the Food and Feed, Safety and Standards Service Plan for 2022/23. (C. Horncastle/Peter Simpson 07920 806260)</p>	Communities and Place OSC 31 August 2022	13 September 2022
<p>Haydon Parish Neighbourhood Plan To seek approval to formally 'make' the Haydon Parish Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed</p>	N/A	13 September 2022

<p>independent examination in March 2022. A local referendum will be held in the Parish of Haydon on 30 June 2022 and it is expected that there will be a majority vote in favour of using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council will then be obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations, and that action should be completed within 8 weeks of the date of the referendum. (C. Horncastle/S. Brannigan 07966 335 508)</p>		
<p>Proposals for the Coquet Partnership This report sets out the feedback received from stakeholders arising from consultation on a proposal to reorganise the Coquet Partnership of schools to a 2-tier (primary/secondary) system of education, with accompanying relevant recommendations in the light of this proposal.</p> <p>Cabinet may also be recommended to permit the publication of a Statutory Proposal in relation to this proposal, which if approved would require Cabinet to make a final decision on the proposal at a later date. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston – 01670 6222810)</p>	<p>FACS OSC 8 September 2022</p>	<p>13 September 2022</p>
<p>Proposals for the allocation of the Public Health ring-fenced grant reserve This report describes the process undertaken to agree proposals for additional investment in public health interventions from the ring-fenced public health grant; and to make recommendations.</p> <p>There is a requirement when using any funds from underspend to comply with the conditions of the use of the annual public health grant, which means that the funds must be spent on public health functions.</p> <p>This report describes a prioritisation exercise undertaken for allocation of part of the public health reserve that has accumulated from underspend. Criteria were developed and weighted to score bids that were sought from within the public health team and from other teams across the council. Criteria with the highest weighting were: ‘Aim to reduce inequalities’ (20%); and ‘local need’, ‘evidence of impact/ effectiveness’, and ‘prevention’ (each 15%). A higher score was given if the goal was</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing OSC 6 September 2022</p>	<p>13 September 2022</p>

<p>primary prevention (preventing illness or maintaining health), in line with public health principles. (W. Pattison/J. Brown, 07796 312409/ L. Morgan, 07920 360093)</p>		
<p>Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of June 2022 The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2022-23 (R. Wearmouth/M. Calvert - 01670 620197) (Confidential report)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 12 September 2022</p>	<p>13 September 2022</p>
<p>Working together with VCSE – Non recurrent variation to VCSE Infrastructure Contract This purpose of this report is to seek approval to expand the current Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Infrastructure contract to include additional funding obtained from NHS Northumberland CCG, now the Integrated Care Board, to support the Thriving Together work between Northumberland Communities Together and the VCSE (W. Pattison/M. Taylor - 01670 622430)</p>		<p>13 September 2022</p>
<p>Alnwick and Hexham Shopfront Design Guides Northumberland County Council is committed to retaining the special character of its conservation areas. In market towns such as Alnwick and Hexham, shops and commercial premises are a key element of the conservation areas and have a considerable impact on their overall appearance. Achieving a high standard of design in relation to shops and other businesses is important in underpinning commercial success. · The Alnwick Shopfront Design Guide, 2021 replaces the 'Design Guide for Shop Fronts' which was adopted by Alnwick District Council in 1995. It has been produced in partnership with Alnwick Civic Society. · The Hexham Shopfront Design Guide, 2018 is an update of the 'Interim Design Package for Shopfronts and Their Advertisements', which was adopted by Tynedale Council in January 1990 and produced in association with the Hexham Civic Society. The updated Shopfront Design Guides are in line with national and local planning policies and contain guidance to assist developers, retailers,</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>11 October 2022</p>

<p>design professionals and building owners to prepare designs for shopfronts and other commercial premises which respond well to local character. They provide the Council with a set of criteria against which to assess the quality of proposed works when determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent. (C. Horncastle/S, Rushton 01670 622650)</p>		
<p>Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24 Since 1 April 2013 the Council is required to have its own council tax support scheme to provide assistance to council taxpayers on low incomes. The scheme needs to be approved annually and assistance is by way of a reduction in the amount of council tax that is due. The Council Tax Support Scheme needs County Council approval. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes – 01670 624351)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 10 October 2022</p>	<p>11 October 2022 Council 2 November 2022</p>
<p>Family Hubs Development Northumberland has been selected as one of the 75 local authorities who can receive additional funding to develop the Family Hub offer. The overall amount potentially available for Northumberland between Autumn 2022 and March 2025 is indicated to be between £3.321m and £3.446m. Work has been ongoing to develop the Family Hub model in Northumberland for some time, building on the already established Early Help Locality Model across the county. (G. Renner Thompson/M. Connor - 01670 620349)</p>	<p>FACS OSC 8 September 2022</p>	<p>11 October 2022</p>
<p>"Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund" submission To seek Cabinet approval for a submission to the Department of Health and Social Care to comply with the grant conditions of the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund 2022 to 2023. (W. Pattison/N. Bradley - 01670 622868)</p>		<p>11 October 2022</p>
<p>Outcomes of Consultation on Berwick Partnership Organisation This report sets out the feedback received from stakeholders arising from Phase 1 of informal consultation with stakeholders in the Berwick Partnership area and other relevant parties on whether any models of organisation that may be</p>	<p>FACS OSC 6 October 2022</p>	<p>11 October 2022</p>

<p>brought forward with specific proposals for schools (Phase 2) should consist of only 3-tier models of organisation or include 3-tier and 2-tier (primary/secondary) models of organisation. Cabinet is also asked to permit the initiation of the Phase 2 informal consultation with stakeholders in the area served by Berwick Partnership and other relevant stakeholders on proposals for individual schools in the partnership. The outcomes of Phase 2 consultation would be brought back to Cabinet at a later date. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - 01670 6222810)</p>		
<p>Revised Joint Charter with Town, Parish and Community Councils This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval for the publication of the revised joint Charter between the Council and the Town, Parish and Community Councils (TPCCs) in Northumberland.</p> <p>This revised Charter includes minor amendments to the 2019 edition and has been prepared following consultation with Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC). It defines joint principles to enable the Council and TPCCs to work effectively together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Northumberland. (G. Sanderson/Iain Hedley -07747 473687)</p>	<p>Communities and Place OSC 26 October 2022</p>	<p>11 October 2022</p>
<p>Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27 This report provides an update on the development of the 2023-24 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2023 to 2027. This report also details budget proposals for 2023-24 to meet the budget gap, as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2023-24 in December 2022. (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon 01670 622168)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 7 November 2022</p>	<p>8 November 2022</p>
<p>Council Tax Base 2023/24 The Council is required to set its council tax base annually. The tax base must be set between the 1st of December and 31st January. The tax base is a measure of the Council's taxable capacity which is used for the setting of its council tax. Legislation sets out the formula</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 12 December 2022</p>	<p>13 December 2022</p>

<p>for calculation. Cabinet have delegated authority to approve the tax base. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes – 01670 624351)</p>		
<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of September 2022 The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 30 September 2022. (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	13 December 2022
<p>Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of September 2022 The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2022-23 (R. Wearmouth/M. Calvert - 01670 620197) (Confidential report)</p>	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 12 December 2022	13 December 2022
<p>Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27 The report presents the updated Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27 to Cabinet following the receipt of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be announced during December 2022. The report will also include an update on the deliverability of savings. (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon 01670 622168)</p>	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 February 2022	14 February 2022 Council 22 February 2022
<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022 The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 December 2022. (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	14 March 2023
<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Position at the end of March 2023 (Provisional Outturn) The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 March 2023 (provisional outturn) (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	9 May 203

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Northumberland County Council

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY UPDATE

COMMITTEE: CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OSC

DATE: 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

Report of: Chris Thompson, Director of IT

Cabinet Member: Cllr Richard Wearmouth

Purpose of report

To provide Members with:

- An overview of progress on all broadband / connectivity projects
- Details of forthcoming projects and their likely impact

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the impact of broadband improvement to date and prospects for the future

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the “thriving” priority within the NCC Corporate Plan.

Key issues

There are several programmes of work planned, underway or recently completed that contribute to the improvement of digital connectivity in Northumberland.

These programmes are:

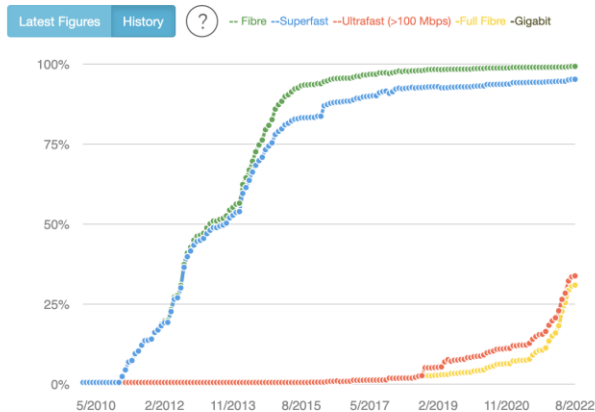
1. **Superfast programme (2014 – 2020)**
2. **Rural Gigabit Programme (2018 - Onwards)**
3. **Borderlands TopUp Vouchers (2020 – 2021)**
4. **Local Full Fibre Network Project (LFFN) (2020 - 2022)**
5. **Project Gigabit (2021 - 2025)**
6. **NCC Top up Vouchers (2022 - Onwards)**
7. **Schools Broadband Project (2022-2025)**
8. **WAN (Wide Area Network) Contract procurement (2023)**
9. **DCIA (Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator) (2022)**
10. **Mobile “Not spots” (Ongoing)**

Whilst we have made great progress over the last few years through these programmes, we are still slightly behind national connectivity coverage as shown in the table below:

How does Northumberland compare to the national picture?

Connection Speed	Property count	N.land	National	Difference
Superfast (Above 30mbps)	166,688	95.25%	97.23%	-1.98%
Full fibre (up to 1000mbps)	54,145	30.94%	38.79%	-7.85%
Below 30mbps	8,313	4.75%	2.77%	1.98%

Northumberland Superfast and Fibre Coverage



Authority classed as Rural-50 (R50) ?

Superfast (>24 Mbps):	96.20%	Below 2 Mbps down:	1.10%
Superfast (>=30 Mbps):	95.25%	Below 10 Mbps down: (Legal USO)	2.22%
Gigabit (DOCSIS 3.1 or FTTP):	30.94%	Below 10 Mbps, 1.2 Mbps up:	2.44%
Full Fibre (FTTP or FTTH):	30.94%	Below 15 Mbps: (High Speed Broadband)	2.99%
Alt Net FTTP: FTTP excluding Openreach, KCOM and Virgin Media RFOG	3.69%	Ultrafast (>100 Mbps):	33.83%
Openreach FTTP:	19.60%	Virgin Media Cable:	8.79%
'Fibre' partial/full at any speed: (FTTC/VDSL/G.fast/Cable/FTTP)	99.29%	Openreach (>30 Mbps):	94.56%
		Openreach G.fast:	4.99%

Coverage percentages include both residential and business premises and is based around postcode level data. The speed available are determined by a model that reconstructs the Openreach exchange/cabinet based network, and takes into account the distance limitations of ADSL2+ and VDSL2/G.fast (FTTC)

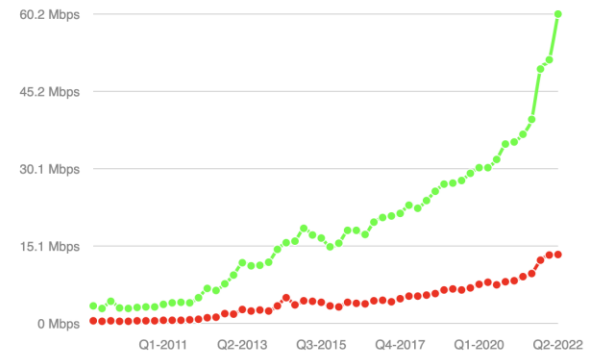
Northumberland Speed Test Results (Mbps)

Last Quarter History

Any Openreach ADSL FTTC Cable FTTH 3G/4G

ADSL, ADSL2+, FTTC, fibre, cable, mobile and wireless speeds ?

Technology Split: ADSL 11.8% FTTC 68.8% Cable 4.9% FTTH 14.4%



Estimated Maximum Mean Download Speed:

328 Mbps

This figure is based around everyone buying the fastest Virgin Media, KC or Openreach product available to them, based on current product availability. Distance limitations of ADSL2+ and VDSL2 are factored into the calculation.

Speed test results are based on the analysis of results from our [speed test](#) or partners who use our speed test service. We believe this is the largest analysis of crowd sourced speed test data for the UK and the technology splits by area help to show what the public is experiencing for the different types of services across the UK.

Background

Due to the diverse geography of Northumberland and the rurality of much of the county, delivering good digital connectivity across the whole county has been a perennial challenge. The Covid crisis in 2020 and 2021 brought the need for good connectivity into even sharper focus with many residents struggling to work from home and children to access online learning.

The Superfast programme had made great inroads in delivering broadband speeds of at least 30Mbps to just over 95% of premises which is just below the UK total of 97% but that still leaves almost 5% of premises with speeds below 30Mbps – and 2% below 10Mbps. These harder to reach premises are a priority that NCC have been working with BDUK at a national level to reach a deliverable solution to mitigate this digital inequality.

A positive outcome is that the rollout of gigabit capable fibre to the premises (FTTP) has accelerated, meaning that since January 2022, the number of premises in Northumberland able to receive speeds of over 100Mbps has more than doubled from 15% to 33.5%. This has in part been due to commercial investment by suppliers, but also positively impacted

by the Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme and Borderlands funded top-up and by the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project which has just come to an end. This momentum in fibre connections will continue with a number of projects that are set to start delivering in the coming months and the potential for better 4G mobile coverage and the beginnings of a 5G network. The continued commitment of Northumberland councillors to support digital initiatives will mean that the population will be able to access digital services on an equal footing and the County will become an even more attractive place to live, work and invest.

Progress to Date

1. Superfast programme

This programme ran from 2014 to early 2020 and represented an investment of more than £22million (£12.4million from BDUK and £9.6million from NCC). The proliferation of green cabinets across the county led to 95% being able to get speeds over 30Mbps but the shortcoming of this programme was that those properties, mostly but not exclusively in rural areas, that were further away from the cabinets received a much slower service. The take up of these superfast services by residents from this programme alone currently sits at 80.14% accurate as of April 2022, averaged across all 3 superfast contracts. This continues to benefit NCC with BT/Openreach granting interval payments to NCC based on the level of take up.

2. Rural Gigabit Programme

The nationally funded programme offered voucher subsidy to residents and businesses to enable the cost of FTTP connection to be made. BDUK made the choice to prioritise rural premises so the vouchers were only available to those who lived in designated 'rural' areas. However the funding at £1500 for homes and £3500 for businesses frequently fell short of the connection cost for hard to reach premises. This programme ended in 2021 and was replaced by 'Project Gigabit' which offered vouchers in the same way – but has a wider remit (see below). Just under 1500 vouchers were paid out to Northumberland between October 2018 and June 2022 delivering over £2.85m in voucher value to residents. Many more vouchers are still being processed to further benefit those in voucher priority areas.

3. Borderlands top-up vouchers

Northumberland and Cumbria both benefited from £4million (combined) from the Borderlands Growth Deal to fund top up vouchers that would effectively double the amount available to connect premises that were both rural and with speeds below 30Mbps. The voucher scheme ran from July 2020 through to April 2022 and, in Northumberland, it meant that 846 rural premises were able to be connected to gigabit capable FTTP (26% businesses and 74% residential) that would not have been financially viable without the top up. We aim to emulate this success with our own Northumberland based top up scheme (See 2. future projects below)

4. Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project

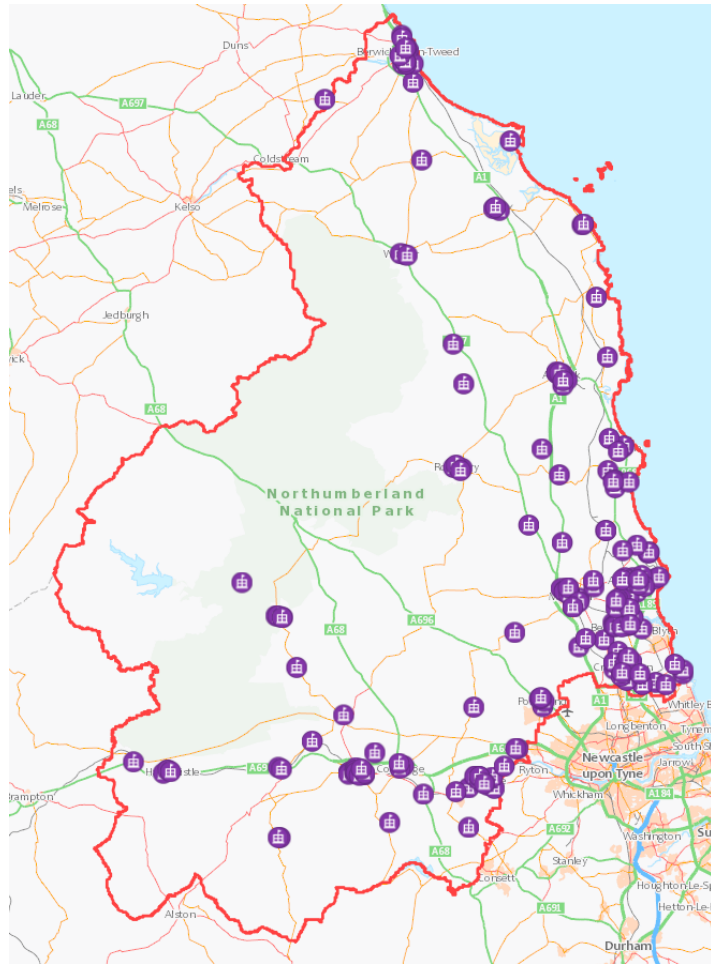
4 of 11

Broadband Connectivity Update – August 2022

This project to connect public buildings to gigabit capable fibre was funded by BDUK and NCC. The contract was awarded to BT to deliver and work commenced in Spring 2021. In addition to connecting public buildings, any premises that shared a distribution point with them would also be able to access gigabit capable fibre. The aim was for the project to act as a catalyst for further connections by running fibre to the 200+ locations.

- Funding offered: £7.275 million from BDUK and NCC agreed £932k funding
- Funding taken up: £5.874 million from BDUK NCC sites cost £872k
- Number of sites: 270 (original forecast) 216 (completed)
 - 173 funded by BDUK
 - 35 funded by NCC
 - 8 sites at nil cost (funded by BT/Openreach)
 - Reduction in sites due to some academy schools refusing offer of connection and others that were found to be part of commercial rollout (Blyth)
 - Around 940 additional premises connected as a result of the project
- Type of sites: Council depots, Libraries, Schools, Fire Stations, Childrens' Centres, Training Centres, Leisure Centres, Health Centres, Country Parks (including Plessey Woods and Druridge Bay).

The completion of this project has allowed new fibre infrastructure to be installed all across the county from Berwick all the way to Haltwhistle and across to the south east urban areas. This includes new large fibre spines in Prudhoe and Rothbury. (See below) The new connectivity will form the basis of the new 2022 WAN contract.



[LFFN completed sites across the County](#)

Ongoing/Future Projects

1. Project Gigabit

As part of the nationally funded £5 billion project being operated by BDUK that uses multiple approaches to connect homes and businesses across England to gigabit capable broadband.

- Project Gigabit Procurement

Northumberland is one of the first areas in the country to be selected. Suppliers have been invited to bid to deliver FTTP to c.21,000 premises in

Northumberland. The deadline for bids was the end of July 2022 and the successful bidder will be announced in November 2022 with delivery due to start early in 2023. The large 'Type B' procurement which covers Northumberland and Durham (a combined investment for the North East of £89.1million) is split into Initial and Deferred Scope premises (9,300 initial




and 8,300 deferred). The deferred scope are premises that may be delivered commercially so will be held until the Initial premises have been delivered.

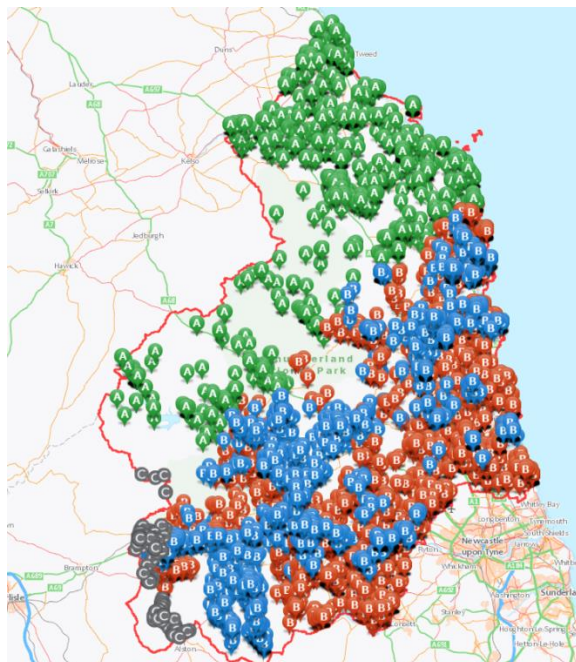
There is also a smaller 'Type A' procurement (£7.3million investment) in Northumberland which will cover around 3,500 premises. The successful bidder is expected to be announced in August 2022. There are also a small number of premises in the south west of the county that fall into the Cumbria procurement as their lines run from a Cumbrian exchange.

There are concerns around how many of the 'very hard to reach' premises will actually be included in the rollout and NCC officers have been working with BDUK to come up with potential solutions which could be enhanced funding for certain premises or consideration of alternative technologies where the cost might be prohibitively high to run fibre.

Northumberland type A and B prems

Procurement_Category

-  Type B Initial Scope
-  Type B Deferred Scope
-  Type A 34.01



[Map showing the extent of Project Gigabit Procurement](#)

- Gigabit Vouchers

These vouchers operate on the similar basis to the Rural Gigabit voucher scheme but are suspended during the current procurement process apart from 'voucher priority areas' which were identified when suppliers already had a well advanced voucher project at the time the procurement started. It is anticipated that the voucher programme will reopen once the procurement is complete but BDUK have yet to confirm a timescale.

2. Top Up Vouchers

The Council have previously agreed £2million of ring-fenced funding for a Northumberland top up voucher scheme which will operate in the same way as the Borderlands top up. This is passing through the BDUK assurance process and should be ready to launch later this autumn. This may need to be reduced at first to £1.5m funding with 2 large previously agreed clawback payments going back to BDUK from the superfast projects. We have confirmed with BDUK that this can then be further topped up later in the lifecycle based on demand for the additional funding.

3. Schools Broadband project

The Council have recently awarded a contract to deliver broadband to more than 110 schools across Northumberland. This will mean that more than 22,000 primary and secondary school children will be able to benefit from gigabit capable (1000Mbps) broadband at school that will enhance their digital learning experience. In some of the village primary schools they have been used to speeds of 10Mbps or even less in some cases, so this new service will transform what they are able to offer whilst keeping costs low.

4. WAN (Wide Area Network) Contract procurement

The council's current Wide Area Network (WAN) connects over 140 of our sites, including libraries, tourist information centres and council offices. The WAN current contract is due to expire in September 2023. The council began a procurement process in January 2022. The team involved in the procurement have evaluated bids from prospective providers. A decision is expected in early September and, depending on the successful bidder, could represent a considerable investment in fibre technology expanding over the contract period with the additional benefit of future proof connections for Council services and expansion of fibre to areas not currently covered. Social Value makes up a significant portion of the scoring system for the bidding suppliers. This puts a large focus on gaining extra full fibre connectivity for residents as part of this contract.

5. DCIA in partnership with NTCA

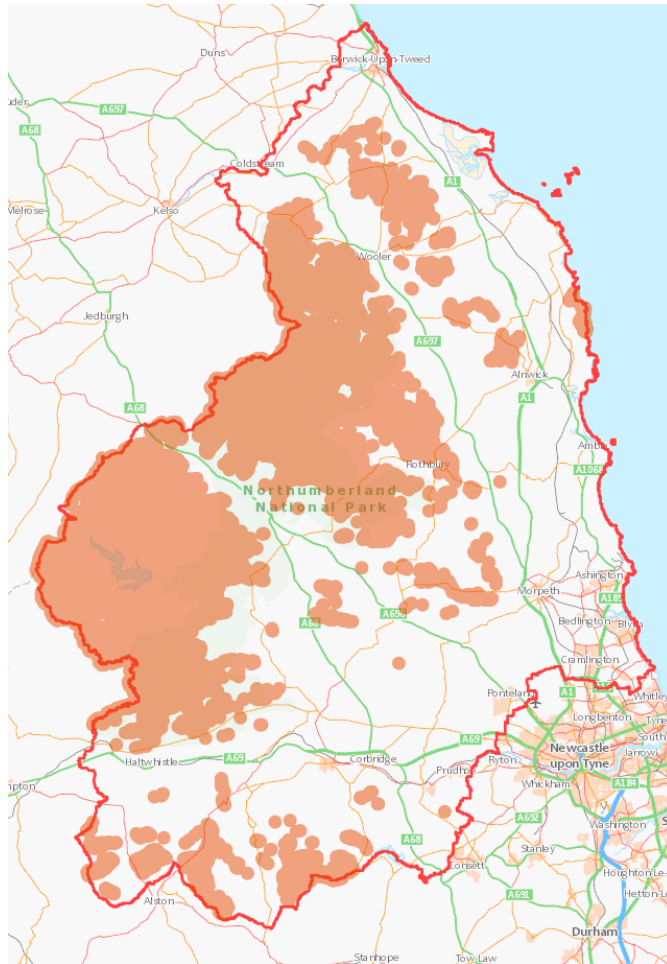
The Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) Pilot is run by DCMS from HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund and supported by DfT. DCIA has allocated funding to pilots which support the implementation of digital asset management solutions for mapping and brokerage of publicly owned assets for use in the rollout of wireless communication networks. The North of Tyne Combined Authority successfully won funding of just under £497,000 and NCC is part of the project along with North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Newcastle and Sunderland Councils. The aim is to make the process easier for mobile network providers to source

publicly owned sites which could host wireless equipment and facilitate 5G rollout across our region more quickly. The deliverables of the project include a digital catalogue of public assets that MNOs can access to locate suitable assets / furniture for installation of connectivity infrastructure. The project also aims to help streamline the approval processes needed for infrastructure installations.

6. **Mobile “not spots”**

We have been lobbying mobile providers for better coverage across the county with limited success. Currently just under 1,000 premises do not have access to a mobile network operator. The Shared Rural Network programme which allows mobile network operators to share masts should have a positive impact on coverage across Northumberland will reduce that figure by about 300. The Borderlands Growth Deal has allocated funding as part of Digital Borderlands to map out mobile ‘not spots’ and this is currently underway. Farrpoint have been commissioned to survey Cumbria and Northumberland and have provided an interim report showing key areas and the difference that the Shared Rural Network is expected to make. They are currently undertaking a drive by survey of Cumbrian visitor attractions and are expected to start Northumberland in September with a final report due early in 2023.

In addition, work is ongoing with Railsite, with support from Craster Parish Council, to build a mobile mast which would resolve the lack of mobile connectivity for the local community and visitors in a £100,000 project.



4G not spot areas shown in orange (Ofcom data)

Implications

Policy	N/A
Finance and value for money	N/A
Legal	N/A
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	N/A
Property	N/A
Equalities	N/A

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	N/A
Wards	N/A

Background papers:

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	CLlr Richard Wearmouth

Authors and Contact Details

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Chris Thompson – chris.thompson01@northumberland.gov.uk

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Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: CORPORATE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

DATE: 12TH SEPTEMBER 2022

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Report of: Cllr Richard Wearmouth

Executive Director of Finance

Purpose of report

At its February 2022 meeting, Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report summarising the results of the Budget Consultation undertaken as part of the 2022/23 Budget setting process. At that meeting, Members requested that the Committee have the opportunity to input into the development of the Budget Consultation for the next year (2023/24).

To help the Committee to do this, this report provides a summary of results from the last budget consultation undertaken between 10th December 2021 and 21st January 2022, setting out each of the questions asked (Appendix 1). The report also includes summary demographic information in relation to the respondents (Appendix 2).

Recommendations

Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

- **Consider the consultation questions asked in the Budget Consultation undertaken for 2022/23 and make suggestions as to draft questions for 2023/24.**
- **Make other suggestions to further strengthen budget engagement and consultation with residents and partners.**

Link to Corporate Plan

As the budget consultation helps to inform the Council's budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, it is aligned to all the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan.

Key issues

1. It's important that the Council's budget reflects services and investments that are most important to residents and businesses in all communities across the County. From 10th

December 2021 to 21st January 2022, we consulted on our budget proposals. Appendix 1 outlines the summary results of that consultation.

Background

2. In December last year, the Council launched its online budget consultation. This was through an online survey tool and was open to anyone wishing to participate, including residents, businesses, partner organisations, Members and staff. The consultation was promoted through a variety of media channels. As the survey was online and open to all, the responses are not a 'statistical sample' of the population so, we did not present the results as representative of the population as a whole. However, the results provided a useful sense of views across a range of stakeholders, including:
 - Residents (94.55% of the responses);
 - Local businesses;
 - Charities;
 - Community Groups;
 - NCC staff who are residents;
 - NCC Staff who are non-residents;
 - Councillors;
 - Public Sector;
 - Other.
3. In total, we received 312 responses to the consultation which is a positive response rate. In the consultation, we asked for views on each of the key services. For each of these areas we asked:
 - (i) Would you spend more / less / same on these services?
 - (ii) How important are these services to you ('extremely' / 'very' / 'important' / 'not very' / 'not at all')?
4. Respondents were also asked:
 - What investment priorities are most important to help jobs and businesses grow;
 - To rank which services were most important to them;
 - To rank priorities for tackling Climate Change;
 - Whether the proposed Adult Social Care precept should be more, less or the same; and,
 - To provide suggestions on how the Council could raise more income or deliver services differently to save money.
5. As well as the consultation questionnaire, in January 2022, the Leader and Portfolio Members presented to the five Local Area Councils (LACs) on the Budget. These meetings were open to the public to view through the YouTube channel. The table (below) sets out viewing for these meetings.

Table 1 LAC Participation

Area	Views (YouTube)
Castle Morpeth LAC	314
Tynedale LAC	129
Ashington and Blyth LAC	221
Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley	223
North Northumberland	306
Total	1,193

6. In addition, the Leader of Council hosted a public question time session on the budget, supported by the Deputy Leader and the Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer). Questions from members of the public were invited, and the livestream had 2,759 views.
7. The budget consultation was promoted on the Council’s social media channels and reached 17,532 people – 12,922 engaged with our social media posts and 300 people commented.

Implications

Policy	The Budget Consultation helps to inform the Council’s Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan
Finance and value for money	Whilst there are no financial implications arising directly from this report, the consultation and wider engagement on the budget help to inform the Council’s Budget which will be detailed in the separate report to Council in 2023.
Legal	Whilst there are no legal implications arising directly from this report, the consultation and wider engagement on the budget help to inform the Council’s Budget which will be detailed in a separate report to Council in 2023.
Procurement	There are no specific Procurement implications within this report.
Human Resources	There are no specific HR implications within this report.
Property	There are no specific Property implications within this report.
Equalities	There are no specific Equalities implications within this report, although the consultation and wider engagement on the budget

(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	help to inform the Council's Budget which will be detailed in a separate report to Council in 2023.
Risk Assessment	There are no specific risk implications within this report.
Crime & Disorder	There are no specific crime implications within this report.
Customer Consideration	There are no specific customer implications within this report.
Carbon reduction	There are no specific carbon reduction implications within this report although the feedback on carbon investment priorities will be shared more widely with teams leading on the Council's plans for carbon reduction.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no specific health and wellbeing implications within this report.
Wards	All wards

Background papers:

Budget Report Medium-Term Financial Plan

Report sign off.

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	N/A
Interim Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Richard Wearmouth

Author and Contact Details

Philip Hunter
Interim Senior Service Director
philip.hunter@northumberland.gov.uk

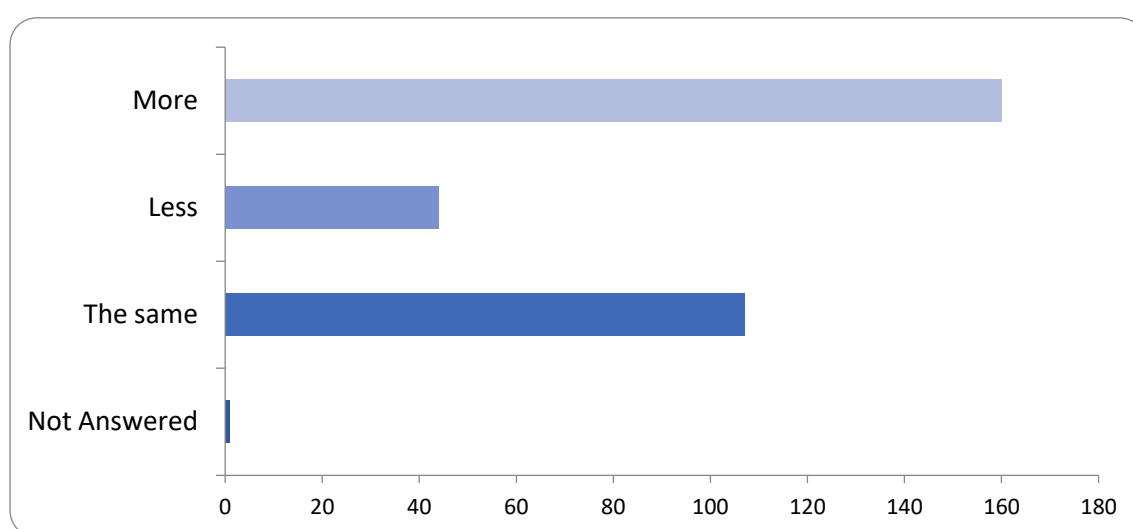
APPENDIX 1 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022-23 – SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. The following paragraphs summarise the responses to these questions, grouped by high-level service areas.

- (i) **Adults' Wellbeing** – the vast majority of respondents (82%) viewed services to adults as 'important', 'very important' or 'extremely important'. Over a third (33.97%) ranked these services as extremely important. Some 86% of respondents would spend more (51.28%) or the same (34.29%) on these services, with 14% saying these would spend less.

Table 1 Adults' Wellbeing: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

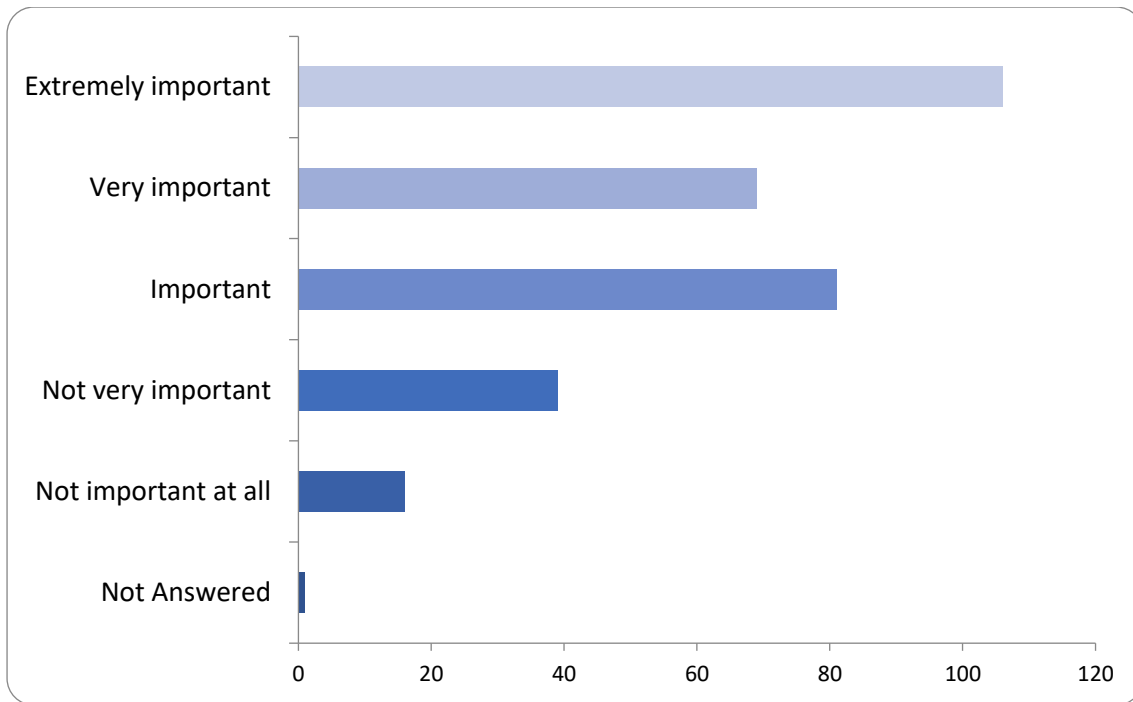
There were 311 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	160	51.28%
Less	44	14.10%
The same	107	34.29%
Not Answered	1	0.32%

Table 2 Adults' Wellbeing: How important are these services to you?

There were 311 responses to this part of the question.

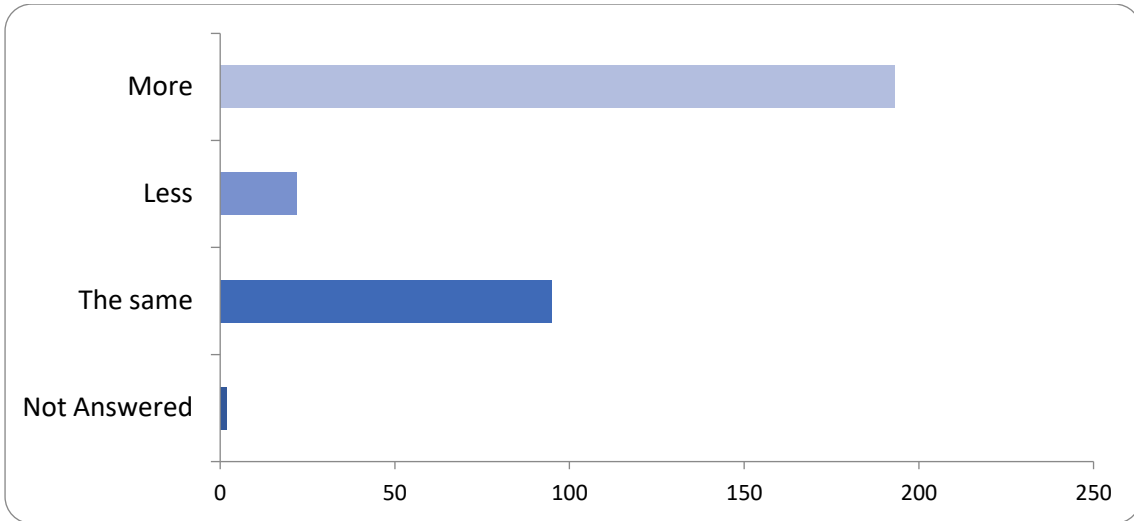


Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	106	33.97%
Very important	69	22.12%
Important	81	25.96%
Not very important	39	12.50%
Not important at all	16	5.13%
Not Answered	1	0.32%

- (ii) **Children and Young People** – like Adult' Wellbeing, respondents attach high levels of importance to Children's Services. Some 88% viewed these services as 'important', 'very important' or 'extremely important', with 42% respondents ranking these services as 'extremely important'. Some 92% of respondents would spend more (62%) or the same (30%) on these services, with 7% saying these would spend less.

Table 3 Children and Young People: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

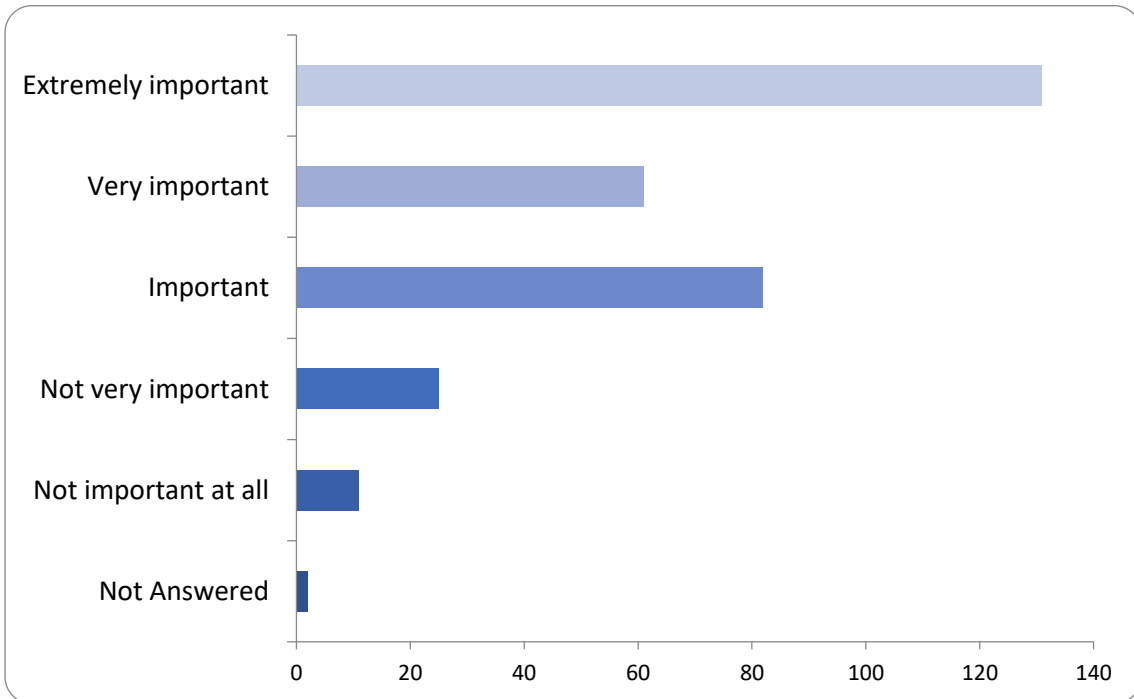
There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	193	61.86%
Less	22	7.05%
The same	95	30.45%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

Table 4 Children and Young People: How important are these services to you?

There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



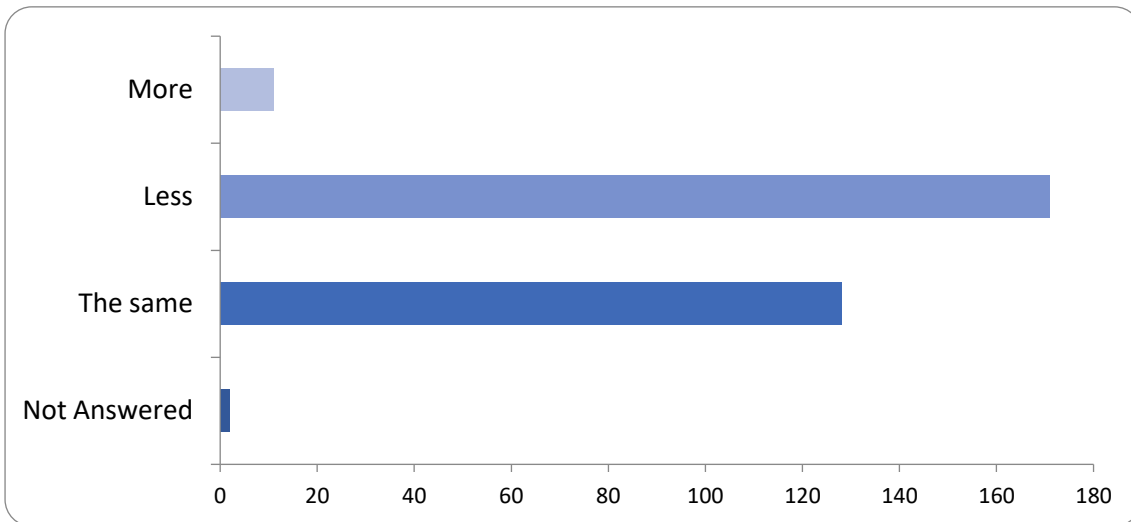
Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	131	41.99%
Very important	61	19.55%
Important	82	26.28%

Not very important	25	8.01%
Not important at all	11	3.53%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

- (iii) **Corporate Services** – these include a range of ‘back office’-type services such as HR, IT and Finance. Some 65% of respondents ranked these as ‘important’-extremely important’. Some 45% would spend more or the same level on these services, with 55% indicating they would spend less.

Table 5 Corporate Services: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

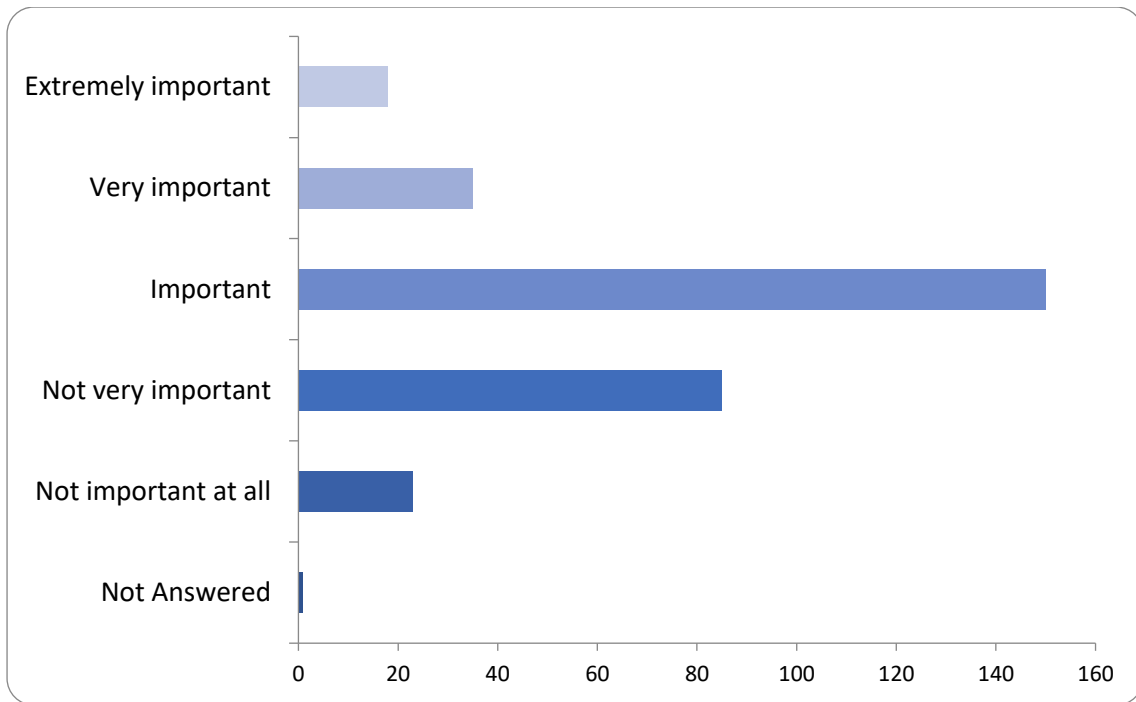
There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	11	3.53%
Less	171	54.81%
The same	128	41.03%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

Table 6 Corporate Services: How important are these services to you?

There were 311 responses to this part of the question.

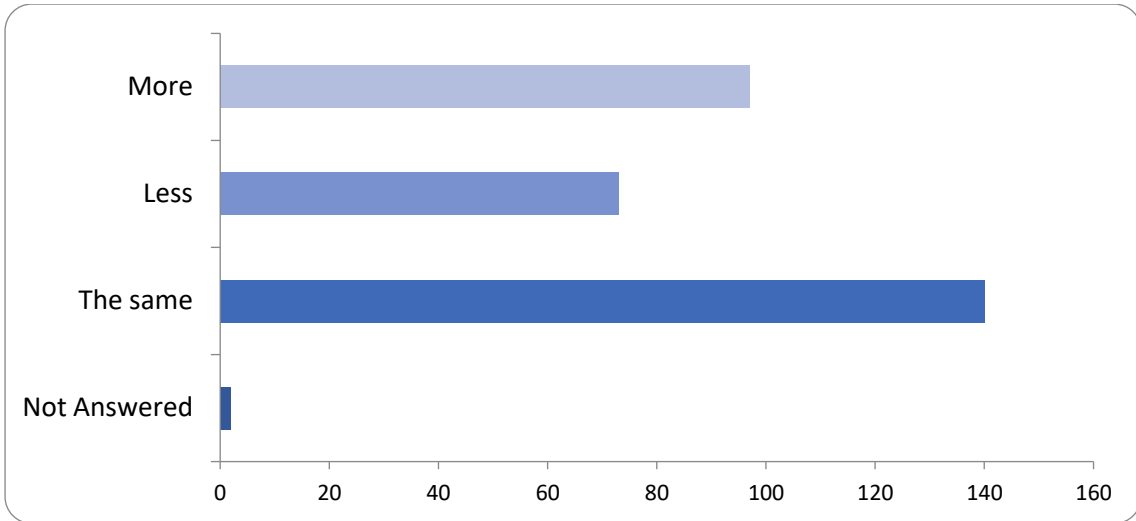


Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	18	5.77%
Very important	35	11.22%
Important	150	48.08%
Not very important	85	27.24%
Not important at all	23	7.37%
Not Answered	1	0.32%

- (iv) **Healthy Lives** – some 78% of respondents ranked these services as either ‘important’, ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’, with 76% indicating they would spend the same (45%) or more (31%) on culture, arts & leisure.

Table 7 Healthy Lives: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

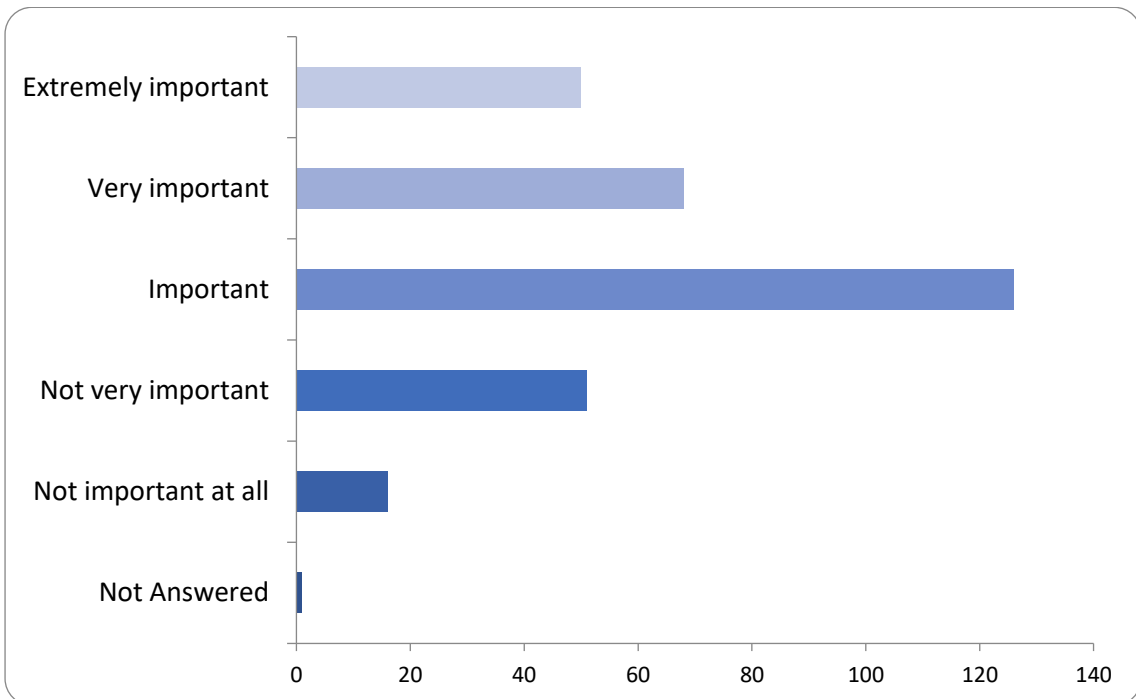
There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	97	31.09%
Less	73	23.40%
The same	140	44.87%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

Table 8 Healthy Lives: How important are these services to you?

There were 311 responses to this part of the question.



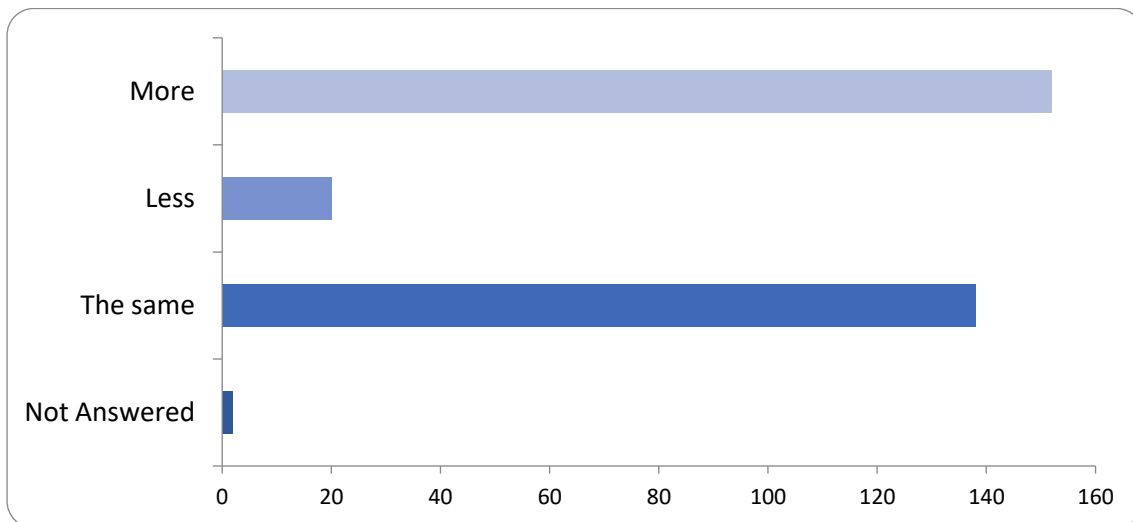
Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	50	16.03%
Very important	68	21.79%
Important	126	40.38%

Not very important	51	16.35%
Not important at all	16	5.13%
Not Answered	1	0.32%

(v) **Local Services** – similar to services to Children and Adults, respondents attach high levels of importance to Local Services such as refuse collection, waste disposal, streetlighting, roads and pavements. Some 96% viewed these services as ‘important’, ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’, with 37% ranking these services as ‘extremely important’. Some 93% of respondents would spend more (49%) or the same (44%) on these services.

Table 9 Local Services: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

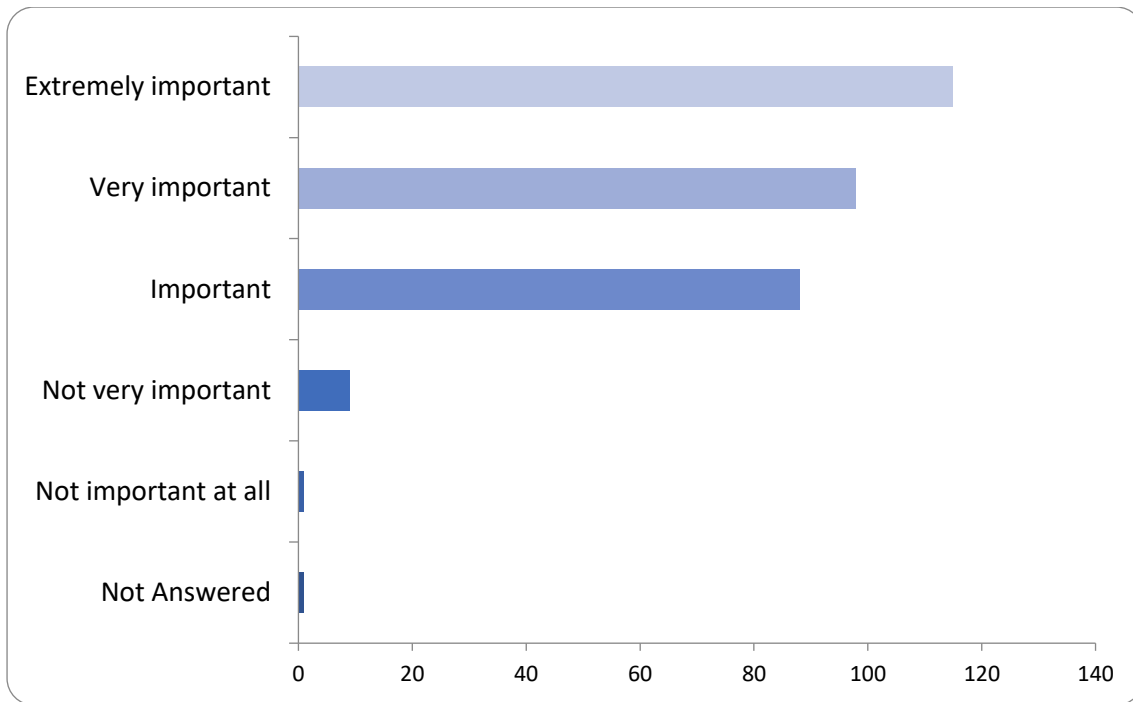
There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	152	48.72%
Less	20	6.41%
The same	138	44.23%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

Table 10 Local Services: How important are these services to you?

There were 311 responses to this part of the question.

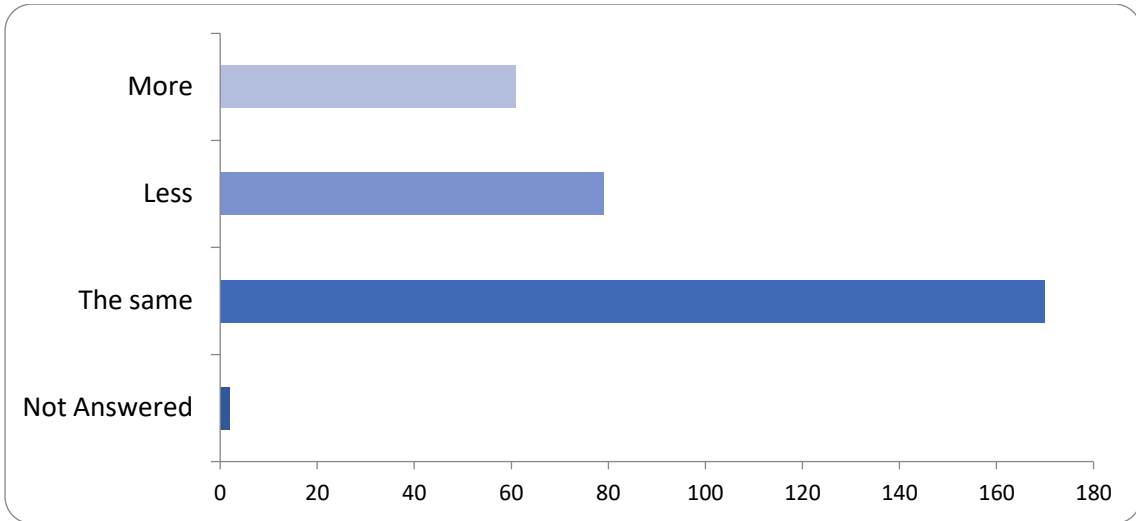


Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	115	36.86%
Very important	98	31.41%
Important	88	28.21%
Not very important	9	2.88%
Not important at all	1	0.32%
Not Answered	1	0.32%

- (vi) **Community Services** – 78% of respondents ranked these services as ‘important’, ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’. Some 74% would spend more or the same on these services.

Table 11 Community Services: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

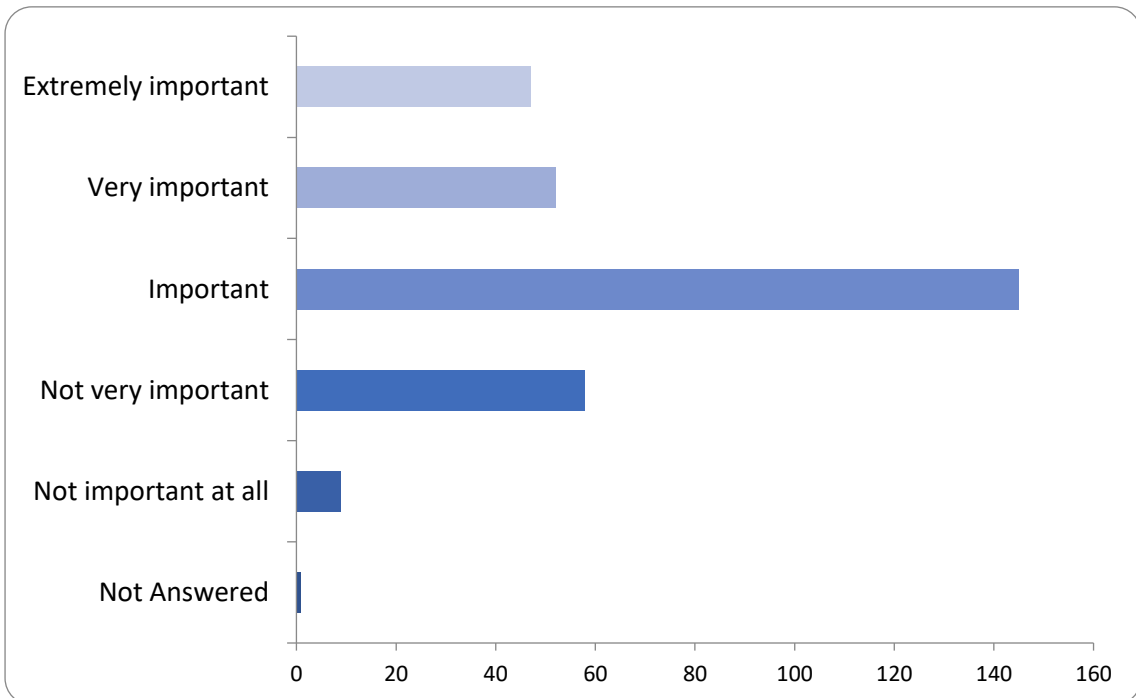
There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	61	19.55%
Less	79	25.32%
The same	170	54.49%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

Table 12 Community Services: How important are these services to you?

There were 311 responses to this part of the question.



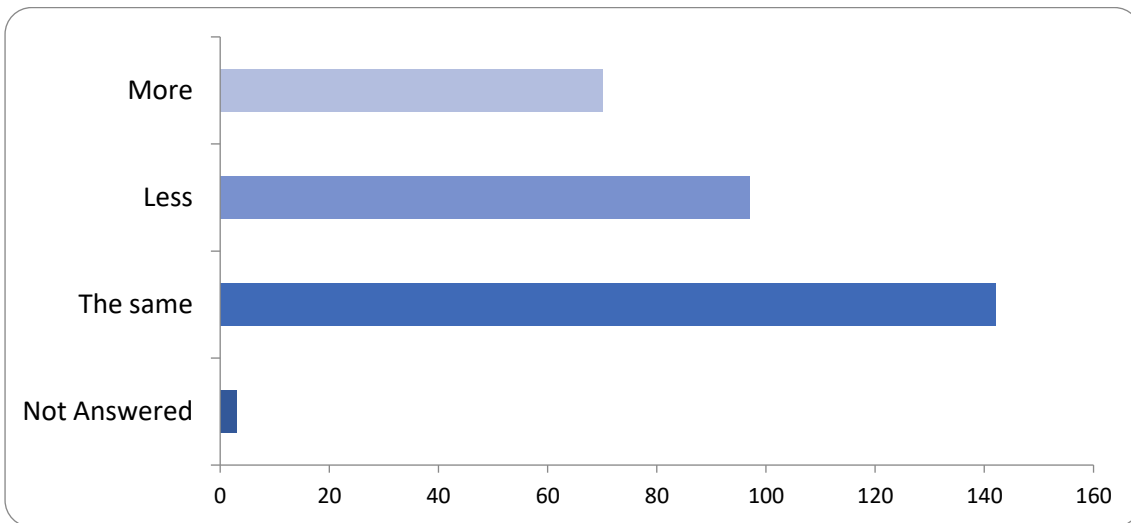
Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	47	15.06%
Very important	52	16.67%
Important	145	46.47%

Not very important	58	18.59%
Not important at all	9	2.88%
Not Answered	1	0.32%

(vii) **Business** – 74% of respondents ranked these services as ‘important’, ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’. Some 68% would spend more or the same on these services.

Table 13 Business: Would you spend more, less or the same on this service?

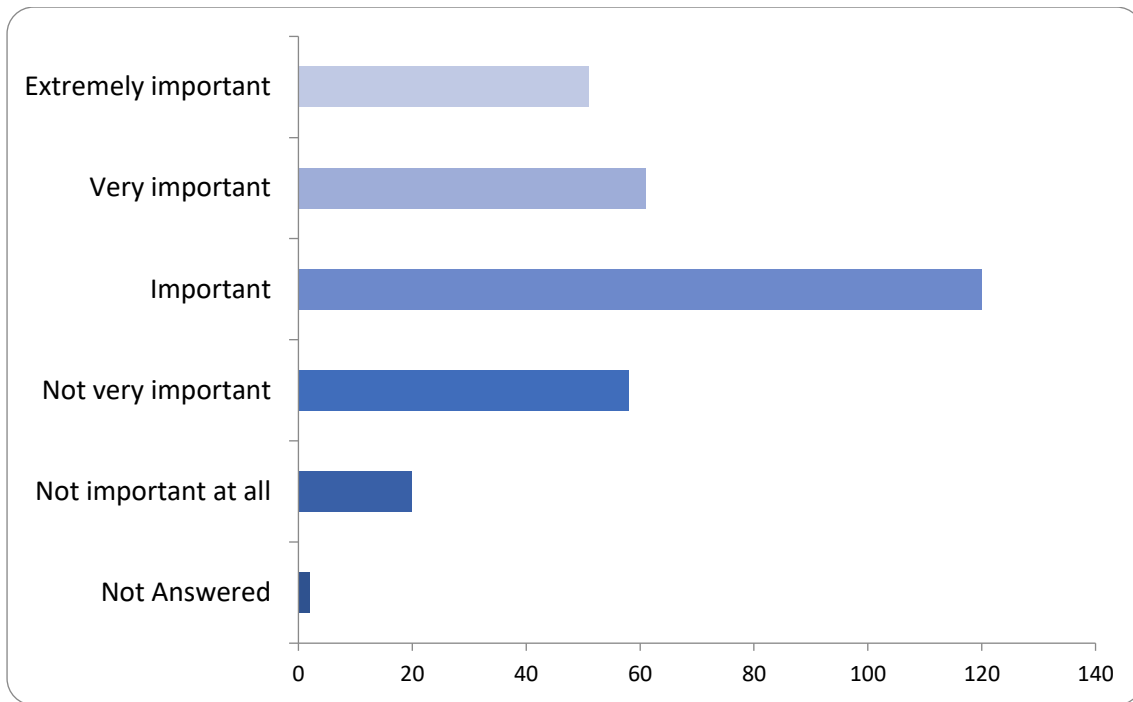
There were 309 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	70	22.44%
Less	97	31.09%
The same	142	45.51%
Not Answered	3	0.96%

Table 14 Business: How important are these services to you?

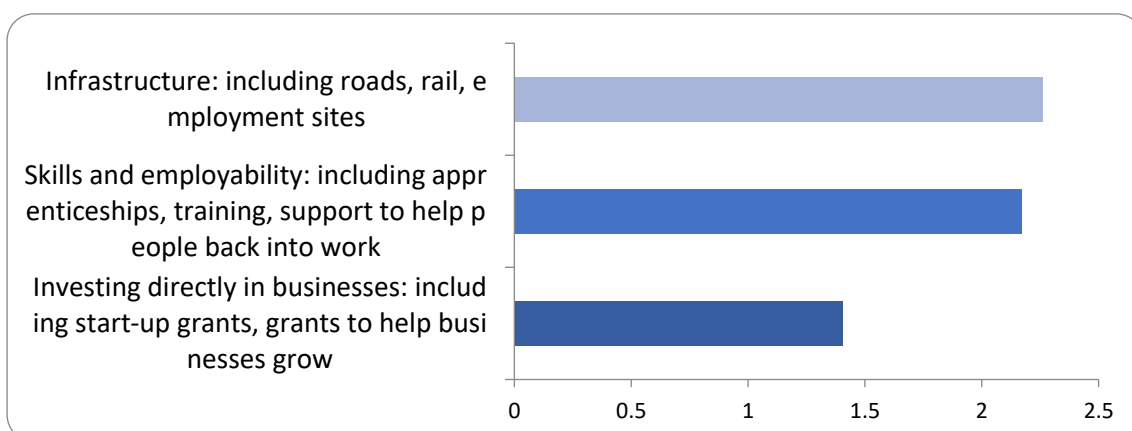
There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Extremely important	51	16.35%
Very important	61	19.55%
Important	120	38.46%
Not very important	58	18.59%
Not important at all	20	6.41%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

2. The survey also sought views on priorities for the Council to invest in jobs and businesses. Respondents were given three broad areas for investment and the ranking is set out in the table 15 below:

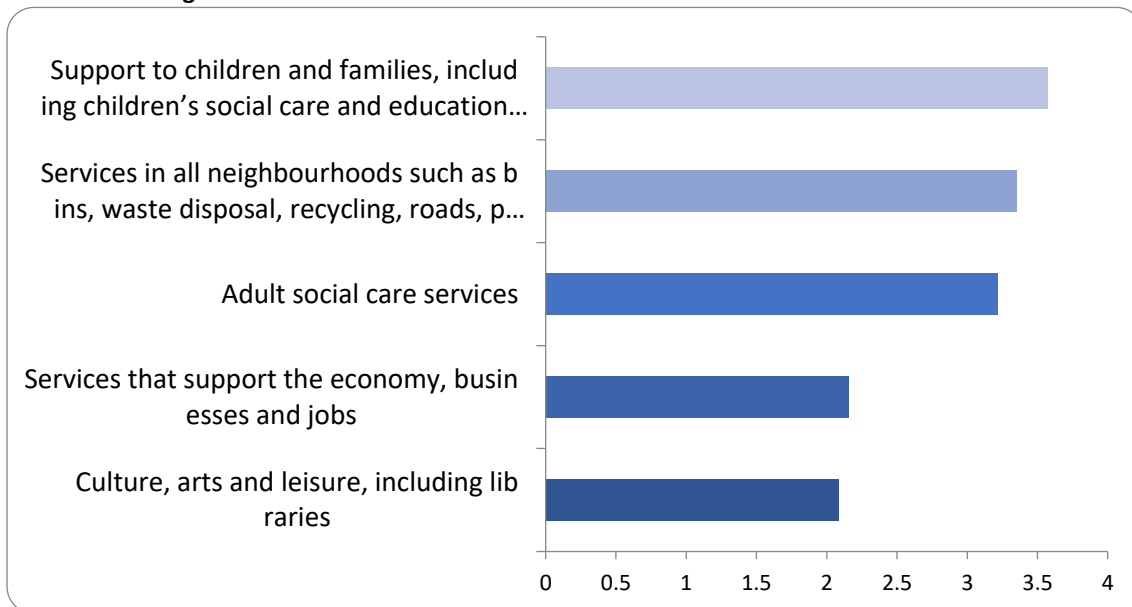
Table 15: What investment priorities do you think are most important to help jobs and businesses grow?



Item	Ranking
Infrastructure: including roads, rail, employment sites	2.26
Skills and employability: including apprenticeships, training, support to help people back into work	2.17
Investing directly in businesses: including start-up grants, grants to help businesses grow	1.41

3. We asked respondents to rank which services were most important to them. Support to children and families was ranked top, with services in all neighbourhoods second. Table 16 (below) shows there was not a big difference between the top three ranked services (Support to children & families, Adult Social Care and services to all neighbourhoods).

Table 16 Ranking of Services

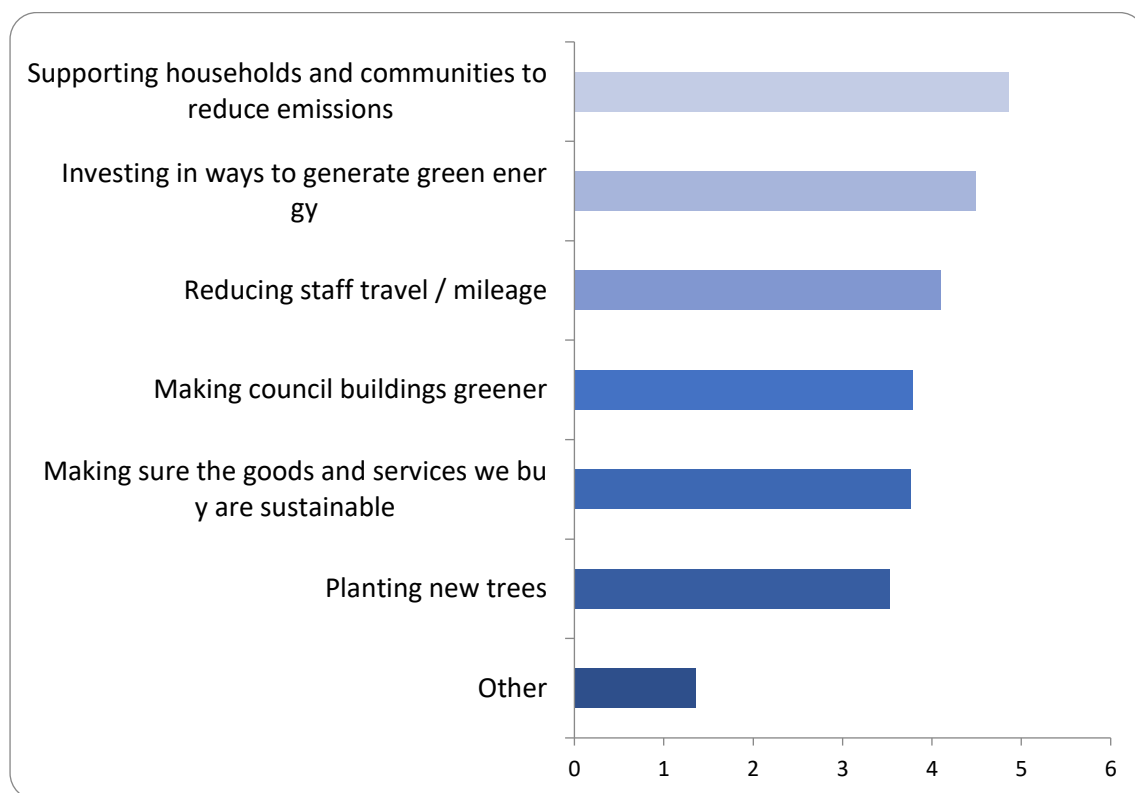


Item	Ranking
Support to children and families, including children's social care and education and skills	3.57
Services in all neighbourhoods such as bins, waste disposal, recycling, roads, pavements and streetlighting	3.36
Adult social care services	3.21
Services that support the economy, businesses and jobs	2.16
Culture, arts and leisure, including libraries	2.09

4. The Council is delivering on its ambitious Climate Action Plan, investing in services and infrastructure to reduce the county’s carbon emissions. So, the Council wanted to know residents’ priorities for tackling this agenda. The top ranked priority was ‘supporting households and communities to reduce emissions’, with ‘investing in ways to generate green energy the second ranked priority’.

Table 17: Ranking of Climate Change priorities

Ranking of 'Climate Change ranking'

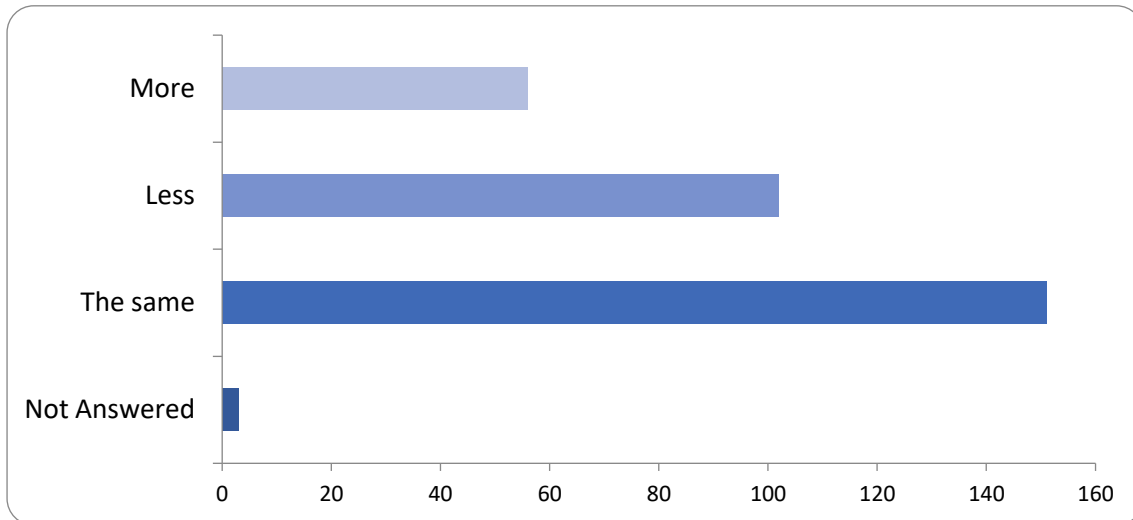


Item	Ranking
Supporting households and communities to reduce emissions	4.86
Investing in ways to generate green energy	4.50
Reducing staff travel / mileage	4.10
Making council buildings greener	3.79
Making sure the goods and services we buy are sustainable	3.76
Planting new trees	3.53
Other	1.36

5. Respondents were asked: whether the proposed Adult Social Care Precept increase should be more, less or the same?” Some 66% indicated this should be more (18%) or the same (48%), with 33% indicating this should be less.

Table 16: Adult Social Care Precept

There were 309 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
More	56	17.95%
Less	102	32.69%
The same	151	48.40%
Not Answered	3	0.96%

6. We asked for ideas on how the Council could raise more income or deliver services differently to save money and received 254 suggestions and comments. These comments fell into 8 broad themes although, naturally, there was a degree of overlap between the comments. The paragraphs below summarise the responses to this question.

- (i) **Organisation** – we received 107 suggestions and comments on how we could make savings through organisational improvements and efficiencies. These covered a broad range of issues, including: reducing senior staff salaries / expenses, management structure, how we procure goods and services; opportunities for joint services with other partners or councils; general efficiencies; and, costs associated with local democracy.
- (ii) **Tax base, charges and other fund raising** – there were some 44 suggestions on how the Council could raise more income through the local tax base, charges and other ways of raising funds. This was not simply about increasing Council Tax and there were comments against Council Tax increases. Many of the suggestions on this theme were focused on: supporting more business and town centres; providing people with support to get into work; and, encouraging more people and businesses to come to the County. There were also suggestions on charges for services and

introducing, raising or increasing enforcement of fines. It should be noted that some of the suggestions made would require national legislation to take forward, for example introducing a 'tourist tax or levy'.

- (iii) **Assets** – this theme was about how the Council makes better use of its assets, including: selling / letting / making more efficient use of buildings, land and facilities; taking more commercial approaches generally; and, use of charges for services. Some of the suggestions were about better use of the County's assets more generally, including use of assets outside the control of the Council (e.g. privately-owned shops). Some 23 comments and suggestions on this overall theme were put forward.
- (iv) **Reduce or re-prioritise investment** – whilst many suggestions supported investment as a way of encouraging business growth and increasing jobs, some people suggested the Council should look to prioritise spending on critical services and where necessary reduce investment where this is not deemed essential. Other suggestions were focused on increasing investment in areas where it was felt more, not less regeneration is needed. There were a total of 20 suggestions and comments on this theme.
- (v) **Reduce or re-prioritise services** – this theme included suggestions (21 in total) and comments on how the Council should prioritise spending on what people felt were critical services. There were also suggestions on how the Council could support communities to do more for themselves and increase working with community and voluntary groups.
- (vi) **Climate Change & sustainability** – we received 13 comments and suggestions on how we can save money or raise income as part of our overall approach to tackling climate change and delivering more environmentally sustainable services.
- (vii) **Parking** – there were 10 comments on re-introducing car-parking charges (in areas where we don't charge) or increasing existing car parking charges. Some comments were focused on charging for non-residents.
- (viii) **Government** – some people suggested that Government should provide more funding to the Council to support local services and investment. In total, there were 16 suggestions and comments on this theme.

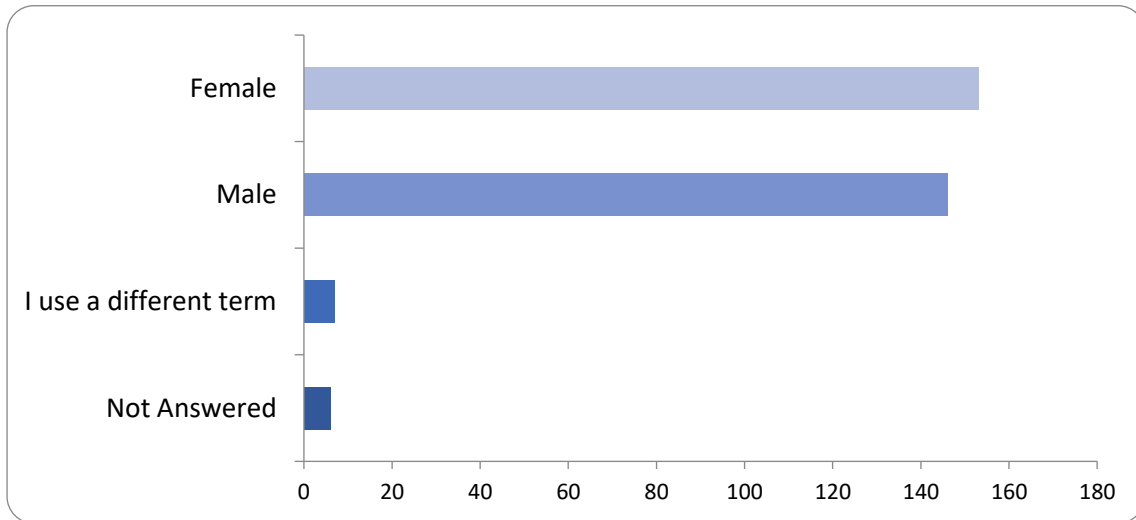
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APPENDIX 2 - BUDGET CONSULTATION – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

22: How do you think of yourself?

Gender

There were 306 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Female	153	49.04%
Male	146	46.79%
I use a different term	7	2.24%
Not Answered	6	1.92%

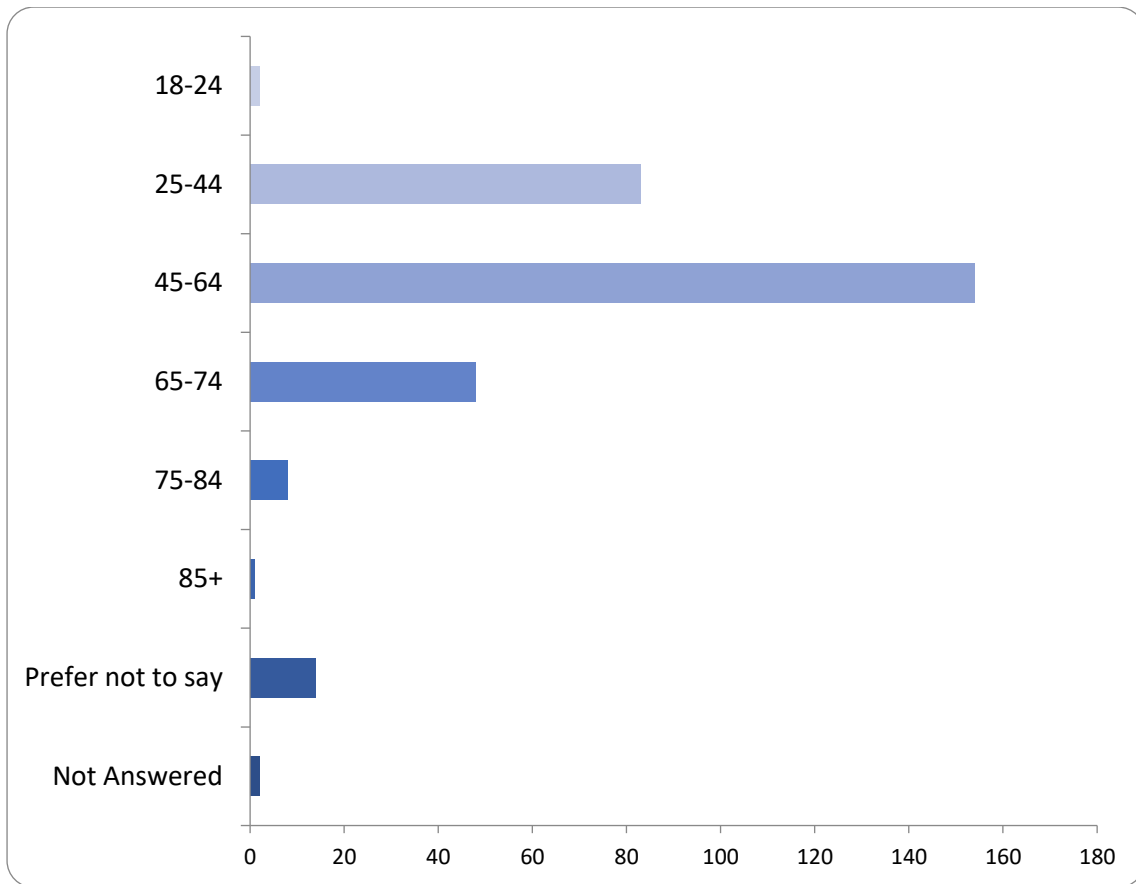
Gender other

There were 11 responses to this part of the question.

23: Please tell us your age group.

Age

There were 310 responses to this part of the question.

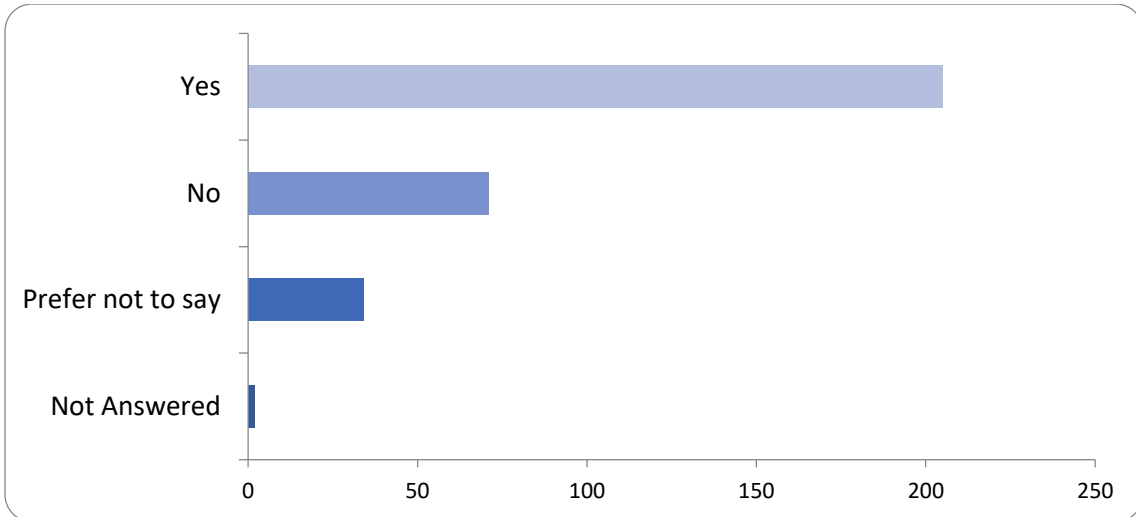


Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	0	0.00%
18-24	2	0.64%
25-44	83	26.60%
45-64	154	49.36%
65-74	48	15.38%
75-84	8	2.56%
85+	1	0.32%
Prefer not to say	14	4.49%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

24: Are you married or in a civil partnership?

Marriage

There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



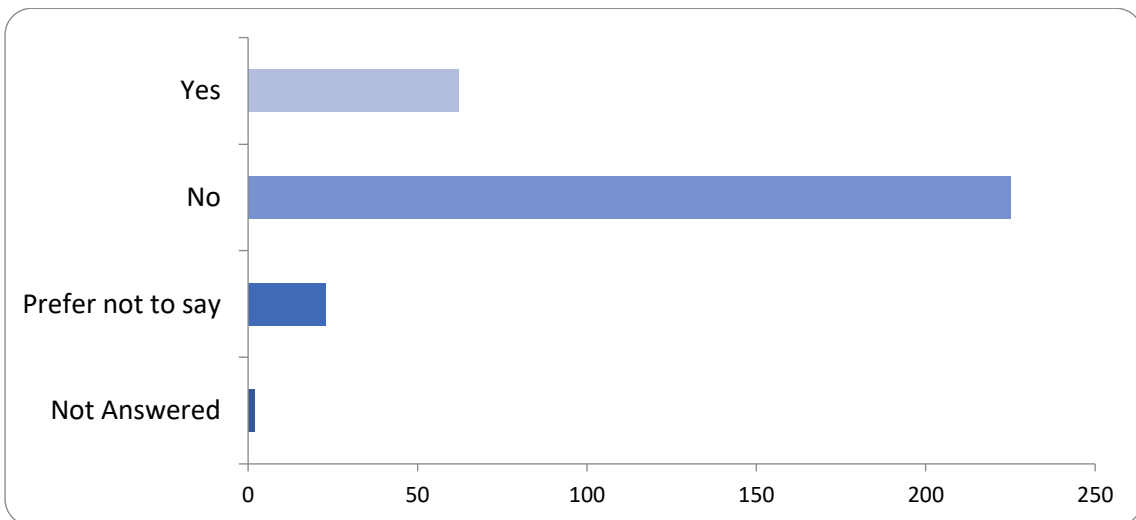
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	205	65.71%
No	71	22.76%
Prefer not to say	34	10.90%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

25: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

(The Equality Act 2010 considers a person to be disabled if they have “a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”)

Disability

There were 310 responses to this part of the question.



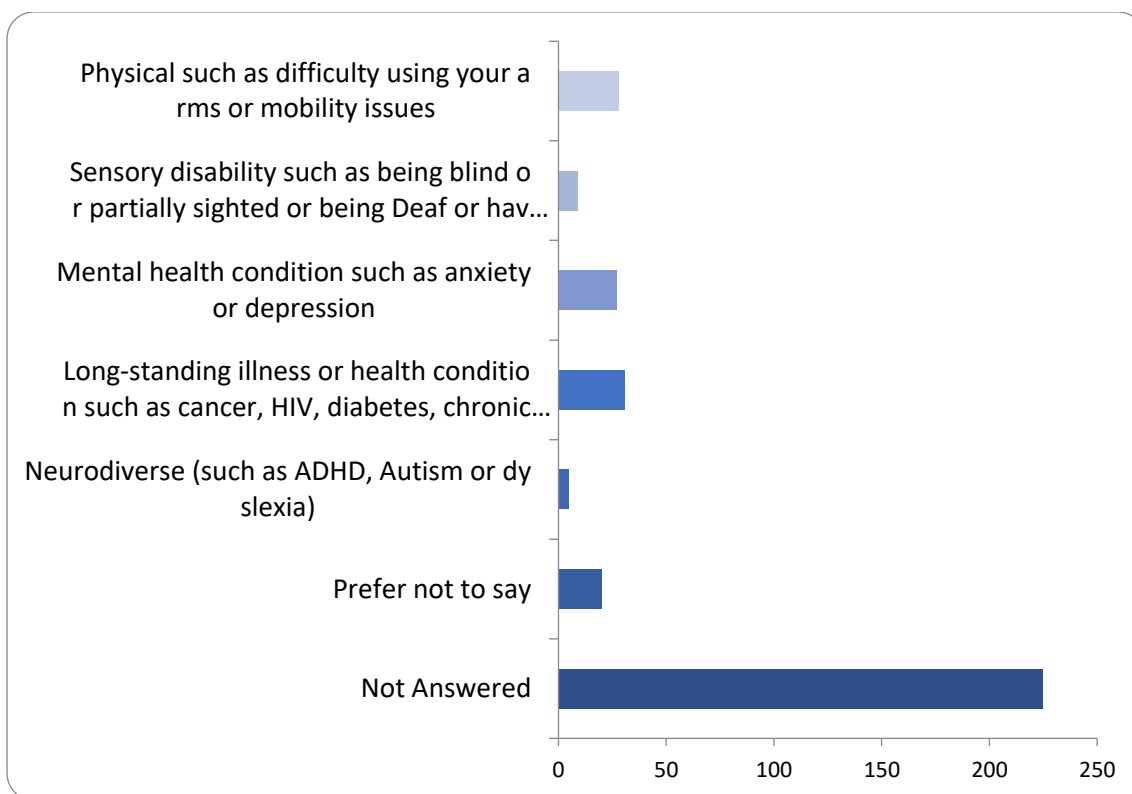
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	62	19.87%
No	225	72.12%
Prefer not to say	23	7.37%
Not Answered	2	0.64%

26: If yes, please indicate the type of disability or health condition you have.

Please tick all those that apply. If none apply, please mark 'Other' and give details.

Disability 2

There were 87 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Physical such as difficulty using your arms or mobility issues	28	8.97%
Sensory disability such as being blind or partially sighted or being Deaf or having hearing loss	9	2.88%
Mental health condition such as anxiety or depression	27	8.65%

Long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	31	9.94%
Learning disability/difficulty (such as Down's syndrome)	0	0.00%
Neurodiverse (such as ADHD, Autism or dyslexia)	5	1.60%
Prefer not to say	20	6.41%
Not Answered	225	72.12%

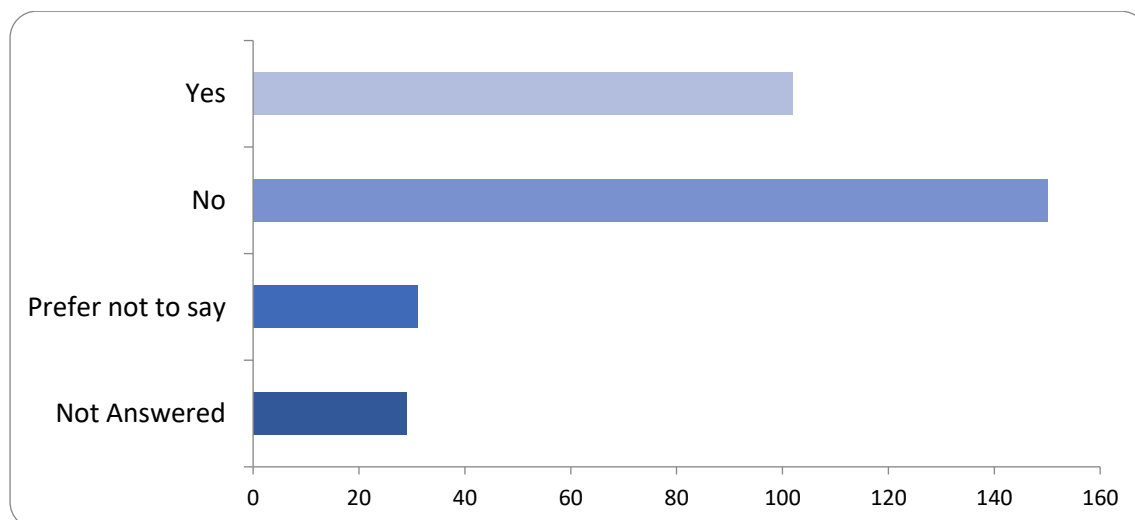
Disability other

There were 3 responses to this part of the question.

27: Do you have any caring responsibilities?

Carers

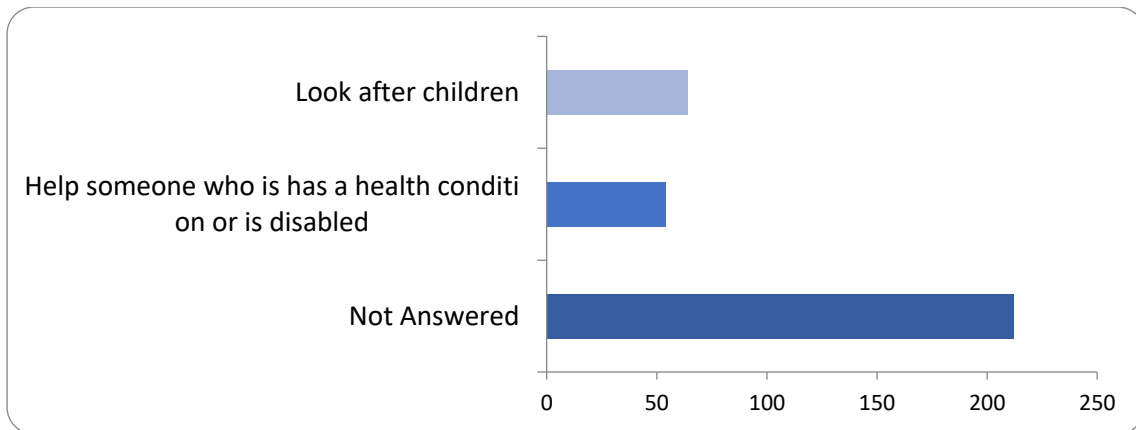
There were 283 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	102	32.69%
No	150	48.08%
Prefer not to say	31	9.94%
Not Answered	29	9.29%

If yes, do you

There were 100 responses to this part of the question.

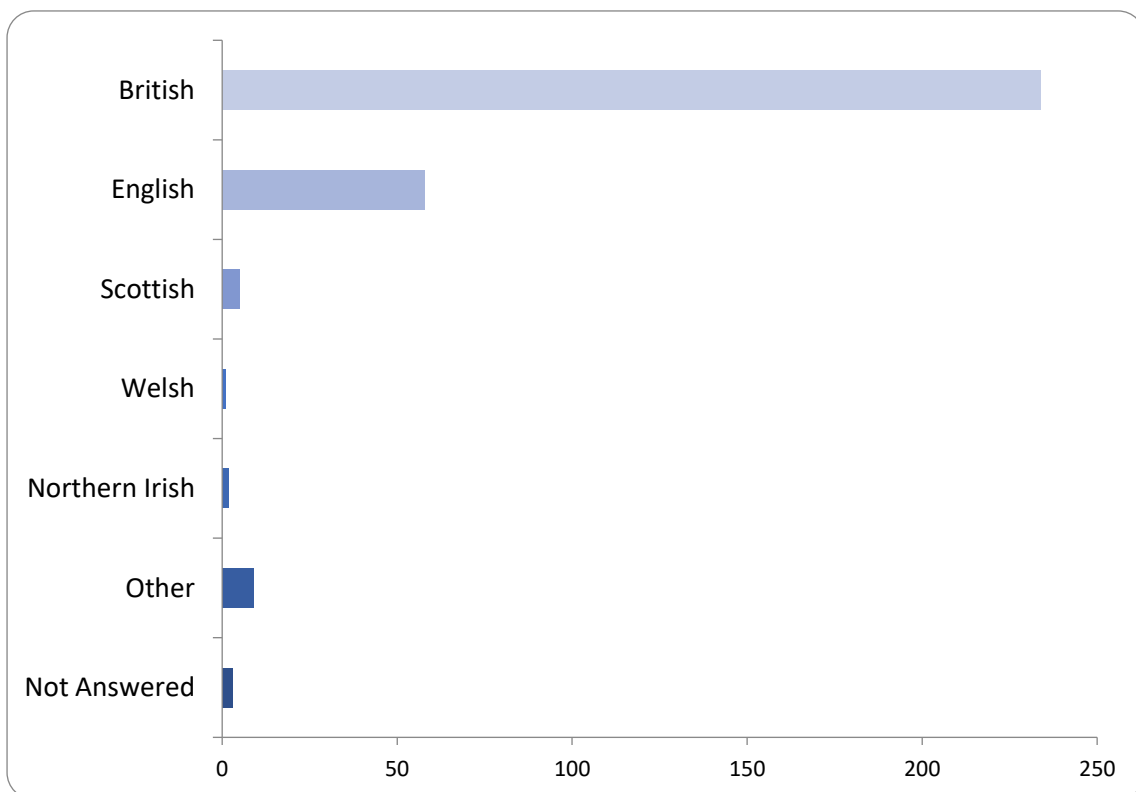


Option	Total	Percent
Look after children	64	20.51%
Help someone who is has a health condition or is disabled	54	17.31%
Not Answered	212	67.95%

28: How would you describe your national identity?

Nationality

There were 309 responses to this part of the question.

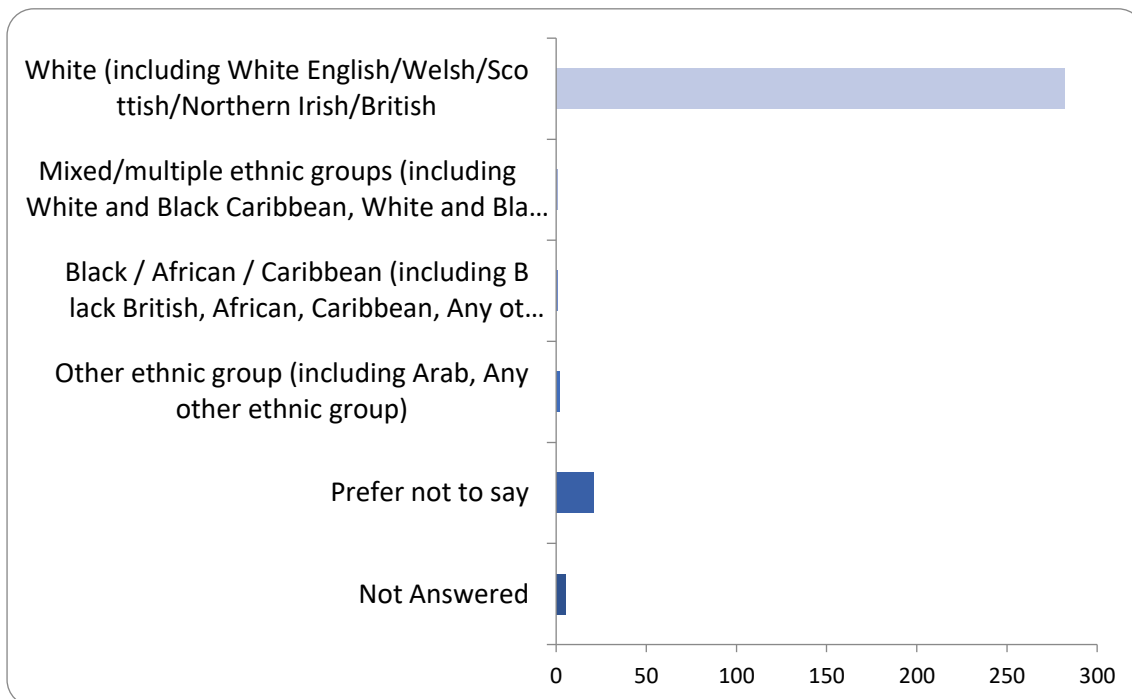


Option	Total	Percent
British	234	75.00%
English	58	18.59%
Scottish	5	1.60%
Welsh	1	0.32%
Northern Irish	2	0.64%
Other	9	2.88%
Not Answered	3	0.96%

29: Please indicate which of these groups you consider you belong to:

Ethnicity

There were 307 responses to this part of the question.



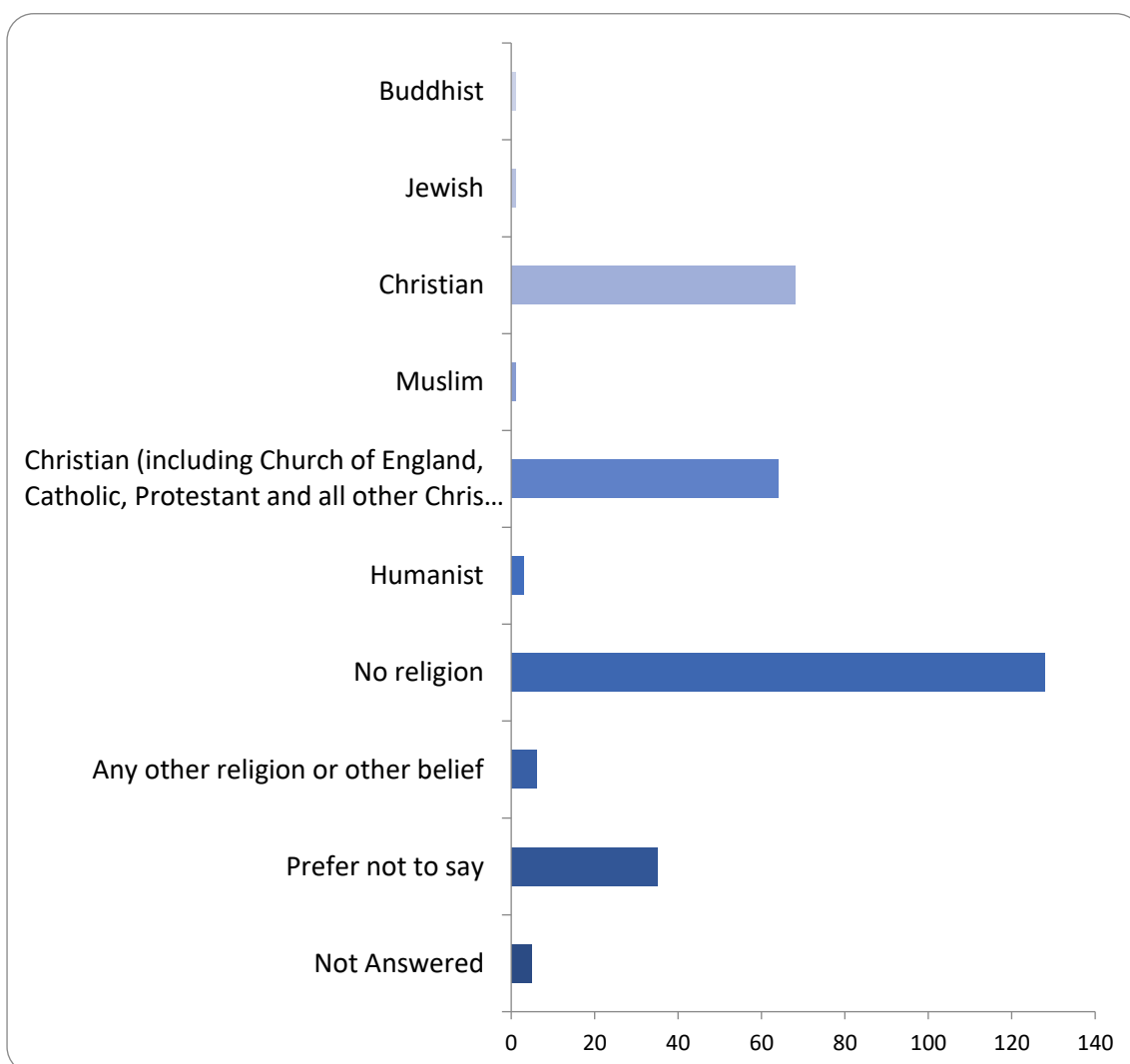
Option	Total	Percent
White (including White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British)	282	90.38%
Irish, Gypsy/Irish Traveller, Roma, Any other White Background)	0	0.00%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups (including White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background)	1	0.32%

Black / African / Caribbean (including Black British, African, Caribbean, Any other Black / African / Caribbean background)	1	0.32%
Asian (including Asian British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Any other Asian background)	0	0.00%
Other ethnic group (including Arab, Any other ethnic group)	2	0.64%
Prefer not to say	21	6.73%
Not Answered	5	1.60%

30: What is your religion or belief?

Religion

There were 307 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Buddhist	1	0.32%
Jewish	1	0.32%
Christian	68	21.79%
Muslim	1	0.32%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	64	20.51%
Hindu	0	0.00%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Humanist	3	0.96%
No religion	128	41.03%
Any other religion or other belief	6	1.92%
Prefer not to say	35	11.22%
Not Answered	5	1.60%

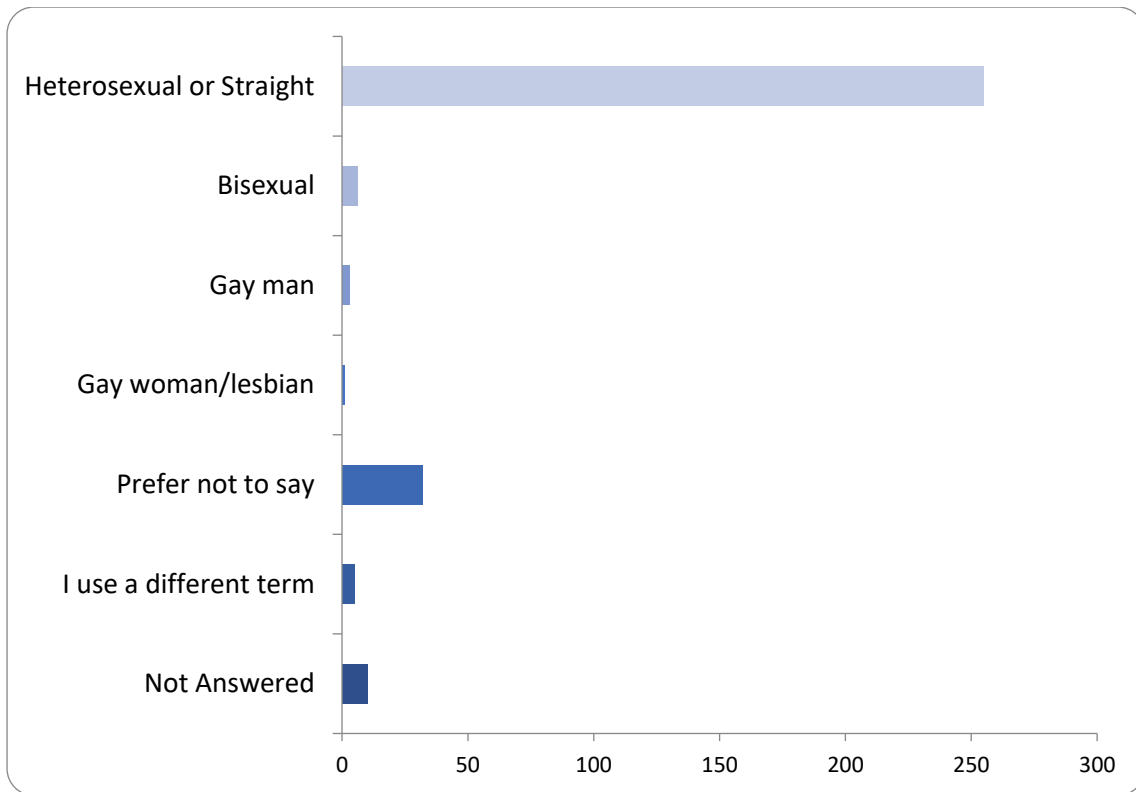
Other religious beliefs

There were 4 responses to this part of the question.

31: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

Sexuality

There were 302 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Heterosexual or Straight	255	81.73%
Bisexual	6	1.92%
Gay man	3	0.96%
Gay woman/lesbian	1	0.32%
Prefer not to say	32	10.26%
I use a different term	5	1.60%
Not Answered	10	3.21%

Sexuality other

There were 6 responses to this part of the question.

Northumberland County Council

Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2022-2023

1. Terms of reference:

- (1) To maintain an overview of the Council's Annual Budget and Budgetary Management via the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- (2) To review the state of Northumberland and the County Council's activity in delivering its Corporate Plan.
- (3) To maintain an overview of the Council's performance management arrangements; highlighting areas of poor performance and monitoring recovery delivery plans.
- (4) To maintain an overview of the Management Agreements in place between the Council and Advance Northumberland.
- (5) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:
 - Corporate Services: Organisational Development, Health and Safety, ICT Strategy, Corporate Governance, Financial Services, Procurement Strategy, Risk Strategy, Shared and Traded Services
 - Partnership development coordination with local organisations
 - Relationships with external bodies
 - Regeneration and Economic Development
 - Strategic Transport Network and Infrastructure
 - Employability, Skills, and removing barriers to work
 - Capital Programme and Asset Management
 - Support to VCS organisations and the Council's relationship with town and parish councils.

Northumberland County Council
Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-2023

10 October 2022

Covid 19 Business Support Update

To consider an update highlighting the support to businesses administered by the Council through Grants and Business Rates Relief during the pandemic.

Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24

The Support Scheme needs to be approved annually by Council.

7 November 2022

Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27

This report provides an update on the development of the 2023-24 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2023 to 2027. It also details budget proposals for 2023-24 to meet the budget gap, as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2023-24 in December 2022. The report will be considered by Cabinet on 8 November 2022 including any comments put forward by the OSC.

12 December 2022

Debt Recovery Update

To provide the Committee with information regarding the level of outstanding debt owed to the Council and to give assurance as to the efficiency and effectiveness of its collection and recovery policies and systems.

Economic Development

To provide a six monthly update on economic development progress in the county

9 January 2023

13 February 2023	
Budget 2023/24	To invite members of all four OSCs to comment on the budget proposals for 2023/24.
13 March 2023	
3 April 2023	

Northumberland County Council
Corporate Services and Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2022-2023

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1.	11 July 2022	Annual Workforce Report	RESOLVED members agreed to note and support the recommendations in the report.	The Committee will continue to receive annual updates.
2.	11 July 2022	Debt Recovery Update	RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted.	A further update will be presented to the Committee in December.
3.	11 July 2022	Green Homes Grant	RESOLVED that the information be noted.	No further action required at this stage.
4. Page 63	11 July 2022	Advance Northumberland Ltd and its subsidiaries–Request for Reserved Matter Approval	<p>RESOLVED to advise the Cabinet that it supported the recommendations contained in the report on the condition the following are included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With regards to the Shareholder Representative Role Profile, the wording be amended to provide greater clarity on the role the Shareholder Representative should carry out at board meetings. Members suggested the wordings to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. <i>To attend and play an active role at board meetings of the Company whilst recognising the authority to make decisions lies with the board of the Company.</i> 2. The Committee would like a further report in 6 months, if appropriate, to review the implementation of the proposed new Articles of Association and the Shareholder Representative Role Profile. 	Cabinet approved the comments made by the OSC when it determined the report on 12 July 2022.

5.	11 July 2022	Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2021-22 – End of March	RESOLVED that the report be noted.	The Committee will continue to receive quarterly updates.
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