



Northumberland  
County Council

# Budget Consultation Summary Results

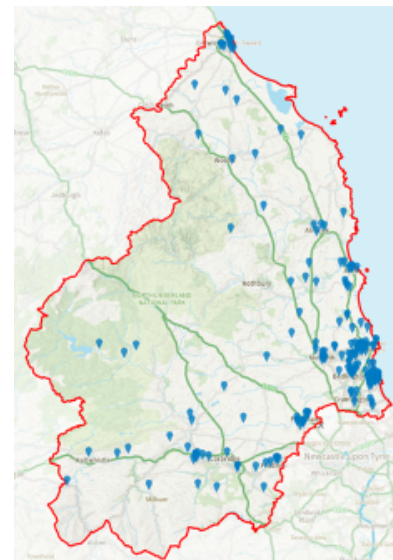
Appendix 1

[www.northumberland.gov.uk](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk)

# Introduction

- Each year the Council must set a balanced budget, which sets out funding for its services as well as its plans for investing. The budget must also take account of new cost-pressures as well as making sure all its services are as efficient as possible.
- A consultation to collect the views of local communities through an online survey ran from 06/12/2022 to 17/01/2023
- In total 209 responses were received – 97.1% of which are residents of Northumberland.
- Residents were asked to provide a postcode to enable analysis by local area. Responses were fairly evenly spread across the County, with lowest levels of responses from Cramlington / Bedlington / Seaton Valley):

- Ashington / Blyth (51 responses, 25.1%)
- Castle Morpeth (49 responses, 24.1%)
- Cramlington / Bedlington / Seaton Valley (21 responses, 10.34%)
- North Northumberland (46 responses, 22.7%)
- Tynedale (36 responses, 17.7%)



Capacity in which consultation completed:	Total	%
I am a resident of Northumberland	203	97.1%
I represent / own a local business	7	3.4%
I represent a charity that covers the Northumberland area	5	2.4%
I represent a community group in Northumberland	12	5.7%
I work for Northumberland County Council (resident)	18	8.6%
I work for Northumberland County Council (non-resident)	5	2.4%
I am a Councillor	6	2.9%
I represent a public sector organisation	2	1.0%
Other	1	0.5%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

# If we look at how our budget was spent last year would you spend more, less or about the same on the following services:

The survey asked respondents to give their opinion as to whether they would spend more, less or about the same as last year on seven service areas. An explanation of what services each area provides was given to help respondents decide.

- Nearly 50% of respondents (47.4%) said that more should be spent on local services with a further 44% saying more should be spent on Children and Young People.
- 61% of respondents felt that less should be spent on Corporate Services, with a further 44% wanting less budget allocated to Business.

	More	Less	About the Same	Not Answered
Adults and wellbeing (30.31% of budget / £231.035m total budget)	40.7%	15.8%	42.6%	1.0%
Children and Young People (31.41% of budget / £239.443m total budget)	44.0%	11.5%	43.1%	1.4%
Corporate Services (14.45% of budget / £110.133m total budget)	6.7%	61.2%	28.2%	3.8%
Healthy Lives (1.41% of budget / £10.751m total budget)	36.4%	26.8%	35.9%	1.0%
Local Services (16.16% of budget / £123.164m total budget)	47.4%	12.4%	38.8%	1.4%
Community Services (5.02% of budget / £38.264m total budget)	37.8%	22.0%	38.8%	1.4%
Business (1.24% of budget / £9.469m total budget plus capital expenditure from Council, regional and national funds)	9.6%	43.5%	44.5%	2.4%

- There are differences in opinion depending on where respondents reside within the County.

Ashington / Blyth	Castle Morpeth	Cramlington / Bedlington / Seaton Valley	North Northumberland	Tynedale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spent on Children and Young People (49%) and Local Services (57%)</li> <li>• Want less spent on Corporate Services (57%)</li> <li>• About the same Healthy Lives (45%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spent on Adults and Wellbeing (45%) and Children and Young People (45%)</li> <li>• Want less spent on Corporate Services (63%) and Business (51%).</li> <li>• About the same on Local Services (49%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spent on Local Services (43%).</li> <li>• Less spent on corporate services (81%)</li> <li>• About the same on Children and Young People (62%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spent on Local Services (48%) and Children and Young People (44%).</li> <li>• Less spent on corporate services (50%)</li> <li>• About the same on Adults and Wellbeing (50%) and Business (50%).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spent on Local Services (53%).</li> <li>• Less spent on corporate services (75%)</li> <li>• About the same on Children and Young People (42%) and Adults and Wellbeing (42%)</li> </ul>

# How important are these services to you?

- 68% of respondents felt that services for Children and Young People were extremely important or very important. This was followed by Local Services (65%) and Adults and Wellbeing (62%)
- Least important were Corporate Services (46% responded that these services were not very important or not important at all) and Business (38%).
- There are variations in opinion across the County. People living in Castle Morpeth were more likely than other areas to feel Local Services were extremely important / important (73.5%) compared to 47.6% in Cramlington / Bedlington / Seaton Valley.

	Extremely important	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not important at all	Not Answered
Adults and Wellbeing	35.9%	25.8%	24.4%	10.5%	3.4%	0.0%
Children and Young People	43.1%	24.9%	20.1%	8.1%	3.8%	0.0%
Corporate Services	2.9%	9.1%	41.2%	32.1%	14.4%	0.5%
Healthy Lives	19.6%	23.4%	35.9%	18.2%	2.4%	0.5%
Local Services	29.2%	35.4%	31.6%	2.9%	0.0%	1.0%
Community Services	20.1%	26.8%	38.8%	11.0%	2.4%	1.0%
Business	6.2%	12.0%	43.5%	30.1%	7.7%	0.5%

	% extremely important / important						
	Adults and Wellbeing	Children and Young People	Corporate Services	Healthy Lives	Local Services	Community Services	Business
Ashington / Blyth	60.8%	66.7%	52.9%	62.7%	60.8%	64.7%	51.0%
Castle Morpeth	67.3%	67.3%	38.8%	46.9%	73.5%	67.3%	44.9%
Cramlington / Bedlington / Seaton Valley	61.9%	52.4%	23.8%	57.1%	47.6%	57.1%	57.1%
North Northumberland	56.5%	63.0%	50.0%	54.3%	60.9%	47.8%	50.0%
Tynedale	58.3%	61.1%	38.9%	61.1%	58.3%	52.8%	47.2%

# Do you have any ideas for how the council could raise more income or deliver services differently to save money?

120 responses were received as to how the Council could raise more income and save money. Ideas from the respondents included:

- Increasing remote working – reducing number of buildings / rationalise property portfolio. Better use of technology.
- Review structure and salaries of Senior Officers.
- Reducing waste and duplication.
- Building Council homes.
- Increasing number of volunteers.
- Car parking charges in tourist areas. Tourist tax. Tax second homes / empty properties.
- Shared services with other organisations. Sponsorship from businesses. Contract some processes to the private sector.
- Increasing Council Tax. Increasing fines for fly tipping.
- Investigating more potential funding options.
- Reviewing contracts for potential savings. Looking at procurement processes.
- Waste services – increasing recycling.
- Better business support to encourage economic growth and investment.

## Which services are most important to you? (rank 1 to 5 where 1 is the most important to you and 5 is the least important)

- Respondents were asked to rank which services are most important to them.
- Highest ranked were support for Children and Families (64% of respondents ranked these services 1 or 2)) and Adult Social Care Services (55%).
- Services that support the economy, businesses and jobs were seen as least important with only 14% ranking these services as a 1 or 2.

	1	2	3	4	5	Not Answered
Adult social care services	26.3%	28.7%	21.5%	12.9%	9.6%	1.0%
Support to children and families, including children's social care and education and skills	34.5%	29.7%	12.9%	13.9%	6.2%	2.9%
Services in all neighbourhoods such as bins, waste disposal, recycling, roads, pavements and streetlighting	20.1%	24.4%	37.8%	12.9%	1.4%	3.4%
Culture, arts and leisure, including libraries	10.5%	6.7%	14.8%	28.2%	36.4%	3.4%
Services that support the economy, businesses and jobs	6.2%	8.1%	11.5%	29.7%	41.6%	2.9%

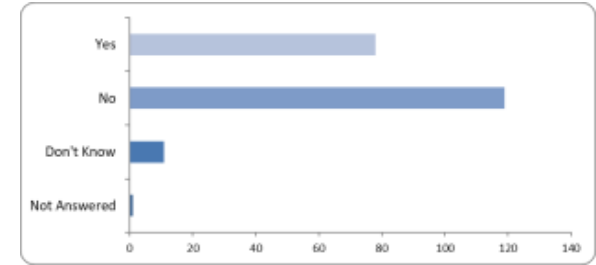
## What do you think are the top priorities for the Council when budgeting to address climate change? (rank 1 to 7 where 1 is the most important to you and 7 is the least important)

- Supporting households and communities to reduce emissions was seen by respondents as being the most important priority to address climate change with 52% of respondents ranking this as 1 or 2.
- Investing in ways to generate green energy was also a popular choice with 43% ranking this option as a 1 or 2.
- Less important priorities were planting new trees (16% ranked this option as a 1 or 2) and that goods and services are sustainable (17%).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not Answered
Reducing staff travel / mileage	16.8%	9.6%	11.0%	12.4%	17.7%	16.8%	11.0%	4.8%
Making Council buildings greener	4.8%	18.2%	17.2%	14.8%	16.8%	14.4%	6.2%	7.7%
Investing in ways to generate green energy	26.8%	16.3%	17.2%	14.4%	11.0%	5.3%	1.9%	7.2%
Supporting households and communities to reduce emissions	25.8%	26.3%	18.2%	14.8%	4.3%	3.4%	1.0%	6.2%
Making sure the goods and services we buy are sustainable	4.3%	12.9%	20.1%	19.1%	21.5%	13.4%	1.4%	7.2%
Planting new trees	8.6%	7.7%	9.6%	13.9%	18.2%	29.2%	8.1%	4.8%

# The Government has said that councils can increase Council Tax bills by up to 5% next year (up to 3% Council Tax and up to 2% Adult Social Care precept) - do you agree with that?

- 57% of respondents feel that Council Tax should not be increased.
- 37% agreed Council Tax should rise.
- Respondents from Cramlington / Bedlington and Seaton Valley were most opposed to a Council Tax rise with 86% not agreeing with the increase.
- People who answered the survey from North Northumberland were most supportive with 59% saying they would agree with a rise.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	78	37.3%
No	119	57.0%
Don't Know	11	5.3%
Not Answered	1	0.5%

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Ashington / Blyth	29.4%	64.7%	3.9%
Castle Morpeth	30.6%	67.3%	2.0%
Cramlington / Bedlington / Seaton Valley	9.5%	85.7%	4.8%
North Northumberland	58.7%	37.0%	4.3%
Tynedale	41.7%	50.0%	8.3%