



Northumberland

County Council

COMMITTEE: CABINET

DATE: 14TH FEBRUARY 2023

BUDGET CONSULTATION REPORT 2023-24

Report of: Cllr Glen Sanderson, Leader of Council

Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer

Purpose of report

This report provides a summary of results of the budget consultation undertaken between 6th December 2022 and 17th January 2023. The budget consultation helps to inform the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

- **Consider and note the summary results of the budget consultation undertaken between 6th December 2022 and 17th January 2023 as well as wider engagement undertaken.**

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 three Corporate Plan priorities.

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 6th December 2022 to 17th January 2023, we consulted residents and other stakeholders to find out the services, investments and issues most important to them. Appendix 1 of this report sets out the summary results of that consultation.

Background

2. On 6th December 2022, the Council launched its 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 and therefore we are not presenting the results as representative of the population as a whole. However, the results do provide a useful sense of views across a range of stakeholders, including:

- Residents (97.1% of the responses);
 - Local businesses;
 - Charities;
 - Community Groups;
 - NCC staff who are residents;
 - NCC Staff who are non-residents;
 - Councillors;
 - Public Sector.
3. In total, we were very pleased to receive 209 responses to the consultation and thank everyone who took the time to share their views. The response rate was down on last year's survey and, we will take time to understand the possible reasons for this and learning to increase the response rates for future years.
4. Appendix 1 summarises the responses to the survey questions.

Other engagement

5. In January, the Leader of Council presented to the five Local Area Councils (LACs) as well as holding three Town and Parish Council conferences. These were an opportunity for the Leader to outline the priorities for the Council's budget and Corporate Plan as well as to listen to local feedback on these topics, including views on service delivery more generally. In January, the Leader also met with representatives of business, again to engage them in the Council's budget and Corporate Plan priorities.
6. The budget consultation was promoted on the Council's social media channels and reached 15,600 people.

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 Cabinet.
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 is detailed in the separate report to Cabinet.
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 (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	There are no specific Equalities implications within this report, although the consultation and wider engagement on the budget help to inform the Council's Budget which is detailed in the separate report to Cabinet.
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

Report sign off.

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

Author and Contact Details

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