

**Northampton Borough Council**

# **Budget Proposals 2016 Consultation results**

**Report owner:**

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# 1 Executive summary

In December 2015 the Council launched a consultation which looked at the budget proposals for 2016/17. Comments were invited over a 6 week period, ending on 31 January 2016.

People were invited to comment on the budget options for savings, investments and growth.

This report summarises the results of the consultation on the Council budget proposals.

## Key results

- Over **2** out of **3** respondents agree with proposals to freeze council tax
- Almost **7** out of **10** respondents would be willing to pay more to help protect/improve services

# 2 Introduction

- 2.1 On 16 December 2015 Cabinet approved for consultation their draft budget proposals for 2016/17, indicative budgets for 2016/17 to 2020/21 for the General Fund Revenue Budgets, the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme as well as a proposed Council Tax freeze and Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.2 Views covering all these areas were invited from 17 December 2015 until 31 January 2016. The aim of this consultation was to find out people's views on the draft budget proposals presented and to propose alternative suggestions.
- 2.3 Completed questionnaires were accepted up to 31 January 2016.
- 2.4 The consultation period will formally close on the date the budget is approved in February 2016.
- 2.5 This consultation followed the principles set out in the Council's Consultation Toolkit and industry standard guidance on best practice in consultation.
- 2.6 This report contains the results to the draft budget 2016/17 consultation. They will be used to by the Council as part of the process for informing priorities for the Council's Corporate Plan and for setting a balanced budget (including a capital programme).

# 3 Methodology

- 3.1 Residents, businesses, and other stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the proposals for the draft budget during the consultation period and support was made available to maximise involvement and understanding of the proposals.
- 3.2 People were able to engage in a range of ways:
  - **On-line survey** asking people if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to freeze council tax; if they would be prepared to pay more council tax if it

helped the Council protect or improve services and inviting feedback on the proposals including thoughts on alternative proposals;

- **Advertised through social media**
- **Paper questionnaires** available upon request;
- **Website information** on consultation proposals and questionnaire available to download and complete on-line
- **E-mail** address, **freepost** address and **consultation phone** line set up to receive feedback;
- **Staff** via intranet, trade unions and as general public;
- Invitation for **Residents Panel** to participate;
- Invitation to **key stakeholders**, including the business community via the Chamber of Commerce, their network and the Federation of Small Businesses;
- Invitation to tenant groups;
- Engagement with the **voluntary and community sector** via their various networks ;
- Information at the **OSS and Guildhall**, also at the Central Library;
- **Open public meeting** held at the Guildhall on 21 January 2016;
- Council's budget proposals debated at **the Council's Community Forums** (Young Persons Forum, Women's Forum, Diverse Community Forum, LGB People's Forum, Pensioners and Disabled People's Forums) during January 2016;
- **Engagement** with our key stakeholder and partners ;
- Meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny** Committee in 20 January 2016;
- **Audit Committee** Meeting 18 January 2016

3.3 The consultation was advertised through the media including mail shots and press releases to raise awareness. Social media, including Facebook and Twitter, were used during the consultation period.

3.4 Interim consultation reports were available to maximise awareness and action in relation to issues and concerns arising during the consultation.

## 4 Consultation questions

Q1. We recognise the increased pressure being placed onto household budgets by everyday expenditure and bills. We are therefore proposing to freeze council tax for a further year to demonstrate our commitment to you. Do you agree or disagree with this approach? Answers (87)

Q2. Would you be prepared to pay more council tax if it helped the Council protect or improve services? For example, a 1% council tax rise would give the Council an extra £150k to spend on services. Answers (86)

Q3. **Feedback of draft budget proposals** - Comments, including concerns about how specific proposals may impact on individuals or any sector of the community and if appropriate, how we can minimise any such impact. Comments (47)

Q4. **Alternative proposals**, including anything else we could do to achieve savings and/or any other comments in respect of budget options for 2016/17 and beyond? Comments (35)

*Full details are available at **section 8***

*Consultation demographic information is available at **section 9***

## 5 Findings

- 5.1 **90** completed online surveys were received as at 31 January 2016 (compared with **90** in 2015, **129** in 2014, **120** in 2013, **272** in 2012 and **149** in 2011). Responses contained **90** free form comments which include concerns about potential impacts on the community and alternative proposals for efficiencies. Full consultation results are available at section 8.
- 5.2 It should be noted that additional activity relating to the budget was undertaken in addition to this exercise during the period of consultation including local press, public meetings, forums, etc. and that the views expressed during such events are not included in this document. (For **Audit Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee** and **Community Forums**, please view minutes of meetings held during the consultation period available at modern.gov)

## 6 How feedback will be used

- 6.1 Where comments relate to service specific issues that relate to the usual business of the organisation, these will be forwarded to the relevant service area.
- 6.2 Where issues raised are not our responsibility, such as street lighting, the state of the roads or about social work, the comments received will be forwarded to the relevant organisation as appropriate.
- 6.3 In relation to the budget, the Cabinet will consider all responses alongside the need to set a balanced budget. Any changes arising from the consultation will be detailed in the Council Wide General Fund Revenue Budget Report.
- 6.4 Findings have also been used to inform priorities for the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-20.

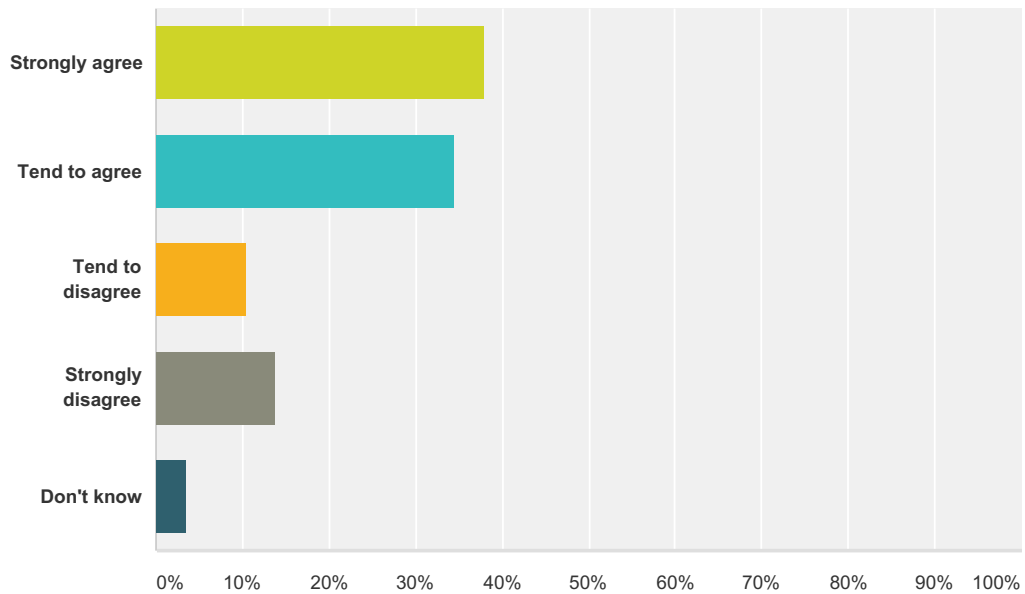
## 7 Equalities

- 7.1 The Cabinet will consider the results of this consultation and of all relevant impact assessments which were developed to make an informed decision regarding the Council's budget.
- 7.2 Equality and Diversity were considered as part of the budget build process and an equality impact assessment or screening was completed as appropriate.
- 7.3 Where issues have been identified and the option is approved, the detailed equality impact assessment will be used to inform the implementation of the budget option.
- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment for this budget consultation process is available at section 10 .

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

**Q1 We recognise the increased pressure being placed onto household budgets by everyday expenditure and bills. We are therefore proposing to freeze council tax for a further year to demonstrate our commitment to you. Do you agree or disagree with this approach?**

Answered: 87 Skipped: 3

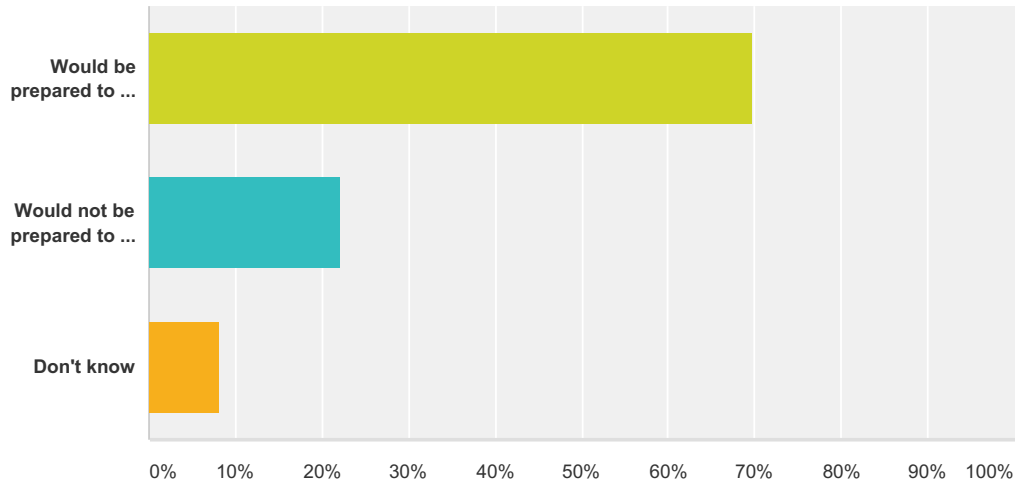


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Strongly agree	37.93%	33
Tend to agree	34.48%	30
Tend to disagree	10.34%	9
Strongly disagree	13.79%	12
Don't know	3.45%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>87</b>

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

**Q2 Would you be prepared to pay more council tax if it helped the Council protect or improve services? For example, a 1% council tax rise would give the Council an extra £130k to spend on services.**

Answered: 86 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Would be prepared to pay more	69.77%	60
Would not be prepared to pay more	22.09%	19
Don't know	8.14%	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>86</b>

#	Please use this space for comments that will help us understand your response	Date
1	i would be prepared to pay, upto 1.99% as previously discribed in the budget papers, however these rises need to be sufficiently communicated in terms of their benefits. For example as an employee my recent payrise was 1.2% so similar impacts need to be considered council tax payers will need to adjust their budgets to accomidate any rises	1/20/2016 9:05 AM
2	The council tax is probably the most effective and equitable means of collecting revenue.	1/19/2016 7:11 AM
3	THIS IS A TEST in response to customer feedback - please ignore.	1/18/2016 2:25 PM
4	I realise the budget from central government has been cut ...and now councils have less money to work with..I dont think its a good idea to cut services to stretch the money...if cuts are to be made cut them from top to bottom instead of bottom to top...ie cut high wages cut expenditures on councillors cut wages above the average earners...then see what money can be saved ...I would gladly give another £5 to £10 a month to keep services up to scratch...perhaps get involed with the public more often..hold meetings to see if you can get volunteers ..with a small gift for them...a failing town can be seen from the outside...invest in the market property ...ie buying land that is a waste site and build for the community ...ask the community what they want and make a venture ...make it pay with no or little profit...support small businesses and the market try and keep the rates reasonable to make them a profit..keep heritage ...promote the town side with local towns to come up with ideas on how to help each other ...keep the town clean...give the public a town to be proud of ...locals that have lived here all thier lives should be more involved and have more of the say...bring back council staff that are qualified in areas...monitor where the monney is spent and inform the public what has been achieved and thank them for thier support. ..be more transparent. ...pennies saves pounds...thank you...	1/16/2016 10:41 PM
5	As long as it is used on projects that serve the whole area and not just 1 small part of it.	1/16/2016 9:20 PM
6	I am not confident that this council would be really utilising extra funding to valuable use , or divert the extra cash to right area. There is just too much wastage and unproductivity .	1/12/2016 8:00 PM

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

7	I believe that it is a no brainer to increase council tax. If you do not you will be unable to provide the services to the public which is what you're supposed to be doing.	1/7/2016 12:06 PM
8	I see some council staff wandering around town centre means there is not enough work load for these individuals hence require Lean organisation which has work to do	1/7/2016 11:52 AM
9	AS LONG AS NBC IS WILLING TO ENFORCE PARKING ORDERS NEAR THE BUS STATION ON BRADSHAW STREET , NEAR ENTRANCE /EXIT WHICH IS OVER RUN BY ABUSIVE, HOT TEMPERED TAXI DRIVERS 24 HOURS A DAY , 365 DAYS. THIS DRIVERS ARE CAUSING PANIC , HAVOC , ARE DANGER TO PUBLIC , BUS DRIVERS , AND CONSTANTLY OBSTRUCT THE EXIT /ENTRANCES AT PARK INN. THERE IS DOUBLE YELLOW LINE , BUT NBC SEEMS TO BE TURNING A BLIND EYE AND NOTHING EVER SEEMS TO BE DONE . WHY IS BOUNDS COMPANY GIVEN THAT SPECIAL RIGHT ? WHY IS NBC NOT DOING ANYTHING ? WHY ARE THE DRIVERS OR THE COMPANY GIVEN ENFORCEMENT NOTICES? THIS MUST BE THE ONLY COUNCIL WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE ANY ACTION AGAINST THIS WELL DOCUMENTED COMPLAINS.	1/5/2016 8:44 PM
10	Council Tax has remained the same since 2010. Although the rate of inflation is close to zero at present, it has been well over 1% (generally over 2%) for most years since 2010. I accept the need to keep public spending under control but consider a modest rise of 1% or even 1.5% to be more than acceptable under the circumstances.	1/5/2016 6:20 PM
11	It has been frozen for long enough. Government restrictions have been relaxed a little.	1/5/2016 3:14 PM
12	I am confused with the first question regarding freezing council tax because I have been told that the council have already approved a 2% rise therefore this is contradictory	1/1/2016 11:09 PM
13	I am slightly confused by the first question regarding freezing council tax because I understand the council are planning an increase therefore this is contradictory	1/1/2016 11:03 PM
14	1% increase means a £9 increase a year to me which would equate to a £1 a month increase in my payments, as across the county that means so much money in total I would not object especially if there were more worthwhile, evident changes in place, I would even go as far as saying that I would go to 2% if the changes were more significant.	12/30/2015 3:10 PM
15	As long as the rise was kept to 1%	12/28/2015 5:25 PM
16	For the Police to actually police the town and not use a bunch of amateurs. Perhaps they could do something about the spate of robberies and muggings happening. And to not ask for witnesses on social media but do nothing themselves! The council to improve the roads so we can save our car suspension from being wrecked by pot holes!	12/23/2015 12:31 AM
17	I am highly skeptical with respect to the Councils's abilities to manage the funds it already has. Too much money has been wasted on ludicrous spending on useless sports equipment as well as very stupid and irresponsible investment in things such as the ill fated Football Club! I therefore feel very strongly that my money should not be wasted and as such cannot in any way support an increase!!!!	12/22/2015 4:17 PM
18	Not particularly impressed with how the money you currently have is being spent, without you getting even more	12/22/2015 11:03 AM
19	Council tax is already high	12/21/2015 4:30 PM
20	There are 10 able bodied adults working in our house and whilst we recognise that not everyone could afford to have the increase given that we could we'd be happy if it went to improve services for those who are less fortunate especially the elderly those with mental health problems and services for children and young people.	12/21/2015 11:17 AM
21	A 1% rise should be implemented. Otherwise it'll only be a 2% rise later.	12/20/2015 5:29 PM
22	We feel that the Borough staff provide exceptional services. We have just two concerns. 1. THE £10,000,000 given to the football club. Why was there a need to give away such a huge sum when there is pressure on vital services because of Central Government cuts? Why was the money not paid in installments? Who made the decision to pay the money to the football club? Has this person been disciplined? Who's account was the money paid into? What investigation has been made to locate /return the money? 2. The ridiculous ammount of funds paid to taxi firms to transport children to schools every day. I appreciate that this waste of public funds is down to the County council. However the Borough no doubt negotiate with the County on use of funds.	12/20/2015 12:08 AM
23	There is still a lot of money being wasted.	12/19/2015 9:11 PM
24	I see waste in some places. Please focus on value for money first. For example, the police doing speed checks immediately in front of a junction, community payback supervisors working sundays, support for private schooling.	12/18/2015 11:38 PM
25	If a small increase was spent wisely the benefits to the taxpayers in general would be well received	12/18/2015 8:44 PM
26	I would like to be clearer as to what it would be spent on, before I could commit to paying more. As usual the budget includes no real advantages for pensioners.	12/18/2015 4:26 PM
27	why freeze yet again. people can afford a small increase especially if it protects services	12/18/2015 9:55 AM
28	I use very little of the services provided	12/18/2015 8:29 AM

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

29	I don't like having to pay twice for services, once through general taxation and again via council tax, but freezing council tax for councillor's party political and personal interests does not serve the needs of Northamptonians. It's not a commitment to us - it's to try and make councillors more popular and therefore more electable. I don't pay taxes to be 'saved' - I pay them to be spent on services that benefit both me and society	12/17/2015 4:18 PM
30	I would support an increase provided that the extra revenue went on necessary expenditure (e.g., more police, reviving the town centre) and not more specialist employees or executive salary increases. Any increase should be matched by a similar decrease in high management salaries and Councillor's remuneration	12/17/2015 2:13 PM
31	I would be prepared to pay more for specific services i.e. adult social care. The money must be ring fenced.	12/17/2015 9:03 AM
32	I am dependant upon benefits due to ill health, I have suffered badly by the welfare reforms where my income has decreased greatly, and also being subjected to the Bedroom Tax and now having to pay Council Tax- The quality of my life is now non-existent as I no longer have any disposable income, My life would be a living hell if you increase taxes any further. Please only increase taxes where people do have disposable income, don't punish the poor, the disabled, or those that are ill.	12/17/2015 6:31 AM
33	What would the £130,00 be used for, old or new project, employment, growth. Depends entirely what the £130,000 is used for, no one wants to give money to something they do not know who will benefit!	12/16/2015 11:45 PM
34	Depends on the service that is being improved or protect. Its usage, its area of coverage, its real need and ability. Its not a simple answer. Every penny has to be used properly and wisely placed.	12/16/2015 11:07 PM
35	The County Council is proposing a tax rise so that it can waste more and be the tail that wags the Northampton dog.	12/16/2015 10:33 PM
36	We all have to do our bit for the community and it is about time we pay a little more after a number of years of no council tax rises. You must make sure that the services are run as efficiently as possible and demonstrate evidence of this.	12/16/2015 10:31 PM
37	But not much more than 1 max 2%	12/16/2015 10:21 PM
38	Would prefer to see efficiencies made first, not just service cuts, but looking at the way things are done and taking the waste out of procedures and processes. I would be prepared to pay more for police and fire services, but not 'nice to haves' like Northants Enterprise Partnership, Christmas lights, council dinners & hospitality etc	12/16/2015 8:51 PM
39	The disabled be they young or older along with the elderly and deprived children are being made to suffer as you cut the budgets for these vulnerable residents.	12/16/2015 7:59 PM
40	I don't feel I should respond as I receive partial Council Tax Benefit.	12/16/2015 5:46 PM
41	I would be prepared to pay more if it was to increase Police presence	12/16/2015 4:07 PM
42	We Need to, Not just maintain but improve our levels of services. This must happen in all areas, not just the areas which score political points.	12/16/2015 3:29 PM
43	Because I believe you have consistently shown the ability to spend revenue raised in an entirely irresponsible manner. Why on earth would I want to give you more to waste?	12/16/2015 3:20 PM
44	If this meant a difference to frontline support of the more vulnerable in our community then I would be prepared to pay more.	12/16/2015 2:58 PM
45	I would be prepared to pay a small extra amount. It would be helpful to know what amount could be raised by a % rise.	12/16/2015 2:50 PM
46	I cannot understand why the council is so ready to reduce the subsidy to those on the very lowest income yet freeze it overall? From the evidence supplied the council is not freezing council tax at all, it is actually increasing it for 16,000 of the poorest across communities whilst protecting the most wealthy from any increase at all. This is morally objectionable and I would personally rather pay extra that I can afford than force those unable to pay to tighten their belts even more. Many of those will be the disabled and carers who have no ability to work. To them this is an increase they have no choice but to pay, I cannot fathom how protection is not in place for such people?	12/16/2015 2:35 PM
47	If the funds were spent as they should be on things such as road repairs, additional policing, healthcare etc	12/16/2015 2:23 PM



**Q3 A challenging programme of internal cost-cutting measures is proposed to tackle the shortfall and prevent the budget gap growing even further in 2016/17. At the same time, to promote growth, there will be a focus on investment in the borough. These proposals, if/when agreed, will help the Council balance its budget for 2016/17. This is your opportunity to comment on the Council's draft budget options before they are submitted to the Cabinet for their consideration. Full Council will in turn consider the Cabinet's recommendation for approval in February 2016. Key proposals:**

- Continue to fund the opening hours of Abington Park Museum during the winter months**
- Invest in a fireworks display and Christmas Market/events in Northampton to attract visitors and boost the local economy**
- Continue to Invest in Northampton in Bloom to provide an all year round, providing floral displays to help improve the look of the town**
- Invest in an enhanced proactive tree management service for the next five years, based on the requirements of a revised Borough Council tree policy**
- Reduce funding to the Royal and Derngate Theatre**
- Increase the amount of Houses in Multiple Occupation fee income**
- New funding arrangements for homelessness prevention**

**A detailed list of the draft budget proposals and background information can be found on our website. Please tell us which option you wish to comment on and include any concerns you may have about how our specific proposals may impact on yourself or any sector of the community and if appropriate, tell us how we can minimise any such impact.**

Answered: 47 Skipped: 43

#	Responses	Date
1	All of the proposals are sound, however i feel greater focus and enforcement as well as fee income should be sourced from HMO landlords	1/20/2016 9:08 AM

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

2	There are numerous firework displays throughout the year and for literally tax payers money to go up in smoke does not seem the most judicious use of finances; this does not help to support sustainable tourism. There is currently a huge demand for rented accommodation and proposals to increase the fee for HMOs will see more landlords and properties leave the market creating more of a burden on the council in terms of its responsibilities with regard to housing. This proposal seems somewhat myopic, seeing one area for immediate revenue increase whilst ignoring the impact it will have in the medium to long term.	1/19/2016 7:16 AM
3	Yes its a good idea to keep all the parks clean ...so why only abbington..if you hold events in different parks then the local people of that park would attend...as for fireworks events how many in the year would there be...November the 5th is the only day there should be fireworks...you have to think of the elderly and animals when holding these events... the christmas markets great idea but who gets what ...who gets the plots ...what revenue is bring made by holding them...think of the costs it makes when holding the markets...ie rubbish..the police..disruption to other businesses ...ie shops outside the town...they could be held just the weekend...I cant comment on the tree thing...neither the housing thing ...except outside of town there should be more flats 1 or 2 bedrooms to take the influx...homeless people should be engrouraged to be part of the community and to be respected as a person help lines and shops should be open to them to talk to....	1/16/2016 11:45 PM
4	All of the above with the exception on reducing funding for the Royal and Derrigate, there funding should be fixed or increased.	1/16/2016 9:25 PM
5	Alive concerts in Delapre park should continue, if not directly with the council , then it should be sub contracted. the organisation and acts has been very good.	1/12/2016 2:18 PM
6	Northampton in Bloom - personally didn't think it was that impressive and not sure if it brings additional money/footfall into the town centre? Fireworks, Christmas Markets - all nice to do, but unless they bring additional money into the town centre I think that they can be cut. Abington Park Museum - reduce the hours for winter.	1/7/2016 12:09 PM
7	Reduce rent value in Abington street hence vacant shops are let Sale of public property is to controlled by independent penal not elected to put into public use in productive way There are number of incidents involving elected councillors	1/7/2016 12:03 PM
8	BRING MORE ENFORCEMENT ON THE DRAPERY WHICH IS USED AS A RAT RUN , WHY ARE CARS ALLOWED TO GO THROUGH WHEN THIS IS FOR BUSES ONLY. CARS , TAXIS ARE CAUSING UNWARRANTED BLOCKAGES AROUND HERE AND SHEEP STREET. REMOVE ALL CAR PARKING FROM THE SHEEP STREET AND MAKE IT CLEAR AND VISIVLE AND EASY FOR POOR BUS DRIVERS. YOU LOT DO NOT DRIVE BUSES SO DON'T SEEM TO REALISE HOW DIFFICULT AND DANGEROURS IT IS FOR BIG BUSES TO PASS EACH OTHER. THINK AND CLEAR THE SHEEP STREET . WE ALSO WANT MORE CHECKS ON BLUE BADGE HOLDERS WHO SEEM TO MISUSE AND ABUSE , OR ARE FRAUD. GET THE TAXI DRIVERS OUT OF BRADSHAW STREET /COLLEGE STREET. ARE THEY THE KINGMAKERS OF THIS AREA.	1/5/2016 8:44 PM
9	I strongly approve of the investments in Northampton in Bloom and the tree management service. I also approve of opening the Abington Museum in winter. I feel neutral towards the firework display but think that NBC should try to get better value from the Christmas Market. I am concerned about the homeless situation and the effects the new funding arrangements might have. I would like to see the Council look into this issue more thoroughly.	1/5/2016 6:32 PM
10	Fireworks Far more important things to spend that amount on. German market not popular. Novelty worn off. Better to reduce stall rent on weekly market to encourage local producers to have stalls. Continue to enhance town with floral displays Tree management vital. Many traffic signs/ signals are obscured by overgrowth. Agree with reducing theatre support Agree with multiple occupancy landlord increases. Concerned that these properties will be springing up south of the town due to uni. We think NBC Website could be better managed, it can be very difficult to find what we want due to non customer friendly vocabulary & the need to make several clicks to get just one step ahead.	1/5/2016 3:44 PM
11	I wish to comment on the first three proposals, whilst I do believe it is important for Northampton to be attractive to visitors and businesses, I am concerned that investing money to maintain an image could detract from providing essential services to the community especially those most vulnerable such as children and elderly. I am unsure how the budgets for the borough and county council are managed but I guess separately because the County Council have announced they need to cut 77million and both children's Services and council owned elderly care homes are due to be cut. It would help to have more information on what the costs are for keeping Abington Park Museum open during the winter because this is not an essential service neither are funding firework displays because I am sure some local businesses would be willing sponsor along with the floral displays in return for free advertising.	1/1/2016 11:31 PM
12	I shouldn't imagine that there are that many visitors to the Park museum in the winter months but making the town look welcoming and inviting will encourage more people to visit and stay within the county. however there always seems to be an abundance of firework displays and when here is a free one there always appears to be parking chaos before and after due peoples selfish attitude to parking?driving in general, and always causes problems for local residents where ever you move it to. The problem with removing funding for Royal and Derrigate is that they are already overpriced so there would be even less support and as there are no other major venue nearby, it would give people even more reason to go to Milton Keynes	12/30/2015 3:23 PM

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13	Fireworks display & Christmas market - There is too little provision for parking at the Race Course for the fireworks display & no traffic management. In the current financial climate I think a display at one of the sports grounds where they have plenty of parking would be better, & a German Market should be at zero cost to the tax payers. Northampton in Bloom does make a difference to the town, but should be sponsored more by businesses, garden centres, etc. Tree management is needed, as too many old trees are not being cut back & only get attention when they have branches falling off, which is a danger to the public. All HMOs should be registered & inspected as many are springing up in terraced property, increasing fly tipping, anti social behaviour & problems with parking. Is there a reporting mechanism for residents to inform NBC when they suspect there is a HMO near them? if not, this should be done.	12/28/2015 5:37 PM
14	Are there sufficient visitors to the Abington Park museum to warrant that???	12/23/2015 1:21 PM
15	Fireworks display: Ditch unless breaking even or making money Northampton in Bloom all year around: Yes, the town needs brightening up. Don't need flower sculptures or works of art, just nice plants and flowers dotted around. Theatre funding: Why do they get funding anyway? It is not an essential council service and so given the current financial climate, I think funding should be withdrawn completely, perhaps in a staged approach in order for them to factor it in and make allowances. HMOs: Agree and perhaps you can up fines for consistently bad landlords, then you are solving multiple problems Homelessness: Didn't see this proposal but I would support more being done to prevent and help homeless people	12/23/2015 11:18 AM
16	Be handy if the website actually opened instead of being "Unavailable"	12/23/2015 12:37 AM
17	Reduce Funding - Continue to fund the opening hours of Abington Park Museum during the winter months Address this issue and that is not by Increasing the amount of Houses in Multiple Occupation fee income Reduce funding to the Royal and Derngate Theater if needed Increase the amount of Houses in Multiple Occupation fee income New funding arrangements for homelessness prevention - Priority for the Town I would think	12/22/2015 11:34 AM
18	From an environmental point of you are not impressed with how many trees and fields are being lost to new housing as it is, it is a shame if the entertainment of the theatre is going to be cut down, further reducing the cultural impact in the town	12/22/2015 11:05 AM
19	The link doesn't work here or on the NBC website but I would be interested in knowing more about the increase fee to HiMO and new funding arrangements for homeless prevention. Not interested in more money being chucked at the fir work display but do appreciate attempts to get trade back into the towncentre. Also looking after our environment and a proactive tree management strategy is important but not over affordable rented accommodation which seems to be a big need in the Borough.	12/21/2015 11:24 AM
20	I agree with all the above key proposals	12/19/2015 2:53 PM
21	Put proper lane narrowing in on ladybridge drive near the park. Promote increased use of volunteers for the museums. Get real..do not waste money on fireworks when you cant finance mental health properly. Charge higher rates for thw swan valley warehouses.	12/18/2015 11:44 PM
22	I would be wary of too much reduction in support of Royal and Derngate not something I would like to see degenerate or be lost	12/18/2015 8:48 PM
23	Disgusted that you should consider reducing the the grant to the Royal & Derngate by £50000 at the same time as spending £75000 on fireworks and a Christmas market. You are always keen to stress the town's cultural quarter, yet reduce the funding of cultural activities. You might consider things that the older generation could also enjoy - most of us over 70s would not (and could not) attend a firework display or be able to visit a Christmas market. Our bus service from East Hunsbury does not even have the luxury of stopping/waiting in the new bus centre - so you don't visit town in winter because of cold waiting in the Drapery. Also the enjoyment of the Royal & Derngate is now curtailed for many older people, as all the nearbyground level parking has been removed	12/18/2015 4:46 PM
24	I think priority should be attract more high quality shops to fill all the empty premises before paying for flowers to make it look pretty	12/18/2015 8:33 AM
25	Northampton in Bloom Council Tax Rebate	12/17/2015 4:28 PM
26	The above proposals are all worthy of continuation,However will the council offset some of the cost by MAJOR sponsorship from large organizations ( not Fred's Chip shop !)	12/17/2015 2:19 PM
27	I support all of the key proposals but would question spending money on fireworks and Christmas events to attract visitors unless you firstly improve the lifts in the Grosvenor Centre. Three have been out of order for the last few weeks at the busiest time of year. Tthe stairwells in the car park are wet, littered with empty alcohol bottles and reeking of urine. Not a pleasant welcome to Northampton.	12/17/2015 9:10 AM
28	I would not support the museum	12/17/2015 8:18 AM
29	I believe that you have a responsibility to look after all of your citizens, and to provide the help, care and support where it is required, You should concentrate on this as your first priority, then and only then if there is any income left over to spend it on frivolous schemes, such as, opening up the road in Abington Street and spending £3m on St Giles St, only a very few residents of Northampton benefit form this sort of expenditure. I also believe that the senior executives of NBC do not offer value for money by paying them such vast salaries, when our basic services are so poor.	12/17/2015 6:45 AM

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30	<p>Sponsorship from businesses to aid in their marketing, but also it will alleviate the strain on the councils coppers and still keep the Northampton in bloom. The Abington Park Museum, can make a nominal charge to help reduce to cost to the council, 10p per visitor, with an explanation of why there is a charge and how it is helping the community. Close winter time, or hold special openings with guest speakers that can talk to school children about the history of the area and the war. Arrange projects in school to research building, backgrounds. All dne without council paying people to do it. The fireworks is costly, but you have to weigh it against the creation of community spirit, the reduce in home firework accidents, revenue created at such an event if money does come back to the council in some form or another. A tree policy is important, as councils build here there and everywhere you need to retain areas for children and family's, embrace nature, learn, relax, get a clear mind and joyful, away from work. Trees, produce oxygen, we need as many as we can as the amount of cars on the roads in Northampton are increasing every year, cleaner mind and air! The Royal and Dergate Theatre should be a free standing business, with the correct money management and marketing. It should have a full calender and able to keep the crowds coming with specific business marketing, sponsorship involvement, charity involvement, be somewhere that is an iconic venue to entertain at all levels. The funding and arrangement for homeless prevention, needs a place, similar to student rooms, specific for homeless, room, bed, sink, table and chair, is a start, for others to move forward, a hand up, not a wasted hand out achieving nothing but a short term, reduce to a measured level of homeless. A hostel/hotel, with strict guideline and rules, people do not want pity, but help, make it possible for people to get help from all the relevant services and all talk from the same sheet, not go here, or go there, or you need this. Just help one at a time and be practical in helping to reduce the problem, not create more. Options are there, for everything, but people have been so closed minded and locked in their position to actually look outside and think, what else can we do, it does not cost lots or needed mindless over fed party members to arrange a costly meeting to actually THINK!! and usually waste time and money on achieving nothing. Realise the main factors that each has on the community, some actually have minimal to none, how many use or are involved in each, are you talking about redundancy or growth. Think outside of the box Give me a job and I will show you. P.S. The link to the website, does not work for me, don't know if it is a PC or Mac thing.</p>	12/16/2015 11:47 PM
31	I see you are putting your pro=active tree management service into effect by destroying that beautiful copse at the end of Booth Rise, making this entrance to the town just as crappy as the Sixfields entrance.	12/16/2015 10:37 PM
32	I would rather see continued level of support for Royal and Dergate and restricted opening of Park museum during winter months	12/16/2015 10:24 PM
33	I disagree with reduce funding to the Royal and Dergate Theatre just as it is starting to get better productions.	12/16/2015 10:21 PM
34	Cut the Christmas market, it just makes Abington St even more cluttered and when I go into town at lunchtime, there is little trade. Forget fireworks - literally burning money Open Abington Park museum on weekends only in winter. Agree ref Northampton in bloom. Agree ref tree management. Agree ref Royal & Dergate Yes we need to reduce homelessness (and immigrant numbers for that matter).	12/16/2015 9:16 PM
35	All these are minor proposals in comparison to the major cuts to care services etc which I strongly disagree with.	12/16/2015 9:08 PM
36	Get sponsorship to fund the fireworks displays and the various events in Northampton that attract visitors. this year' Christmas Market is a poor copy of the one held last year. Northampton in Bloom also should be sponsored. Increase the HMO fee by at least 200% and demand that all HMOs are fully licensed. ensuring that this money goes towards funding and prevention of homelessness for all residents of NBC.	12/16/2015 8:10 PM
37	I think any investment that brings interest/revenue to the town is good. I cannot comment on the theatres as I can't afford to go.	12/16/2015 5:49 PM
38	I don't believe houses should be multiple occupation under any circumstances even if all people in occupation within the house are related houses should be single family i.e. parent and their siblings	12/16/2015 5:24 PM
39	No funding should be given to the above proposals, it is waste of money	12/16/2015 5:16 PM
40	Strongly disagree with a reduction in funding for The Royal & Dergate Theatres.	12/16/2015 4:56 PM
41	Continue to fund the opening hours of Abington Park Museum during the winter months - why is this necessary? Does the business generated back the hours this is open during the winter months? If not, why not just reduce to open weekends during the winter months? New funding arrangements for homelessness prevention - this should be an absolute priority to the council, more so than poxy flowers to 'improve the look of the town'!! There are hundreds homeless on our streets and the council should be doing it's upmost to provide shelter and help to those who desperately need it, Northampton Citizens should be put first before anyone else!	12/16/2015 4:23 PM
42	Increasing housing in Northamptonshire means you must ensure there is adequate services such as Doctors and Dentists, Schools, and improvements to General Hospitals. The County has already been affected by a serious shortfall of Doctors and NGH has long waiting times, which is affecting everyone.	12/16/2015 4:19 PM
43	Would be concerned about "Reduce funding to the Royal and Dergate Theatre". The theatre is a major attraction for the town and its diminution would reduce tourism and quality of life and hence make the town a less attractive option for business to relocate to.	12/16/2015 4:10 PM

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

44	<p>•Continue to fund the opening hours of Abington Park Museum during the winter months Not Required. •Invest in a fireworks display and Christmas Market/events in Northampton to attract visitors and boost the local economy We had fantastic events "Balloon Festival - Town Show which both had great Fireworks displays. And if this years Christmas market is the best we can do I would scrap that as well. •Continue to Invest in Northampton in Bloom to provide an all year round, providing floral displays to help improve the look of the town This is worthwhile we need to improve the look of our town. •Invest in an enhanced proactive tree management service for the next five years, based on the requirements of a revised Borough Council tree policy This is worthwhile we need to improve the look of our town. •Reduce funding to the Royal and Derngate Theatre Northampton cant afford to not have the Royal and Derngate Theatre, These must be kept at all cost •Increase the amount of Houses in Multiple Occupation fee income I don't understand this, but if this means you are going to charge more for properties with multiple occupations then YES. •New funding arrangements for homelessness prevention This a must.</p>	12/16/2015 3:45 PM
45	<p>Regrettably I consider that all of these items should have have funding either frozen or withdrawn. If it requires money that is not readily available then it should come under the heading of 'zero budgeting' and a case by case study should take place which includes members of the public [Northampton Council Tax Payers]. Ask us what is important to us - don't just talk to us when it's election time!</p>	12/16/2015 3:27 PM
46	<p>Continue to fund the opening hours of Abington Park Museum during the winter months - No, the community doesn't need it (during austerity) it is also questionable whether the decision isn't motivated by the financial interests of a nearby cafe owned by a conservative counsellor I believe? Invest in a fireworks display and Christmas Market/events in Northampton to attract visitors and boost the local economy - I am in favour of this Continue to Invest in Northampton in Bloom to provide an all year round, providing floral displays to help improve the look of the town - We are in a time of auserity. This is not a time to invest in the personal hobbies of a few no matter how pretty it might look. Unless it generates income for the town then it should not receive investment. Invest in an enhanced proactive tree management service for the next five years, based on the requirements of a revised Borough Council tree policy - £250,000 is an amount we all of a sudden need to spend? Do trees not know how to look after themselves? Seems a lot of money to check out trees, I am not in favour. Reduce funding to the Royal and Derngate Theatre - We are in austerity, unless the theatres, which I love, can sustain themselves I am sorry to say they have no right to public protection. I agree with the cut. Increase the amount of Houses in Multiple Occupation fee income - Surely there is nothing in place here to prevent landlords passing the costs onto already low income tenants? Is there something in place for that or is this just to raise £70,000? New funding arrangements for homelessness prevention - Surely creating affordable and social housing is a far better long term solution?</p>	12/16/2015 2:44 PM
47	<p>I would be interested in the cost of funding the opening hours of Abington Park Museum during the winter months, can this cost really be justified? How many people actually want to visit the Museum during the winter? The Northampton Christmas Market is, to be frank, rubbish, clearly Northampton have not visited other Christmas markets in towns such as St Albans or suchlike, the stalls are minimal and the goods being sold are awful. Maybe a Christmas Market for local people to sell their wares would be more suitable. I know the firework display used to be poplular but I dont see how this would boost the local economy. Northampton in Bloom would be a nice idea but again, what would be the cost of this? Trees?? Really? Do you not think the funds would be better spent elsewhere? I am no expert on the financial situation of the Theatre's but surely this should take precedence over trees! There are many visitors to the Theatre's and it would be a shame for these not to be supported. HMO's? To house whom? There does need to be adequate finance for homelessness prevention.</p>	12/16/2015 2:31 PM

## 8 Draft Budget 2016/17 Consultation Results - Survey Monkey

### Q4 Alternative proposals Is there anything else that you think we could do to achieve savings and/or any other comments you would like to make in respect of the budget options for 2016/17 and beyond?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 55

#	Responses	Date
1	Selling of vacant council land for development	1/20/2016 9:08 AM
2	Completely stop funding royal and derngate.	1/19/2016 12:09 PM
3	The town should thieve be able to be safe...promote businesses ...advertise the town...keep public informed how progress is going....a good transport is important...new buildings or revamp old ones...show the public you have made progress and the budget has grown...dont try and fool the public...being honest is worth millions...treat all wards the same spread the money equally ...where wards are left neglected they will rot...savings are there to be made ...people on higher earnings can help ...ie ask them to lend support or help in ways of investment in the town ...dont ask dont get...	1/16/2016 11:45 PM
4	Decrease funding for wasted projects in the town centre. If any money is to be invested in the town centre it should be used on promoting the market square to get a new influx of traders, we do not need another fountain.	1/16/2016 9:25 PM
5	Carry out a strategic review of your senior management team in light of the events which took place during 2015. As the council continuous to shrink then a new' fresh and energised team may be more appropriate	1/12/2016 8:33 PM
6	Cut down on wastage , stop the marketiung of silly FREEBIES , which does not mean or do any thing, cut down on unproductivity .	1/12/2016 8:02 PM
7	Waste collections. Reduce the green (brown bin) waste to once a month during the winter months.	1/7/2016 12:09 PM
8	FINE HEAVILY UNLAWFUL PARKERS AND GET SOME REVENUE TO PROVIDE DECENT SERVICES FOR OUR ELDERLY , DISABLED. COMING TO NORTHAMPTON BUS STATION AREA IS A NIGHTMARE - DAY IN DAY OUT. SEEN BETTER PLACES. KETTERING ROAD , THE NEW DIRTY MARKET STREET OF NORTHAMPTON.	1/5/2016 8:44 PM
9	I would like to see greater enforcement of anti-litter and anti-fouling laws. Can such enforcement be self-financing?	1/5/2016 6:32 PM
10	We think NBC should find as many ways as possible to work collaboratively with other loca, authorities in the area. Cut out all agency work and large payouts for top personnel who leave	1/5/2016 3:44 PM
11	I believe as a society we must protect and look after the vulnerable including the elderly, children, those with mental health issues including the homeless. I would hope that the councillors who decide on the proposals cut services for the elderly and vulnerable of our society realise the massive impact this will have on those individuals these are people many with complex needs not just numbers or figures on a spreadsheet	1/1/2016 11:31 PM
12	Increase the number of fines/ prosecutions for fly tipping, littering as our town is let down too often by this.	12/28/2015 5:37 PM
13	Do more to help promote revenue making services: museums, weddings and room hire etc.	12/23/2015 11:18 AM
14	Effective contract with enterprise Clearing of Fit tipping cost must be higher than working with NCC to allow access for recycling Intensive on rent for keeping areas clean and tidy - work with the community in the affected ares, if you say that you will prosecute then this must be followed with action. Any shared services - possibly ask local Parish councils if they would like the budget so they can maintain there areas or at the very least share the contact details so that any deviation from contractual obligations are reported directly.	12/22/2015 11:34 AM
15	Sort out the potholes!	12/22/2015 11:05 AM
16	The Northamptonshire population needs to be more controlled. We're building on green belt land whilst reducing funding to the inner town. If you need evidence of this simply look at the state of the roads and pathways. We're slowly becoming a county of unsightly warehouses and low income housing. If we wish to reverse this, cut child benefit. A One child policy only, would push adults to choose their future plans more careful. Also eradicate child benefits. Cash for sex is state sponsored prostitution. Sorry if that doesn't sit well with people but that is a fact.	12/20/2015 6:50 PM
17	Recover the 'lost' millions foolishly handed over to the ex chairman of the Cobblers and do not repeat that sort of exercise	12/18/2015 8:48 PM
18	Do NOT waste money on fireworks - give that to the Royal and Derngate. Improve parking near to the Royal and Derngate or consider a park and ride to coincide with performances. You have removed car park after car park, and vastly increased demand for the little that still remains in the area.	12/18/2015 4:46 PM

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19	I'd rather see investment in sustainable planting and the development of communal areas than continuing to fill plastic containers with hundreds of flowers and then hanging them on railings at road junctions. The tree policy is good but I'd prefer small annual maintenance costs over many years to 5 year projects. I believe the policy on Council Tax Rebate is a political decision to benefit the well off at the direct expense of the poorest and most vulnerable in the town. Maybe people who can already afford sufficient food and money for heating are pleased at not having to pay any more in council tax. And maybe they don't know the people who are already making up the excess deaths from low resilience this Autumn/Winter.	12/17/2015 4:28 PM
20	see above . Monitor and.as far as possible,control population growth , attitude and behaviour	12/17/2015 2:19 PM
21	Interduce a small charge for museums	12/17/2015 8:18 AM
22	Again, please do not increase taxes for the very poor people of Northampton.	12/17/2015 6:45 AM
23	Give me a list of what you spend money on and I will tell you where you can save money, but not needed services utilised by the community of Northampton.	12/16/2015 11:47 PM
24	Tender out for a commercial partner to run the fireworks and Xmas markets rather than fund through the council. Could sponsorship be found for the Northampton in bloom thing? Must maintain safety critical services such as tree management. Definitely reduce funding for the Theatre.	12/16/2015 10:38 PM
25	reduction in brown bin collection especially during winter months	12/16/2015 10:24 PM
26	Clean up Abington Street. Just like an ashtray last week!	12/16/2015 10:21 PM
27	Look at back room services - how can they be more efficient. How can you buy effectively when procurement is outsourced to a third party ? Reduce entertaining/hospitality What is the cost benefit analysis on NEP and similar partnerships. Offer incentives to bigger retailers to come to the town to make the town more upmarket and desirable. Biggest mistake ever to lose House of Fraser for Primark. Sell quality recycled items at the tip again and use the funds to open the tip for residents on a couple of weekdays. Free parking at weekend is a great idea. Get rid of half the army of traffic wardens.	12/16/2015 9:16 PM
28	Merge the borough Councils and County Councils. Reduce the number of executives. Found out where the Ten Million Pounds loaned to the Cordozas who were in charge of the Cobblers went. Do not make any more dubious loans to sports clubs at this time in our extremely fragile financial state. Why are you proposing to spend vast sums of money making changes in St Giles's Street when you are proposing to make drastic cuts to social and care services in the county.	12/16/2015 9:08 PM
29	Increase the funding to Northampton Door to Door and Northampton Shopmobility as without these excellent services a large number of elderly and disabled residents of the town will be completely housebound, meaning that they will be unable to help the resurgence of the town centre.	12/16/2015 8:10 PM
30	I do not see any provisions short or long term, to ensure adequate services such as Doctors and Dentists or Policing with all the new housing.	12/16/2015 4:19 PM
31	What I would really like to see is the promotion / development of our market square. (Largest Market Square in the UK). The options are endless, you only need to go over to any European town, just to see what can be done. The town needs to have one BIG event a year which brings in the crowds.	12/16/2015 3:45 PM
32	See above - try real communication.	12/16/2015 3:27 PM
33	Get the town centre sorted. The Grosvenor Centre under current ownership is in decline. It has become essential to offer free parking (at a cost) just to ensure those remaining business are sustainable. Start getting tough with Legal & General and ensure they invest in phase 2 ASAP or that they sell their stake and enable another owner to put in the investment this town needs in retail. We have lost too many prime stores and are not attracting new ones	12/16/2015 2:44 PM
34	I think you should reconfigure your services to deliver mandatory services only	12/16/2015 2:35 PM
35	Wider consultation with the residents of Northampton(shire) to ensure the Council have a bigger view of the local opinion. More transparency with the budgets such as how money was spent and the final result, good or bad. Local opinion sought before major operations are commenced - the bus station debacle for one!	12/16/2015 2:31 PM

## 9 Demographics of respondents

Gender			
Options	Response %		Response Count
Male	62.71%		37
Female	37.29%		22
Age			
Options	Response %		Response Count
Under 16	0%		0
16-24	1.69%		1
25-34	8.47%		5
35-44	10.17%		6
<b>45-54</b>	<b>35.59%</b>		<b>21</b>
55-64	24.53%		12
65-74	18.64%		11
75 or above	5.08%		3
Ethnicity			
Main categories	Response %		Response Count
<b>White</b>	<b>84.48%</b>		<b>49</b>
Asian/Asian British	8.62%		5
Mixed	3.45%		2
Black/Black British	0%		0
Prefer not to say	3.45%		2
About Respondents			
Options	Yes	No	Response Count
<b>I live in Northampton</b>	<b>100% (56)</b>	<b>0% (0)</b>	<b>56</b>
I work in Northampton	74.42% (32)	25.58% (11)	43
I study in Northampton	10.34 (3)	89.66% (26)	29
I have a business in Northampton	17.24% (5)	82.76% (24)	29
I am employed by Northampton Borough Council	6.90% (2)	93.10% (27)	29
I am responding on behalf of an organisation/group	7.14% (2)	92.86% (26)	28

Organisations include: Community Law Service (Northampton and County); Graphside Ltd. and Richardsons



## 10 Equality and Community Impact Assessment

### Draft Budget Consultation

#### **What are we looking to achieve in this activity?**

The Council is mindful of its Public Sector Equality Duty and wants to ensure that it has due regard to its equality duties in its decision making process.

#### **How will the decision be made?**

Cabinet will consider the results of the consultation and of all relevant impact assessments to help it make an informed decision regarding the Council's budget and priorities. The Council will set its Budget for the 2016/2017 financial year in February 2016.

#### **What information exists already to assist with making the judgments above? Has any consultation been undertaken on this or any other related issue? Are any reports or relevant documents available internally or from partners or other sources?**

Impact assessments are carried out for individual options as they are developed where appropriate. They will be reviewed as the consultation evolves using the feedback received.

#### **Who is/ will be the main beneficiaries/people affected by this activity?**

Everybody living, working, studying or otherwise engaged with the town or its people may be potentially affected by our budget plans. This includes businesses, employees of the Council as well as, partners and contractors. Some efficiency savings will impact on staff and could lead to redundancies and changes in service provision; the level of service received by the public will be protected wherever possible. Where this is appropriate, consultation will be undertaken in accordance with council policy and all those affected will be able to have a say in this process.

#### **Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or to discriminate against different groups in the community or to make a positive contribution to equalities?**

The testing challenges caused by the general economic environment continue to have a significant impact on our communities as a whole and also on our budget, creating added pressure and increase demand for our services.

With limited resources, service provision will need to be reviewed and this may affect the services we provide, the people who deliver them, and those who receive them. It is critical when making decisions that may affect people that their views are sought and considered so that we can understand what matters to them, what they consider priority and what areas are in need of improvement and how the choices made may impact on their lives.

#### **Impact**

Proposals that will lead to efficiency savings and/or potential changes in service provision have been screened for impact against the protected characteristics groups. Where proposals involve staff changes and rationalisation, appropriate consultation in line with council policy will be followed and outcomes monitored for any disproportionate and adverse impacts on individual groups.

Any savings with impact on services will have the issues and risks raised through their individual assessments and evaluations taken into account in the implementation and monitoring of the options.

Issues and concerns identified during this consultation will be used to develop mitigation where possible and will be used to inform priorities for the Council.