Appendix 2

Finance and Business Plan Consultation

Consultation Findings

February 2013
Insight
Chief Executive's Service

SECTION 1

Executive Summary

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the detailed findings from the Finance and Business Plan consultation, 2013/14-2015/16.

1.1 Summary of approach to Finance and Business Plan Consultation

This year there has been three phases of consultation:

- Phase One (October 2012 – November 2012): Residents' Perception Survey
- Phase Two (November 2012 – January 2013): Corporate Plan Consultation
- Phase Three: Finance and Business Plan Consultation (including 2013/14 budget) (October 2012 – February 2013).

A summary of the results from the Residents' Perception Survey and the earlier Sense of Place Consultation can be found in appendices A and B of this paper.

This report sets out the detailed findings from phase two and three, which consisted of four strands:

- Survey on the Council's Finance and Business plan (including proposed budget) for 2013/14 - 2015/16
- Survey on proposals for the 2013/14 Corporate Plan and our priorities for coming years
- Face to Face consultative event with members of the Citizens' Panel and Youth Panel
- Service-specific consultations where the council has indicated there will cuts to services in the budget proposals for 2013/14.

A summary of the key findings are outlined on the following pages. The results will be used to inform the development of next year's Corporate Plan and final decisions on the council's Finance and Business Plan and Budget for 2013/14 - 2015/16. The full findings can be found under sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this report.

1.2 OVERALL SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1.2.1 FINANCE AND BUSINESS PLAN BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Finance and Business Plan Consultation (including 2013/14 budget) consisted of an online survey. Paper copies were made available on request. Views were also sought through a Citizens' Panel face to face consultative event.

Summary of key findings

The survey received a total response of 50 surveys (not all respondents completed all questions). Due to the small sample size the overall findings **should be treated with caution**. In total 61 residents attended the consultative event, 51 members from the Citizens' Panel and 10 members from the Barnet Youth Board, representing a cross-section of the community.

- #### Council's overall approach to budget

The survey showed that in terms of the council's overall approach to budget savings i.e. the proportion of efficiency savings, increased income and service reductions - views were mixed and there was no clear majority. However, respondents were more likely to say the level of efficiency savings that the council had identified were about right; that the increased income that had been identified should be more and that the reduction to services should be less.

Residents at the Citizens' Panel consultative event indicated that in terms of generating income, increased charges - or additional services which could generate income - to businesses for Planning or environmental services were popular. Delegates felt that council assets, including libraries, could be used more effectively to generate income. In terms of reduction to services, it was felt that some could be merged with other boroughs, but that services for the most vulnerable should be protected.

- #### Priorities the council has identified within each service area

The majority of survey respondents agreed with most of the service priorities the council has identified for each service budget.

However, there were some priorities where opinion was slightly more mixed. These were: Adults and Communities priorities: '**Giving residents greater choice'** and '**Educating the need for traditional social care services';** Children's Services: **'Provide better for less through intelligent commissioning of services';** and Streetscene Services: **'Implementation of a new waste collection method and updated waste strategy for refuse and recycling services'** and '**Continuing with the development of better local relationships with residents around initiatives such as Adopt a Street and Pledgebank'.**

Respondents were still more likely to agree with these priorities compared to disagree but a greater proportion said they were either neutral or did not know. Frequently cited reasons for disagreement were lack of information; it was unclear how the priorities were going to be achieved, and concern that the priorities might lead to more cuts.

- **Services priorities ranked as most important**

  Respondents were asked to rank the service priorities in order of importance. The full rankings are given under the detailed findings. In brief, a common theme from Adults and Communities and Children's Services was that respondents were more likely to rank priorities as the most important where they focused on early intervention and protecting the vulnerable.

  Within Streetscene Services, the priorities that were seen as the most important were those that focused on keeping the service in-house and delivering locally based services.

- **General consultation**

  Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about specific savings proposed that were marked as 'general consultation' under each service area. Very few comments were received – these are reported under section 2 of this report.

- **Level of Council Tax**

  In terms of the level of Council Tax, views were mixed and there was no clear majority in terms of the relationship between keeping Council Tax low compared to protecting council services. 39% (11 out of 28 respondents) suggested they would want Council Tax levels to increase above inflation. Remaining respondents suggested they would want Council Tax levels to increase at or below inflation, or in some instances be frozen or cut.

- Delegates from the Citizens' Panel face to face event were generally opposed to raising Council Tax explaining their concern was with reference to the wider economic context; as salaries are frozen and the cost of living is going up a Council Tax freeze seems like an increase in real terms. However, some questioned the freeze while seeing services cut but would only accept an increase in Council Tax if the council could demonstrate services were performing or had driven savings down. Some delegates suggested that it was better to increase income from other sources (e.g. Planning Services) than increasing Council Tax.

- **Savings from the council's change programme**

  Respondents were invited to comment on the proposed efficiency savings derived from the intended outsourcing of back office services and customer services (NSCSO), and the procurement of a provider of development and regulatory services (DRS).

  Very few responses to these questions were received. In summary most of the comments referred to lack of information, some opposition to outsourcing, concern that the outsourced services would not generate the savings quoted, and reference to the timing of this consultation.

1.2.2 SERVICE SPECIFIC CONSULTATIONS, FINANCE AND BUSINESS PLAN 2012/13

In summary, the following service consultations have been or are being consulted on as part of Finance and Business Plan Consultation 2013/14 - 2015/16:

- **Children's Services** have now completed the following consultations: Youth Services, Sports Development, Substance Misuse and Fees and Charges. The service consulted with their users and other stakeholders extensively with face to face engagement and an online survey. The general public were also given an opportunity to have their say and register their interest. Full details can be found at http://engage.barnet.gov.uk (past consultations).
  Children's Services will also be consulting on transport for children in care and children with special educational needs later on in the year.
- **EPR** has consulted on the new fees and charges increases. Full details can be found on http://engage.barnet.gov.uk (past consultations).
- **Streetscene services** will also be consulting on savings resulting from alternative service provision, trade waste commercial approach to the service later on in the year.

1.2.2.1 Children's Services' Consultations:

Children's Service Budget Consultation - summary of key findings:

In total, 42 people responded to the online Children's Service budget consultation survey. 60 children and young people responded to the young people's survey online and in hard copy. The budget proposals have also been discussed at a number of meetings, including with young people. The key points that emerged were:

- Regarding youth services, the £458,000 reduction in the original saving proposed was positively received. However, significant concerns over ongoing reductions to youth services were expressed. It was strongly felt that frontline workers should be protected from reductions. Concerns were also expressed about the impact of ceasing dedicated mediation support for homeless young people and the ability of targeted youth workers to carry out this work. Most agreed that Council support for careers information, advice and guidance could be reduced
- In relation to the sports development proposal, many respondents referred to the Olympic Games, and the importance of continuing that legacy with further investment in sport. Respondents were particularly mindful of the impact of obesity on children and young people in Barnet and keen to ensure that sports development was aligned with public health services
- The majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the substance misuse proposal. Some respondents highly valued the current specialist provision and hoped that the best aspects of this would be retained
- Young people felt especially strongly that the growing population of children and young people in the borough meant that expenditure should be reduced in other areas.

1.2.2.2 Environment, Planning and Regeneration (EPR) Service Consultation

Summary of key findings:

Fees and Charges

Notifications in respect of annual increases to fees and charges across a range of EPR services were the subject of public consultation from 8 November to 21 December 2012. This enabled all residents to be made aware of the proposed increase in charges and their applicable date of change and invites feedback and comments prior to implementation.

Ten responses were received in the publicised consultation mailbox in connection with allotment rents that were the subject of last year's consultation and already approved for implementation.

The majority of these related to comments on the allotment rent charges due to be implemented on 1 April 2013.

The general sentiment of the majority of respondents (in the allotments community) was that the approved fee increase due to be implemented for 2013/2014 is unjustified, unfair and potentially detrimental to the council's reputation. They called for the allotment rent increases to be abandoned or delayed to ensure that the existing project to transition allotment sites to self management is fully completed.

However, the council is confident that the majority of the allotment portfolio will have transferred by April 2013.

Full details can be found in Section 4 of this report.

1.2.3 CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION FINDINGS

The Corporate Plan Consultation comprised of an online survey (paper copies were made available on request). Views were also sought on the Corporate Plan priorities through a Citizens' Panel consultative event.

Summary of key findings

The survey received a total response of 39 (not all respondents completed all questions). Due to the small sample size the overall findings **should be treated with caution**. In total 61 residents attended the consultative event, 51 members from the Citizens' Panel and 10 members from the Barnet Youth Board, representing a cross-section of the community.

- The strategic objectives received responses in agreement from the vast majority of respondents, with around eight out of 10 respondents agreeing with them. The most popular objective was **'Improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work, and study'** with 87% agreeing with this priority.
- When respondents were asked to rank the objectives in order of importance respondents saw them all of almost equal importance. **'Creating the right**

environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough' was ranked as the most important, closely followed by **'Supporting families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being'. 'Improving the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study'** was ranked last. Interestingly, the latter got the greatest level of agreement but when respondents were asked to consider which objective was the most important respondents indicated this objective as the least important.

- Again the vast majority of respondents agreed with the priority outcomes included in the Corporate Plan, and there was little difference between levels of agreement.

- When respondents were asked to rank the priorities in order of importance respondents saw them all of almost equal importance. This was reflected the Citizens' Panel consultative event, where delegates felt all the priorities were positive and found it very difficult to rank them.

- In the survey the priorities that were ranked highest were: '**To maintain a well designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough'** and '**To maintain the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy'.** However, delegates at the face to face event recognised the importance of the preventative aspect of some priorities, and that others would follow as outcomes if these were put in place. The two priorities which were consistently rated highly at the event were '**To create better life chances, starting from pregnancy, for children and young people across the borough**' and '**To maintain the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy**'.

- Some respondents expressed confusion over the language of the objectives and priorities, and felt that they needed more explanation over the type of actions which would result from them. This was reiterated in the face to face Citizens' Panel event. There were suggestions for rewording: "To promote ***and educate'*** a healthy, active, independent and informed over 55 population in the borough so that Barnet is a place that encourages and supports residents to age well". Another suggestion was "to ***create and promote*** the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy".

1.2.4 CONSULTATION TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S DRIVING RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

The consultative event held with members of Barnet's Citizens' Panel and Youth Board members was also used to explore what is driving residents' perceptions.

Summary of key findings

In total 61 residents attended the consultative event, 51 members from the London Borough of Barnet's Citizens' Panel and 10 members from the Youth Board, representing a cross-section of the community.

➢ Delegates' top concerns

Delegates identified a wide range of concerns, but there were four in particular which received attention. These were: '**quality of health service**', '**not enough being done for young people**', '**crime**', and '**lack of affordable housing**'.

Working with local health partners, better police visibility, more activities for teenagers, and housing suited to local demographics were positive actions that delegates felt could tackle these concerns. There was a consensus that dirty streets and the state of roads and pavements needed effective intervention from the council, alongside better behaviour from residents.

➢ Key drivers of the top concerns identified in the Residents' Perception Survey

Crime – top concern in the Residents' Perception Survey

Delegates felt this was mainly driven by concern for burglaries, followed by assault, muggings, stabbings, and also teenagers hanging around the streets. Delegates made a number of suggestions of actions which could be taken to address this. The top priority for these was greater police visibility on the streets, followed by more CCTV in high crime areas (though CCTV should not replace active police presence); "naming and shaming" petty criminals in the local media, encouraging a more organised role for neighbourhood watch groups, ensuring criminals pay back to the community via full fines and community service, improving street lighting where it is too dim. There was a feeling that some areas were neglected, for example Burnt Oak.

Conditions of roads and pavements - second top concern in the Residents' Perception Survey

Potholes received the most attention, with delegates on one table agreeing that the North Circular was one of the worst areas. Delegates reported that there were good repair rates for potholes but that they were not of good quality and damage soon re-appeared. It was suggested that better follow-up and checks on quality of contractors was needed. Uneven pavements were a concern for older people. Supply of grit was also seen as a driver for concern of conditions of roads and pavements and it was felt that more grit supplies should be provided by the council so that they are accessible for all properties. With regard to the parking system there was a suggestion for a more convenient "tap and park" system, like the oyster card system where parkers are able tap in and tap out.

Concern for level of Council Tax - third top concern in Residents' Perception Survey

Delegates from the Citizens' Panel event were generally opposed to raising Council Tax explaining their concern with reference to the wider economic context; as salaries are frozen and the cost of living is going up a freeze seems like an increase in real terms. However, some questioned the freeze while seeing services cut but would only accept an increase in Council Tax if the council could demonstrate services were performing or had driven savings down. It was suggested that it was better to increase income from other sources (e.g. Planning Services) than increasing Council Tax.

➢ Resident Perception Survey - increasing concerns

Litter and dirty streets

Some delegates pointed out that the fact that street cleaning teams were not as visible as they have been may have coloured perceptions. But others felt that this was becoming more of a problem, because of a combination of more littering and less effort? to tackle it by the council.

Practical concerns raised were that there were not enough bins on streets and that they weren't emptied often enough (also that litter around bins was not being properly removed). Flytipping and dog mess were seen as specific growing problems. There was a good level of support for the notion of personal responsibility, and neighbourhoods working together to improve areas. There were also suggestions to increase awareness of litter problems through schools, and rewarding good practice. The idea of better regulation and policing was floated with comparisons to systems on the continent. There were some positive comments about cleanliness and refuse collection, specifically on Barnet High Street.

Increasing concern: affordable housing

Affordability of renting and buying in the borough was a concern for many; rents and purchase prices were said to be too high and it was felt this led to overcrowding. "Saturation" and "over population" were felt to be partly to blame, and delegates recognised that there had been a big rise in homelessness. But some delegates also put this down to high private sector rental rates, a number mentioned houses standing empty and lack of social housing. The growth in one to two bedroom flats for commuters was highlighted, which affects the type of neighbourhood – a reference was made to the new developments at Colindale, viewed by some as too small and too expensive. It was felt that certain areas were becoming unaffordable and some delegates thought it necessary to ensure diversity in the housing supply; a good mix of affordable housing, rent to buy, and renting. It was also felt that was not enough communication between services and organisations who served vulnerable people and who really needed affordable housing.

➢ Other Residents' Perception measures

Fear of crime at night

There was a widespread fear of crime at night and reasons for concern are outlined above. This was seen as more of a policing than a council issue, but it was felt that authorities should invest in crime prevention. Neighbourhood Watch groups were raised and spoken of positively. At various times in the event delegates made the connection between crime and young people not having enough to do. Lack of affordable housing was also referenced in this context.

Engagement

In terms of practical methods of communication by the council it was felt that these had improved a lot in the last few years, particularly the website, although Barnet First was described as an advert for the council by some.
There was a split between the younger and most of the elderly delegates who didn't use the internet and preferred to use local newspapers and advertising to find out about the council. Delegates liked the idea of ward specific news, as well as more

localised consultation. The idea for an e-newsletter or feed from the website that residents could use to subscribe to the specific feeds which interested them was raised at one table.

"My council doesn't do enough for people like me"

Delegates felt the reason why the survey showed an increase in this perception was that many residents are above the threshold of having to require services from the council i.e. in terms of income or the fact that they do not require all of the council services. The council should make it clear what its role is so that expectations are managed. But delegates also made it clear that they wanted resources to support those most in need rather than waste scarce resources on those who can support themselves. Support for young people was an issue that arose in a number of different instances during the Citizen's Panel event, and at this point some of the young delegates voiced concerns that there are not enough facilities or services on offer to them.

- **Generating income; efficiency savings; increasing revenue or reduction to services**

Delegates explored three ways in which the council could make savings or generate income: efficiency savings, increasing revenue or better use of assets, and a reduction to services. Plenty of ideas of how to generate revenue were offered, and charges to businesses or new services for Planning or environmental services were uniformly popular. Delegates felt that council assets, including libraries, could be used more effectively to generate income. In terms of reduction to services it was felt that some could be merged with other boroughs, but that services for the most vulnerable should be protected. There was no consensus on bin collections.

SECTION 2

Finance and Business Plan

Budget General Survey

Detailed Findings

2. FINANCE AND BUINESS PLAN ONLINE SURVEY DETAILED FINDINGS

The Finance and Business Plan Consultation consisted of an online survey. Paper copies were also available on request.

2.1 Technical details and method

2.1.1 In summary, the survey was administered as follows:

The Finance and Business Plan consultation opened on 8 November 2012 and closed on 31 January 2013.

- The consultation was published on the council's engage space http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/ which gave detailed background information about the council budget, the challenges the council faces and a hyper link to the full Cabinet Report on the Council Business Plan for 2013/14 – 2015/16
- Collection of respondents' views were fed back via an on line self-completion survey
- Hard copies were also available on request
- Fieldwork for the survey took place between 8 November 2012 and 31 January 2013.

The survey was widely promoted through an insert in the November edition of Barnet First, in libraries, via Community Barnet's newsletter, the Youth Board and various service user groups and partner mailing lists.

Also, as part of the council's statutory duty to consult with National Non Domestic Rate payers (NNDR or Business Rate payers), letters were sent out to all the council's NNDR payers inviting them to take part in the survey.

2.1.2 Questionnaire design

The online survey was developed to ascertain residents' views on the council's Finance and Business Plan for 2013/14 - 2015/16 and the budget, particularly in terms of:

- The savings and the priorities identified within each service area
- Those areas marked as 'general consultation' in the Council's Business Plan
- Views on the relationship between keeping Council Tax low compared to protecting council services.

In order to enable in-depth segmentation analysis on the results the following types of question were also included:

- Open ended questions, where respondents were asked if they disagreed with any priority to say why, and for comments on those budget savings which were marked as 'general consultation' in the detailed service savings of the Council's Business Plan and Budget for 2013/14-15/16, and then for any other comments on the savings
- Key demographic questions.[1]

Throughout the survey, hyperlinks were provided at each question to the relevant sections of the Council's Finance and Business Plan 2013/14 - 2015/16.

[1] Inline with the council's equality policy and the 2010 Equalities Act

2.1.3 Response to the survey

The survey received a total response of 50 responses. Due to the small sample size the **overall findings should be treated with caution** and no segmentation analysis has been conducted between demographic sub groups.

2.1.4 Calculating and reporting on results

The results are based on "valid responses" only, i.e. all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question depending on the extent of non - response.

2.1.5 Sample profile

The table below shows the profile of those who responded to the survey. Fifty responses were received in total, and those who replied were mainly residents (26%). Despite writing to all NNDR payers, only six responses were received from businesses based in Barnet. Due to the small sample size demographic information has not been produced for this report, although it was collected.

Type	Number	%
Resident	13	26%
Business	3	6%
Resident and business based in Barnet	3	6%
Public sector organisation	0	0%
Voluntary/community organisation	0	0%
Other	1	2%
Not answered	30	60%
Total	**50**	**100%**

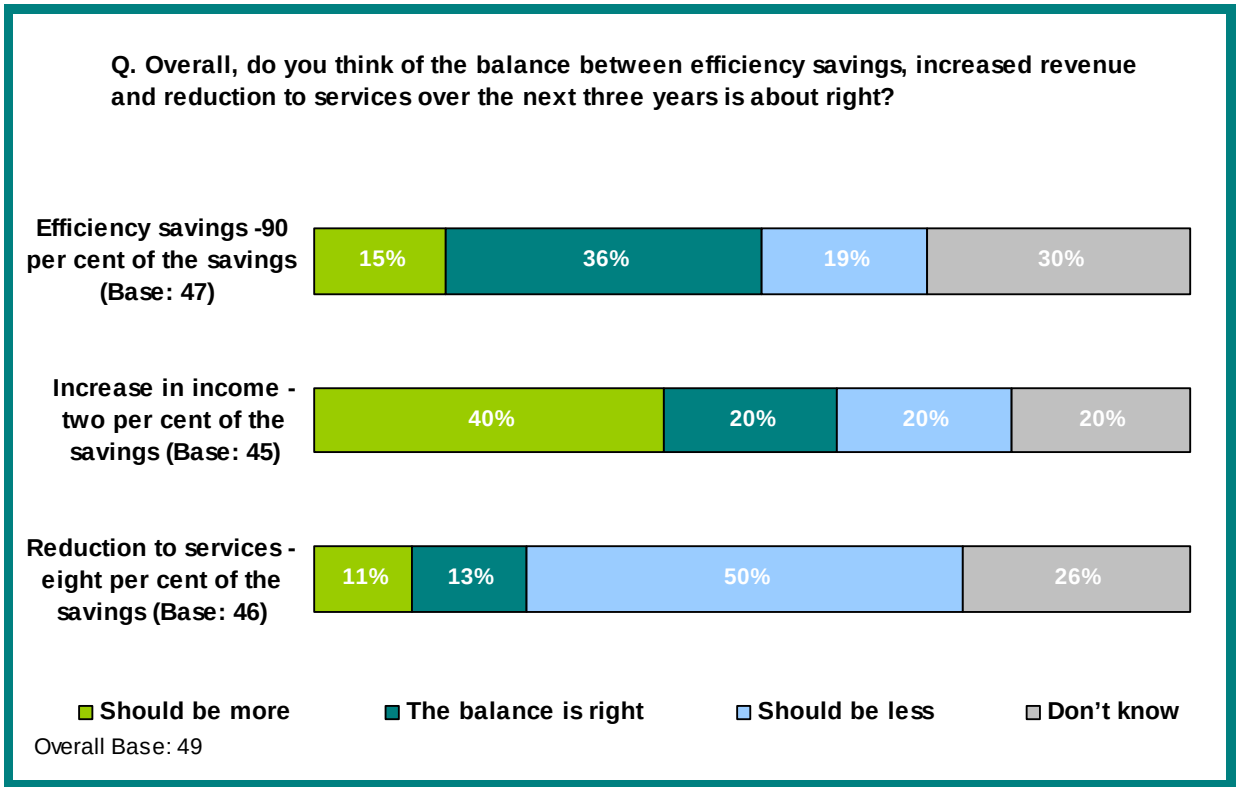
2.2 Results in detail:

2.2.1 Council's overall approach to budget

Respondents were asked what they thought of the council's approach to its business plan in terms of efficiency savings, increased revenue and reductions to services.

The chart below shows that in terms of the council's overall approach to its business plan, views were mixed and there was no clear majority. However, respondents were more likely to say the efficiency savings the council had identified were about right, that the increased income that had been identified should be more and that the reduction to services should be less.

Chart 1: Response to the council's overall approach to budget



- ***Efficiency savings (90 per cent of the savings)**:*
  Just over one third of respondents (36%, 17 out of 47) felt that the efficiency savings were about right, 15% (seven out of 47) said they should be more and 19% (nine out of 47) said they should be less. Just under a third of respondents (30%, 14 out of 47) said they did not know.

- ***Increase in income (two per cent of the savings):***
  Two fifths of respondents (40%, 18 out of 45 respondents) felt the council should generate more income. Opinion was then evenly split with a fifth of respondents (20%, nine out of 45 respondents) saying the balance was about right, it should be less, or saying they did not know.

- ***Reduction to services (eight per cent of the savings):***

There was a much more negative view to the reduction of services made, with half of the respondents (50%, 23 out of 46) saying there should be less of a reduction to services. A small number of respondents (11%, five out of 46) said they felt the reduction should be more, 13% (six out of 46) felt it was about right. However, just over a quarter (26% of respondents, 12 out of 46 respondents) said they did not know.

2.3 Service area questions

A series of questions were asked on each service area. Each set of questions asked how much respondents agreed or disagreed with the priorities identified within each service area, which priorities were most important to them, and if they had any other comments to make on the specific service savings proposal marked as 'general' consultation in the Finance and Business Plan.

2.3.2 Priorities the council has identified within each service area

In terms of individual service area priorities, the majority of respondents agreed with most of the priorities the council has identified for the budget within each service area.

However, there were exceptions where opinion was slightly more mixed: Adults and Communities priorities: '**Giving residents greater choice'** and '**Educating the need for traditional social care services';** Children's Services **'Provide better for less through intelligent commissioning of services'** and StreetScene Services: **'Implementation of a new waste collection method and updated waste strategy for refuse and recycling services'** and '**Continuing with the development of better local relationships with residents around initiatives such as Adopt a Street and Pledgebank.'**

However, a much greater proportion of respondents agreed with these priorities rather than disagreed and respondents were more likely to say they were either neutral or did not know than disagree. The most frequently cited reasons for disagreement were lack of information, it was unclear how the priorities were going to be achieved, and concern that the priorities might lead to more cuts.

Respondents were also asked to rank the service priorities in order of importance and these are outlined in the detailed findings for services to consider.

The detailed findings are outlined below.

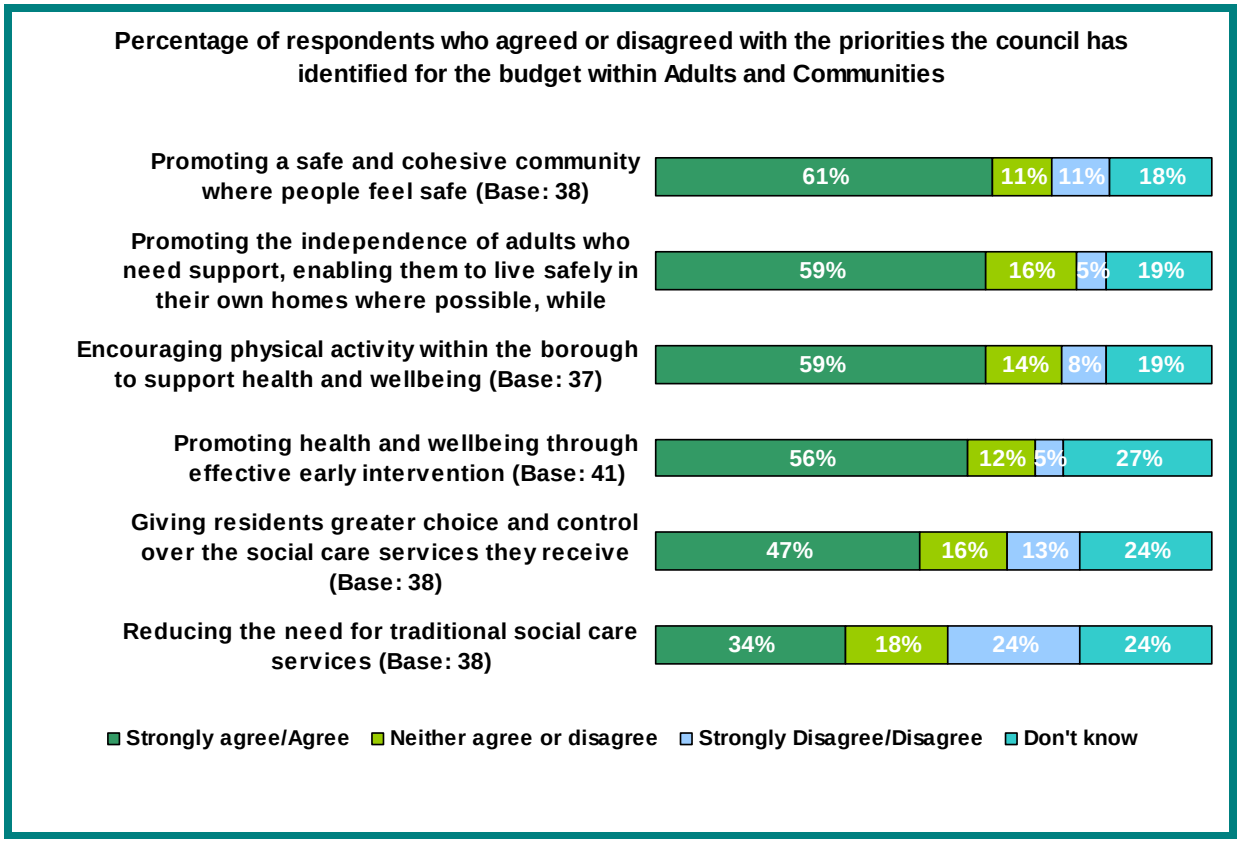
2.3.3 Adults and Communities

The chart over the page shows that the majority of respondents agreed with the priorities: '**Promoting a safe and cohesive community where people feel safe', 'Promoting the independence of adults who need support', 'Encouraging physical activity within the borough'** and **'Promoting health and wellbeing'.** Respondents who did not indicate they 'agreed' with these priorities were much more likely to say they were neutral or did not know rather than disagree.

Just under half of respondents agreed with the priority **'Giving residents greater choice'** and just over a third agreed with '**Reducing the need for traditional social care services'.** However respondents who did not indicate they 'agreed' with these

priorities were again much more likely to say they were neutral or did not know rather than disagree.

Chart 2: Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with Adults and Communities Priorities



- **Promoting a safe and cohesive community where people feel safe** received the highest level of agreement with 61% (23 out of 38 respondents) agreeing with this priority. In contrast only 11% (4 out of 38 respondents) disagreed with this priority, with a greater proportion indicating they were either neutral (11%, 4 out of 38) or they did not know (18%, 7 out of 38 respondents).

- **Promoting the independence of adults who need support** and **Encouraging physical activity within the borough** received similar levels of agreement with 59% (22 out of 37 respondents) agreeing with this priority. Again only a small proportion disagreed with these priorities (5% and 8% respectively), with a much greater proportion saying they were neutral or they did not know.

- **Promoting health and wellbeing,** 56% (23 out of 41 respondents) agreed with this priority. As before a minority disagreed (12%, five out of 41), with a much greater proportion saying they were neutral or did not know.

- **Giving residents greater choice and control over the social care services they receive** received agreement from just less than half of respondents (47%, 18 out of 38 respondents). However, a minority of respondents (13%, five out of 38 respondents)

disagreed with this priority, with a greater proportion being neutral or saying they did not know.

- **Reducing the need for traditional social care services** received agreement from just over a third of respondents (34%, 13 out of 38 respondents)**.** Just under a quarter (24%, nine out of 38 respondents) disagreed with this priority and as before a greater proportion neither agreed nor disagreed or said they did not know (18%, seven respondents and 24%, nine respondents respectively).

2.3.4 Reasons for disagreement with Adults and Communities service priorities

- Respondents who disagreed with any of the priorities for Adults and Communities services were asked to say why. A small number of respondents (10) provided reasons for their disagreement.

The most frequently cited reason was mainly in the context of not knowing how the council was going to achieve the priorities and hence they felt vague, aspirational and meaningless.

A small number of survey respondents questioned the intention of some of the priorities, such as enabling people to live in their own home and questioned whether this meant reducing funding or increased charges. One respondent questioned the priority '**Encourage physical activity**' arguing that the council already has high leisure charges and expressed concern over potential service reduction.

A small number of respondents registered concern with the priority of '**Reducing the need for traditional social care services'** reflecting that there will always be a need for traditional social care.

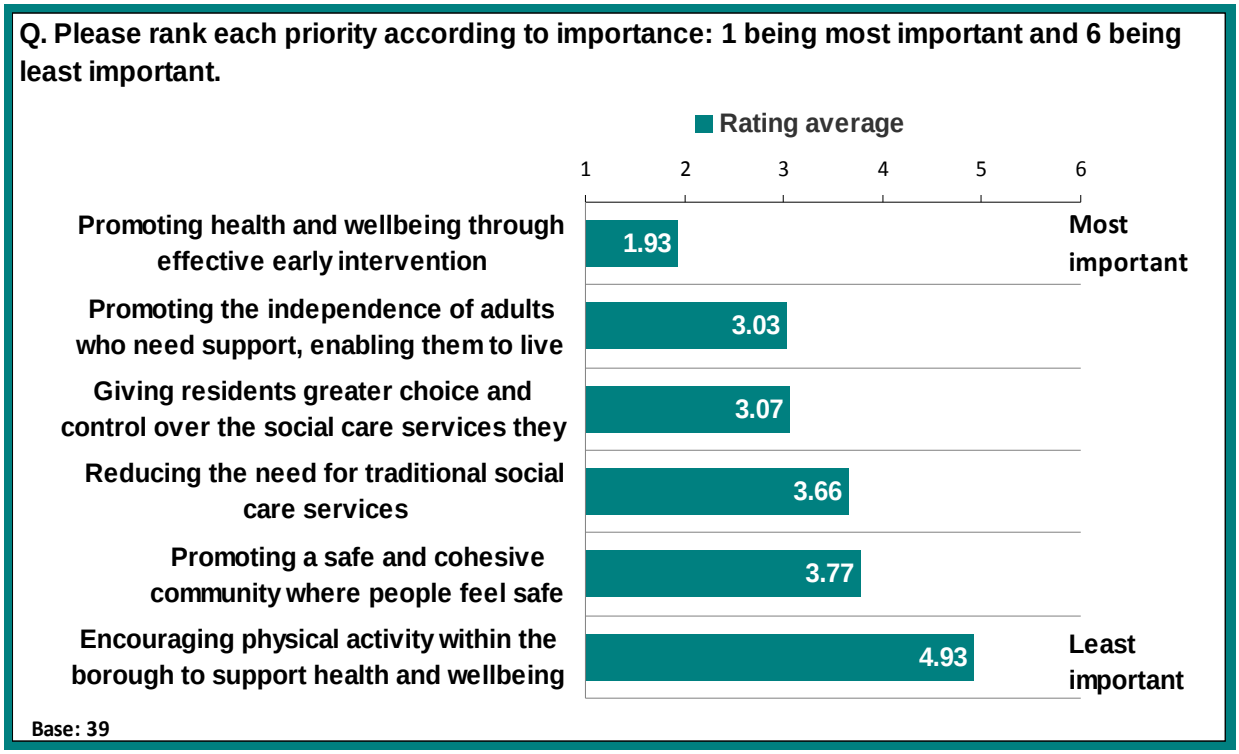
2.4 Ranking Adults and Communities' service priorities

Respondents were asked to rank which of the Adults and Communities service priorities were most important to them.

The chart over the page shows that respondents ranked **'Promoting health and wellbeing**' as the most important priority followed by **'Promoting the independence of adults'** and '**Giving residents greater choice and control over the social care services they receive'.**

In fourth and fifth place respectively was **'Reducing the need for traditional social care services'** and '**Promoting a safe and cohesive community where people feel safe'**. **'Encouraging physical activity within the borough to support health and wellbeing'** was seen as the least important priority.

Chart 3: Ranking of the Adults and Communities service priorities



2.4.1 Comments on those savings marked as 'general consultation' in Adults and Communities service consultation

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about specific savings proposed that are marked as 'general consultation' within the Adults and Communities budget. There were four responses to this question:

- E4/E1: one respondent felt that the 'New Social Work Model' is likely to be a good thing but high risk and should be subject to consultation with carers and recipients.
- E9/E5: respondent questioned what this means, suggesting greater pressure on volunteers and families.
- E10/E6: efficiency is fine, concern over underinvestment in skills or decrease in quality of services is not.
- E1: concern that a saving showed a high impact on service delivery customer satisfaction and equalities impact.

2.4.2 Additional comments on the savings identified in Adults and Communities

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments to make about the savings that have been identified in Adults and Communities. Three respondents felt there was not enough detail in tables; one respondent suggested the council should pay less housing benefits in order to achieve saving, another respondent suggested encouraging neighbours and the community to help.

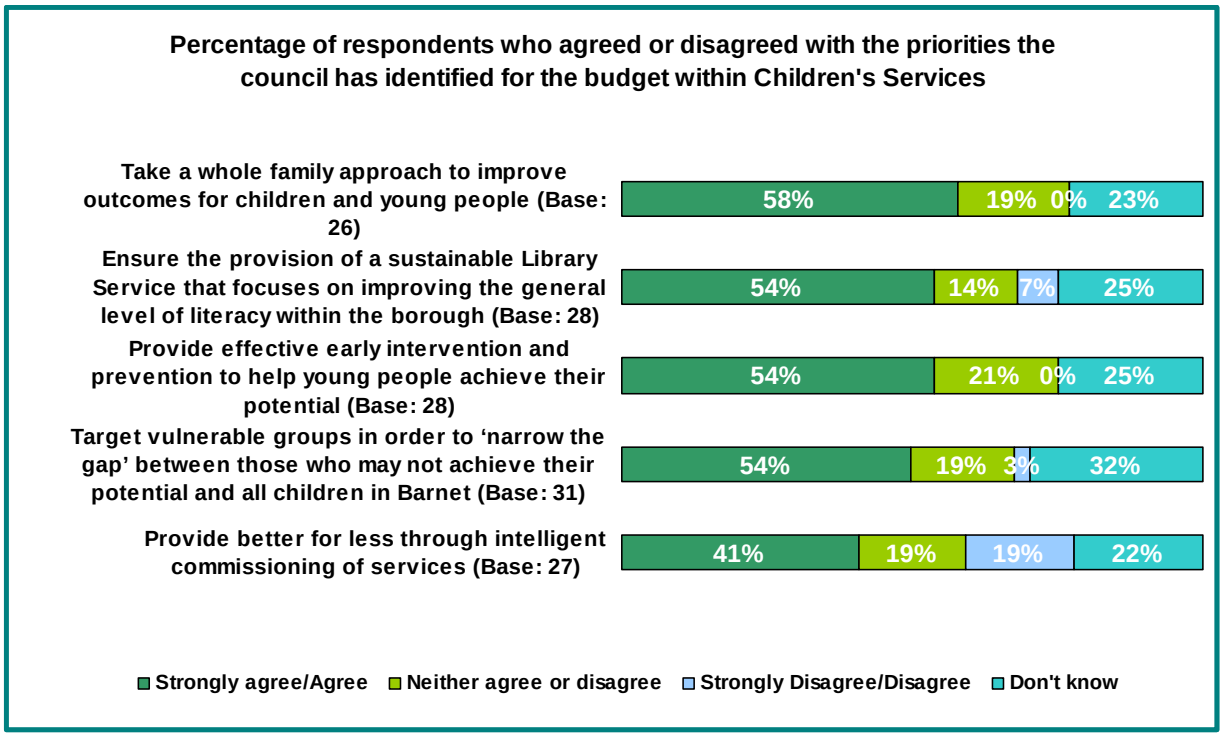
2.5 Children's Services

2.5.1 Children's Services priorities

The chart below shows that the majority of respondents agreed with four out of five of the priorities the council has identified for the budget within Children's Services. Only a small proportion disagreed with these priorities, with a much greater proportion saying they were either neutral or did not know.

Although only two fifths agreed with the fifth priority '**Provide better for less through intelligent commissioning of services'**, only a small proportion disagreed, with a much greater proportion saying they were either neutral or did not know.

Chart 4: Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with Children's Services Priorities



- The priority **'Take a whole family approach to improve outcomes for children and young people'** received the highest level of agreement with 58% (15 out of 26 respondents) agreeing. No respondents disagreed with this priority and instead were either neutral (19%, five out of 26) or said they did not know (23%, six out of 26 respondents).

- **'Ensure the provision of a sustainable Library Service', 'Provide effective early intervention and prevention to help young people achieve their potential'** and '**Target vulnerable groups in order to 'narrow the gap'** received similar levels of agreement, with 54% of respondents agreeing with these priorities. Again only a small proportion disagreed with these priorities with a much greater proportion saying they were either neutral or did not know.

- **'Provide better for less through intelligent commissioning of services'** received the lowest level of agreement with 41% (11 out of 27 respondents) agreeing with this priority. However, as before, a minority disagreed (19%, five out of 27) with a much greater proportion saying they were neutral or did not know.

2.5.2 Reasons for disagreement with Children's Services priorities

Where respondents disagreed with a priority, they were given the opportunity to provide a reason. Six respondents answered this question citing various reasons:

- Three respondents referred to the priority '**Ensure the provision of a sustainable Library Service that focuses on improving the general level of literacy**' as a reason for their disagreement. Particular reference was made to the recent closure of libraries, and interim spend on the Arts Depot. One respondent said that libraries should not focus on promoting literacy and that they have a much wider role to play.

- Three respondents felt that some of the priorities could mean cuts, through commissioning or withdrawing services to those at risk.

- Two respondents also felt there was not enough information or clarity on the council's plans to deliver the priorities.

- One respondent cited their reason for their disagreement was because they were against the council's change programme (One Barnet) and their perception of the reputation of Capita in delivering contracts.

2.5.3 Ranking Children's Services priorities

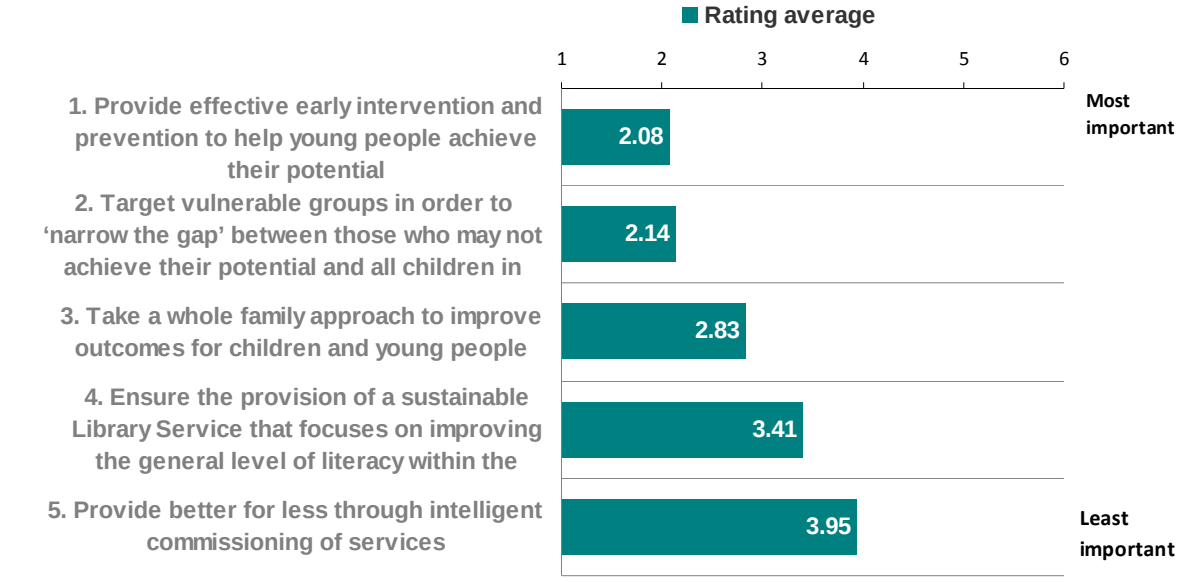
Respondents were asked to rank which Children's Services priorities were most important to them.

The chart below shows that respondents ranked '**Provide effective early intervention and prevention to help young people achieve their potential**' as the most important priority, closely followed by '**Target vulnerable groups in order to 'narrow the gap' between those who may not achieve their potential and all children in Barnet'** and **'Take a whole family approach to improve outcomes for children and young people'.**

In fourth and fifth place respectively were **'Ensure the provision of a sustainable Library Service that focuses on improving the general level of literacy within the borough**' and '**Provide better for less through intelligent commissioning of services'.**

Chart 5: Ranking of Children's Services Priorities

Q Please rank each priority according to importance: 1 being most important and 6 being least important.



Base: 31

2.5.4 Comments on those savings marked as 'general consultation' in Children's Services

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about specific savings proposed that are marked as 'general consultation' within the Children's Services budget.

One respondent made comments on the specific general savings within the Children's Services budget, opposing six of the savings and adding that it is important not to put cost savings ahead of quality. The savings that the respondent opposed are outlined below:

- E2: Communications, performance, workforce, development, commissioning and administration, the table says 'detrimental impact'
- E4/E5: Reducing learning and reducing training
- E6: The aim should be 'no disruption' to any children, not just to some
- E16: Children's needs are often different from those of adults, so it would be essential that expert staff are consulted
- E17: Concern this could result in reduced focus on the specific needs of client groups.

2.5.5 Additional comments on the savings identified in Children's Services

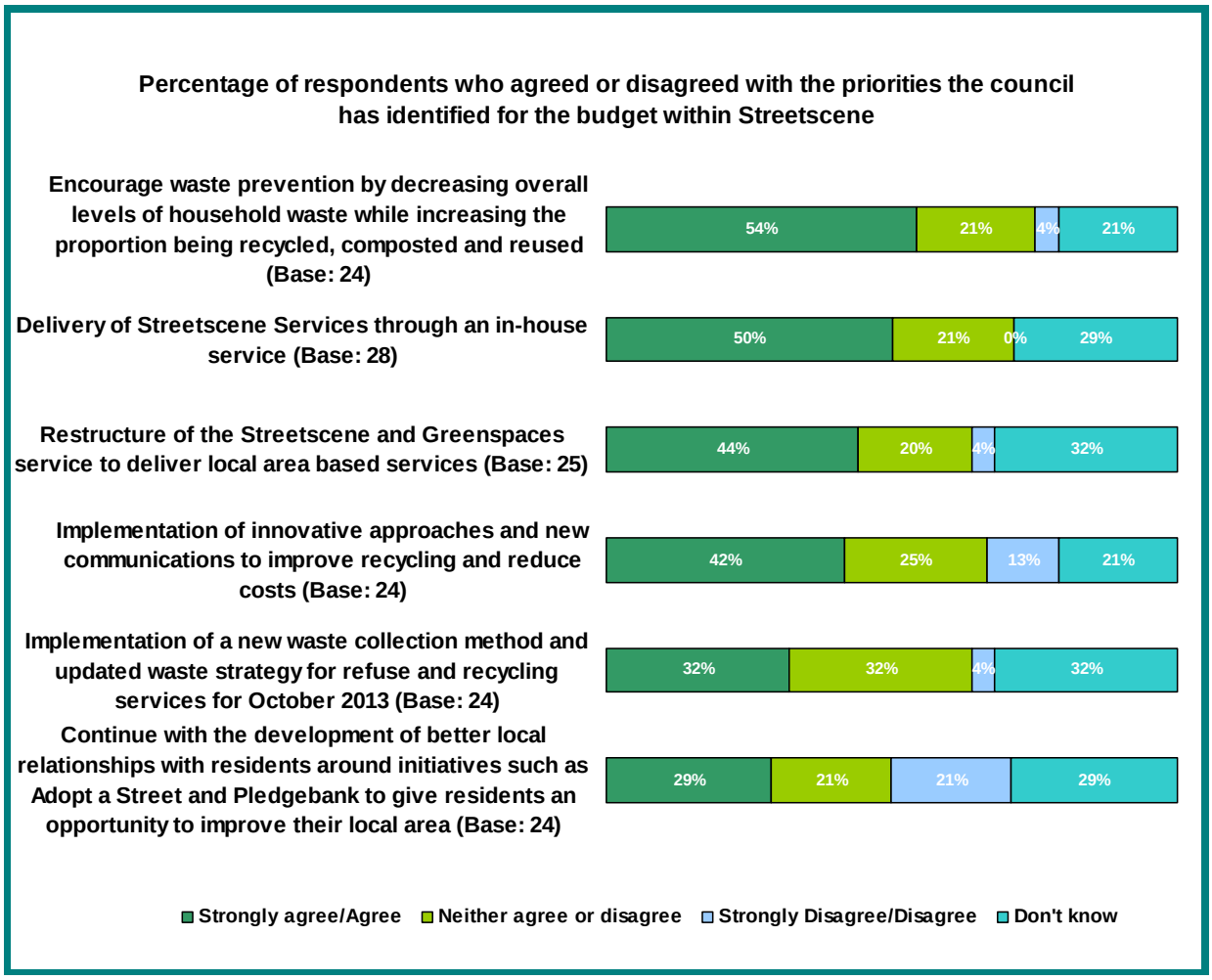
Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments to make about the savings that have been identified in Children's Services.

- One respondent raised concerns on reducing training, whether families are capable of managing the 'personalised budget' and what happens if the budget is not adequate. Another respondent said that they did not agree with the wording in the priorities, and suggested the council asks people what their priorities are.

2.6 Streetscene Services

2.6.1 The chart below shows opinion was more mixed towards Streetscene priorities.

Chart 6: Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with Streetscene Services priorities



- The priority **'Encourage waste prevention by decreasing overall levels of household waste while increasing the proportion being recycled, composted and reused'** received the highest level of agreement with 54% (13 out of 24 respondents) agreeing with this priority. Only a small minority disagreed with this priority (4%, one out of 24 respondents) with a much greater proportion either neutral (21%, five out of 24) or saying they did not know (21%, five out of 24 respondents).

- Half of the respondents (50%, 14 out 28) agreed with the priority of **'Delivery of Streetscene Services through an in-house service**'. No respondents disagreed with this priority, with the majority saying they neither agreed or disagreed (21%, six respondents) or that they did not know (29%, eight respondents).

- Just over two fifths agreed with the priority '**Restructure of the Streetscene and Greenspaces service to deliver local area based services'** (44%, 11 respondents) and the **'Implementation of innovative approaches and new communications to**

improve recycling and reduce costs' (42%, 10 respondents). Again, only a small proportion disagreed with these priorities with a much greater proportion saying they were either neutral or did not know.

- Around a third (32%) agreed with the **'Implementation of a new waste collection method and updated waste strategy for refuse and recycling services'**. Conversely only 4% (one respondent) disagreed with this priority, with the majority of respondents saying they were either neutral (32%) or did not know (32%).

- The priority **'Continue with the development of better local relationships with residents around initiatives such as Adopt a Street and Pledgebank to give residents an opportunity to improve their local area'** received the lowest level of agreement with just under a third of respondents agreeing with this priority (29%, 10 out 24 respondents). Five respondents (21%) disagreed with this priority but again a much greater proportion said that they were neutral (21%, five respondents) or that they did not know (29%, seven respondents).

2.6.2 Reasons for disagreement with Streetscene priorities

Where respondents disagreed with a priority, they were offered the opportunity to provide a reason. Four respondents gave reasons for their disagreement.

Three respondents disagreed because they felt there was not enough detail on what the priorities meant and how they would be implemented. There was particular concern on the lack on information in the proposed new waste strategy. Two respondents mentioned Adopt a Street and cited disagreement with this because they felt the council was trying to pass on its responsibility to residents. One respondent said that they did not agree with the wording of the priorities, so ranking them was difficult.

2.6.3 Ranking Streetscene Services priorities

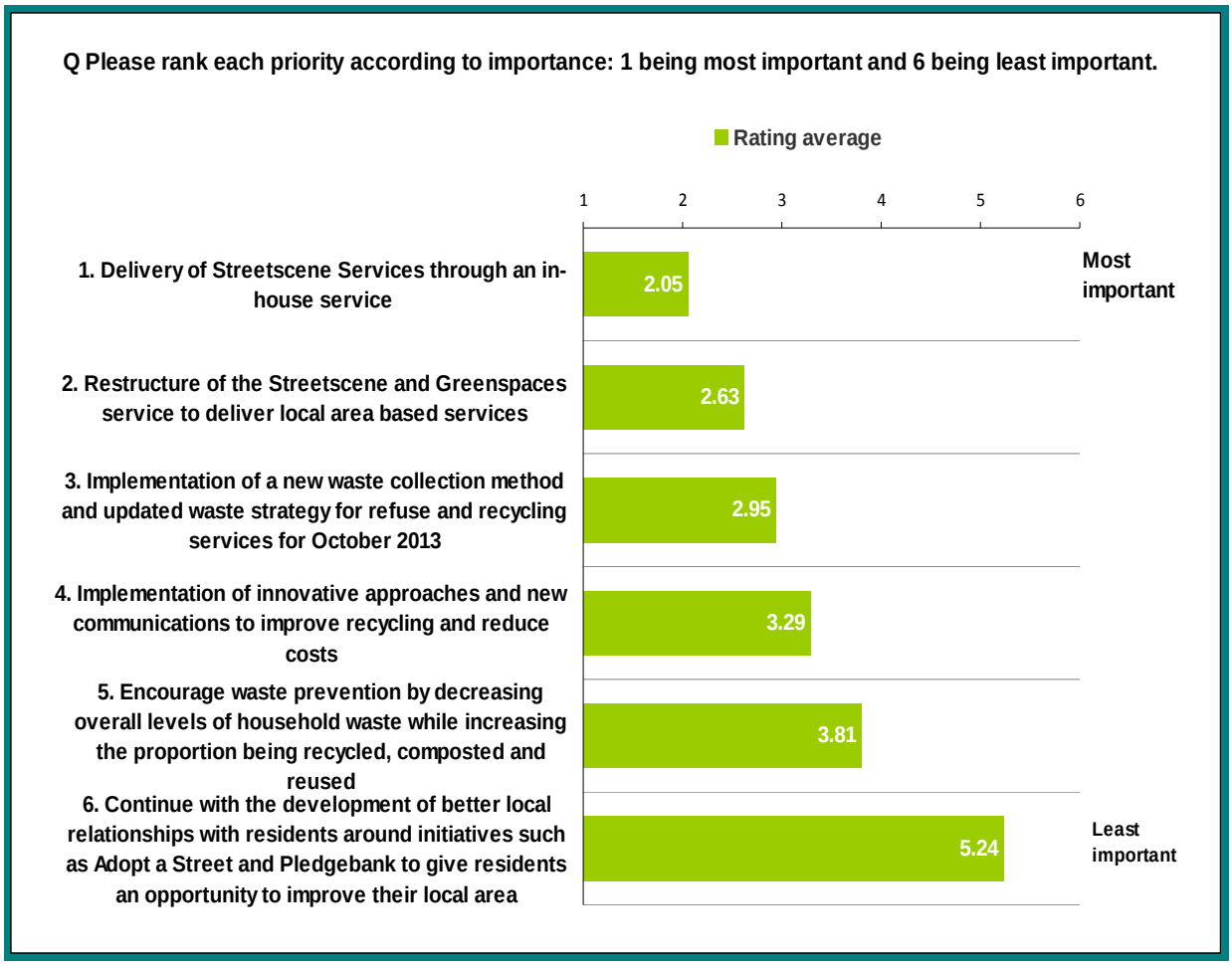
Respondents were asked to rank the Streetscene Services priorities in order of importance.

The chart over the page shows that respondents ranked the priority **'Delivery of Streetscene Services through an in-house service**' as most important, closely followed by the **'Restructure of the Streetscene and Greenspaces service to deliver locally area based services'** and **'Implementation of a new waste collection method and updated waste strategy for refuse and recycling services'**.

In fourth and fifth place respectively were **'Implementation of innovative approaches and new communications to improve recycling and reduce costs'** and **'Encourage waste prevention by decreasing overall levels of household waste while increasing the proportion being recycled, composted and reused'.**

The priority that was ranked last was **'Continue with the development of better local relationships with residents around initiatives such as Adopt a Street and Pledgebank to give residents an opportunity to improve their local area'.**

Chart 7: Ranking of Streetscene Services Priorities



2.6.4 Comments on those savings marked as 'general consultation' on Streetscene Services budget

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about specific savings proposed that were marked as 'general consultation' within the Streetscene budget. Three respondents answered this question.

One respondent was concerned with E1-E5 Waste management and concern that this may be outsourced (although the council's saving table does not state this). Two respondents mentioned E10, Alternative Parking Delivery, disputing service quality, stating that NSL provision is inefficient and that the council should have consulted before changing the parking service. Another respondent assumed that the council is privatising services such as local public parks, green areas and rubbish collection, and questioned why this is needed.

2.6.5 Additional comments on the savings identified in Streetscene Services

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments to make about the savings that had been identified in the Streetscene Services. One respondent suggested offering residents recycling measures that do not impact on finances of

residents. Another respondent felt it was cheaper to remain in-house and another again mentioned the lack of detail on how things will operate.

2.7 Generating revenue

Respondents were asked for their views on the relationship between keeping Council Tax low compared to protecting council services. Respondents were presented with a list of options and asked to tick their preferred option.

Views were mixed in response to this question and were drawn from a very small sample. The table below shows:

- The preferred option for over a third, (39%, 11 out of 28 respondents) was to **increase Council Tax above future inflation so that the current front line services can be provided at a higher quality.**
- A quarter (25%, seven out of 28) said they would prefer to **continue with the current rate of Council Tax with the risk of providing front line services at a lower quality.**
- Almost a fifth (18%, five out of 28 respondents) indicated they would prefer to see an **increase in Council Tax to be in line with future inflation so the current level of front line services can be provided at the same quality.**
- Only one respondent said they would prefer **a cut in Council Tax with reduced front line services and provide the remainder at a lower quality.**

Table 2: Preferred option for Council Tax

Option	%	Base
Increase Council Tax above future inflation so that the current front line services can be provided at a higher quality	39%	11
Continue with the current rate of Council Tax with the risk of providing front line services at a lower quality	25%	7
Increase Council Tax to be in-line with future inflation so the current level of front line services can be provided at the same quality	18%	5
Cut Council Tax, reduce front line services and lower their quality	4%	1
Don't know/Not sure	14%	4
Total	**100%**	**28**

Respondents were asked to give reasons for their answer and seven respondents chose to do so.

Of the reasons given, four were from respondents who indicated they wanted **an increase in Council Tax above future inflation so that the current front line**

services can be provided at a higher quality. Reasons cited for their choice were: to make up the shortfall to protect the vulnerable, provide good services and provide a civilised level of services, improving service quality and the limited impact a small increase would have on Council Tax bill payers as a 2.5% could bring in £4 million a year.

One respondent said the reason they chose **an increase in Council Tax to be in-line with future inflation so the current level of front line services can be provided at the same quality** because they felt a freeze will require cuts of £4 million, when other public services are making cuts or charging more.

Two respondents cited the reason why they chose **continue with the current rate of Council Tax with the risk of providing front line services at a lower quality** was that they felt the economy should be allowed to improve before increasing Council Tax and another said salaries are not increasing at the rate of inflation.

2.8 The local community

Respondents were asked for suggestions on how the local community could help the council save money. Ten respondents answered this question and comments were varied.

One respondent felt the local community could take on more responsibility itself in some areas. Another response was that the community could set up, run and decide local parking rates and issues, set up and run local libraries, as well as being representatives on local high street and town centre committees. One respondent suggested adopting a zero tolerance approach on all anti-social behaviour.

Other comments were not on what the local community could do but what the council could do. One respondent said give people back their voice at forums, two comments argued that the council should cut senior management and consultants.

Other responses referred to the One Barnet programme; one respondent said stop the One Barnet programme, others felt it was important to keep jobs in the borough and to use local providers.

Two respondents mentioned councillors, reducing the number of councillors or for them to be more efficient.

2.9 Commissioning Group and Assurance Group

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about specific savings within the Commissioning Groups and Assurance Group.

Eight respondents answered this questioned and comments were again varied:

- Two respondents felt they did not have enough information about the Commissioning Groups and Assurance Groups in that the savings were unclear
- One respondent said reduce councillor and senior managers' pay in the borough and expressed concerns over local democracy

- Another respondent reiterated that they were opposed to the One Barnet Programme.
- One respondent asked why there were no questions on parking or CCTV.

2.10 Development and Regulatory Services (DRS)

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about proposed efficiency savings from Development and Regulatory Savings.

Six respondents answered this question. Four respondents were opposed to outsourcing, citing the council should make the in-house service better by investing in it and managing it properly and keeping jobs in Barnet. There was another comment that a private sector company would not be able to minimise costs without also reducing services. One respondent expressed concerns over the experience of other private sector contracts such as South West One.

Three respondents said there was too little information to make judgement, citing there was no information on efficiency in the tables, the council's ability to change course when using a contract or the impact on staff or services; and one respondent said there had been no consultation on this outsourcing.

2.11 New Support and Customer Service Organisation (NSCSO)

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about proposed efficiency savings from the New Support and Customer Service Organisation.

Five respondents answered this question. All respondents questioned the savings being made and felt they were arbitrary and just a forecast. There was particular reference to the contract and that this should be published with detailed analysis. One respondent referenced the budget tables published, citing losses over the next three years, and questioned what would happen after this. Reference was also made to the direct impact on the public and the number of job losses in the borough, another respondent felt outsourcing was not good for services, democracy and residents. Two respondents felt that consultation now was retrospective and too late.

2.12 Legal Services

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about proposed efficiency savings in the new Legal Service.

Five respondents answered this question. One respondent felt this was a better approach than outsourcing. However, another respondent questioned whether the new service will actually make the savings and still deliver quality, and wanted to know whether accountability and the lines of responsibility were clear. Another respondent said they had already had a poor experience of the new legal service. One respondent said no efficiency savings had been identified in the published tables which did not match other information published. Lastly one respondent felt that this consultation was too late.

2.13 The Barnet Group

Respondents were asked if they had any additional comments about proposed efficiency savings within the Barnet Group.

Six respondents answered this question. Two respondents questioned whether service users and their carers are happy with the new arrangements. And one respondent asked what service reductions are planned post 2013/14.

Reference was made to the Common Purpose democratic process. One respondent disagreed that there are more choices for disabled people. Reference was made to Barnet Homes, saying it does not provide decent housing for disabled people and services for adults with learning disabilities are deteriorating, and that budget constraints prevented people from opting for external services, such as Bushey Resource Centre.

One respondent stated that there were no efficiency savings yet and that Your Choice Barnet is currently forecasting a deficit next year, commenting that Barnet will have to step in if it fails to reduce thjs deficit as Barnet are 100% shareholders of the LATC.

One respondent felt there was not enough detail and in particular on how savings will be made and how the proposals will affect services.

SECTION 3

Corporate Plan

Online Survey

Detailed Findings

3 CORPORATE PLAN ONLINE SURVEY DETAILED FINDINGS

The Corporate Plan consultation comprised of an online survey (paper copies were also available on request) and a Citizen's Panel consultative event (more details on the method and approach to the event can be found under Section 3 of this report).

3.1 Technical details and method

3.1.1 In summary, the survey was administered as follows:

- The consultation was published on the council's engage space http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/ which gave detailed background information about the Council budget, the challenges the council faces and a hyperlink to the full Cabinet Report on the Council Business Plan for 2013/14 – 2015/16
- Collection of respondents' views were fed back via an on line self-completion survey
- Hard copies were also available on request
- Fieldwork for the survey took place between 8 November 2012 and 31 January 2013.

The survey was widely promoted through an insert in the November edition of Barnet First, press releases, in libraries, via Community Barnet's newsletter, the Youth Board and various service user groups and partner mailing lists.

3.1.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed to help understand what residents' priorities are for the next 10 years in order to inform the development of next year's Corporate Plan, with particular regard to:

- The Corporate Plan's top level strategic objectives
- The Corporate Plan's priority outcomes.

In order to enable in-depth segmentation analysis on the results the following types of question were included:

- Open ended questions, where respondents were asked if they disagreed with any priority or outcome to say why, and for additional comments if respondents felt there may be something the council had missed
- Key demographic questions.[2]

Respondents were provided with information on the 'Background to developing the council's Corporate Plan', 'Emerging priorities', a list of the 'strategic objectives', and the 'priority outcomes'.

'Background to developing the Corporate Plan' set out the new legislative context of the Localism Act, the move towards a commissioning model of operation, and the council's aim to create a more focused Corporate Plan.

'Emerging Priorities' sets out the demographic and economic changes facing the borough, and the opportunities afforded by new powers to local authorities, alongside key characteristics of Barnet's economy.

[2] Inline with the councils equality policy and the 2010 Equalities Act

3.1.4 Response to the survey

The survey received 39 completed surveys (not all respondents have completed all questions). Due to the small sample size the overall findings **should be treated with caution**.

3.1.5 Sample profile

The table below shows the profile of those who responded to the survey. In total, 39 responses were received; those who replied were mainly residents (56%). Due to the small sample size demographic information has not been produced for this report, although it was collected.

Type	Number	%
Resident	22	56%
Business	2	5%
Resident and business based in Barnet	4	10%
Public sector organisation	2	5%
Voluntary/community organisation	1	3%
Other	0	0%
Not answered	8	21%
Total	**39**	**100%**

3.1.6 Calculating and reporting on results

The results are based on “valid responses” only, i.e. all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. Therefore the base size may vary from question to question depending on the extent of non response.

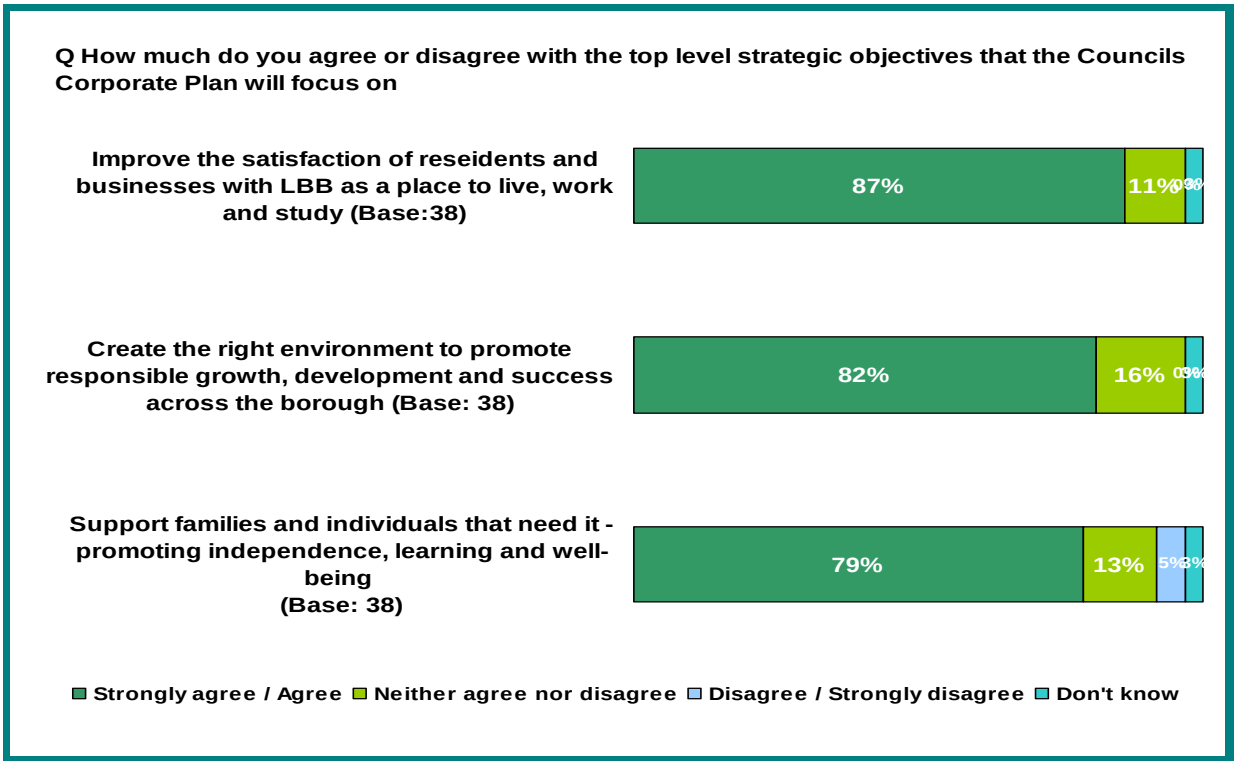
3.2 Results in detail:

3.2.1 The council's top level strategic objectives

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the council's strategic objectives.

The chart below shows that the vast majority of respondents agreed with all of the strategic objectives included in the Corporate Plan.

Chart 1: Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the council's Corporate Plan strategic objectives



- **'Improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work, and study'** received the highest level of agreement, with nearly nine out of 10 respondents agreeing with this objective (87%, 33 out of 38 respondents). There was no disagreement and the remainder of respondents were either neutral (11%, two respondents) or said they did not know (5 %, one respondent).

- **'Create the right environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough'** received the second highest level of agreement with just over eight out of 10 respondents agreeing with this strategic objective (82%, 31 out of 38). Again there were no respondents who disagreed with this objective and the remainder either said they were neutral (11%, four out of 38 respondents) or said they did not know (3%, one out of 38 respondents).

- **'Support families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being.'** Although third this still received a high level of agreement with nearly eight of 10 respondents agreeing (79%, 30 out of 38 respondents). Only 5% disagreed (two out of 38 respondent) with the remainder indicating they were neutral (11%, four out of 38) or they did not know (3%, one out of 38 respondents).

3.2.2 Reasons for disagreement with the strategic objectives

- Respondents who disagreed with any of the objectives were asked to say why. Ten respondents provided numerous reasons for their disagreement.

The two respondents who disagreed with the objective **'To support families and individuals that need it'** commented that there was not enough information to understand how this objective would be achieved, with one going on to explain they didn't know what the objectives meant, or how they would balance.

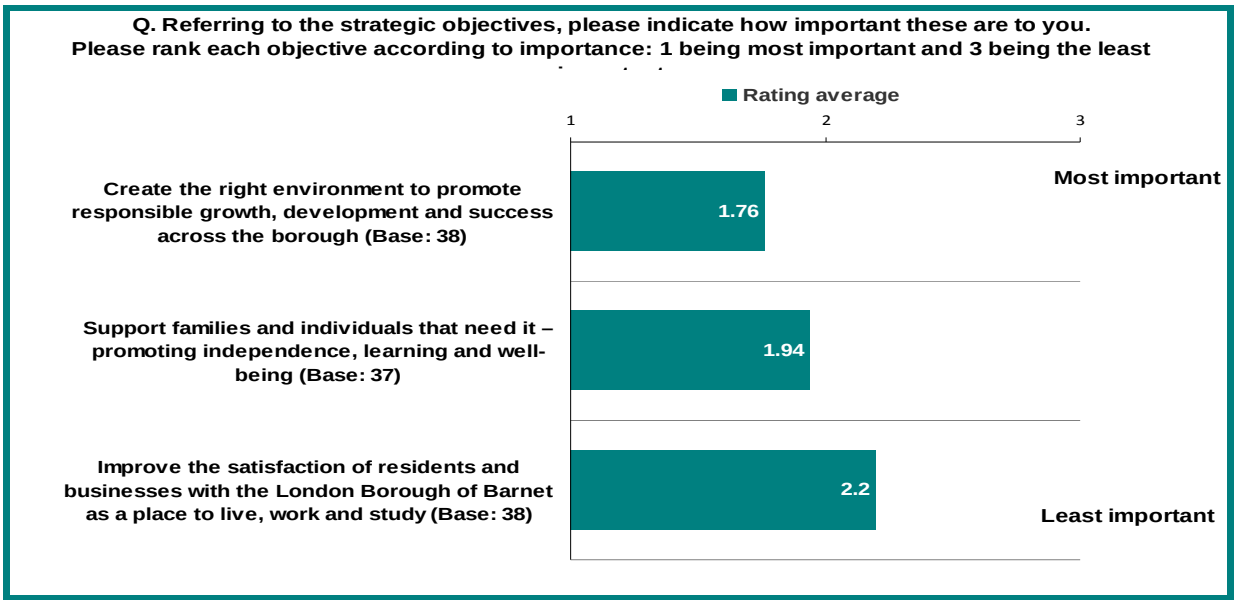
One respondent also felt that those people who are not contributing to the growth or well being of the borough should not be given more help because there was already adequate assistance for them.

3.2.3 Ranking the strategic objectives

Respondents were asked to rank which of the strategic objectives were most important to them.

The chart below shows the ranking average for each of these objectives and demonstrates that respondents saw the objectives were almost of equal importance. In particular although **'creating the right environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough**' was ranked as the most important priority. It was closely followed by **'supporting families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being. Improving the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study'** was ranked last**.** The latter got the greatest level of agreement in the previous question but when respondents were asked to consider which objective is the most important to them they indicated this objective was the least important.

Chart 2: Ranking of the Corporate Plan strategic objectives

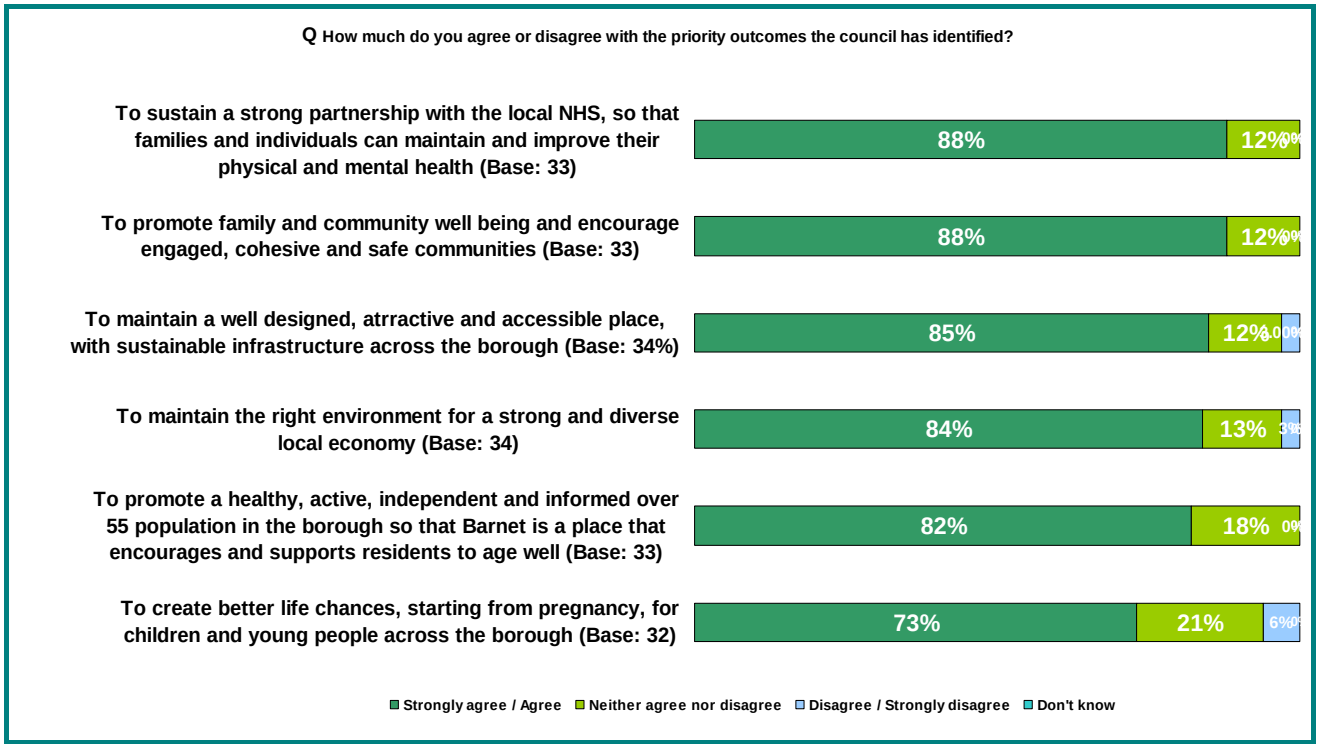


3.2.4 The council's priority outcomes

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the priority outcomes the council has identified to support these objectives.

The chart below shows that a large majority of respondents agreed with all the priority outcomes.

Chart 3: Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the council's priority outcomes



- The priorities which achieved the highest levels of agreement were '**To sustain a strong partnership with the local NHS, so that families and individuals can maintain and improve their physical and mental health'** and **'To promote family and community well being and encourage engaged, cohesive, and safe communities'.** Almost nine out of 10 respondents agreed with these priorities (88%, 29 out of 33 respondents) and the remainder were neutral (12%, four out of 33 respondents). None of the respondents disagreed with this priority.

- Similar levels of agreement were achieved for the priorities '**To maintain a well designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough'** (85%, 29 out of 32 respondents), '**To maintain the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy'** (84% agreed, 27 out of 32 respondents) and '**To promote a healthy, active, independent, and informed over 55 population in the borough so that Barnet is a place that encourages and supports residents to age well'** (82% agreed, 27 out of 33 respondents'). A minority disagreed with this priority and the remainder were neutral.

- **'To create better life chances, starting from pregnancy, for children and young people across the borough**' received the lowest level of agreement with around seven in 10 respondents agreeing with this priority. However, only 6% disagreed with this priority with a much greater priority saying they were neutral (21%, seven out of 33 respondents).

3.2.5 Additional comments on the priority outcomes

Respondents were asked if they felt the council had missed anything from the priority outcomes.

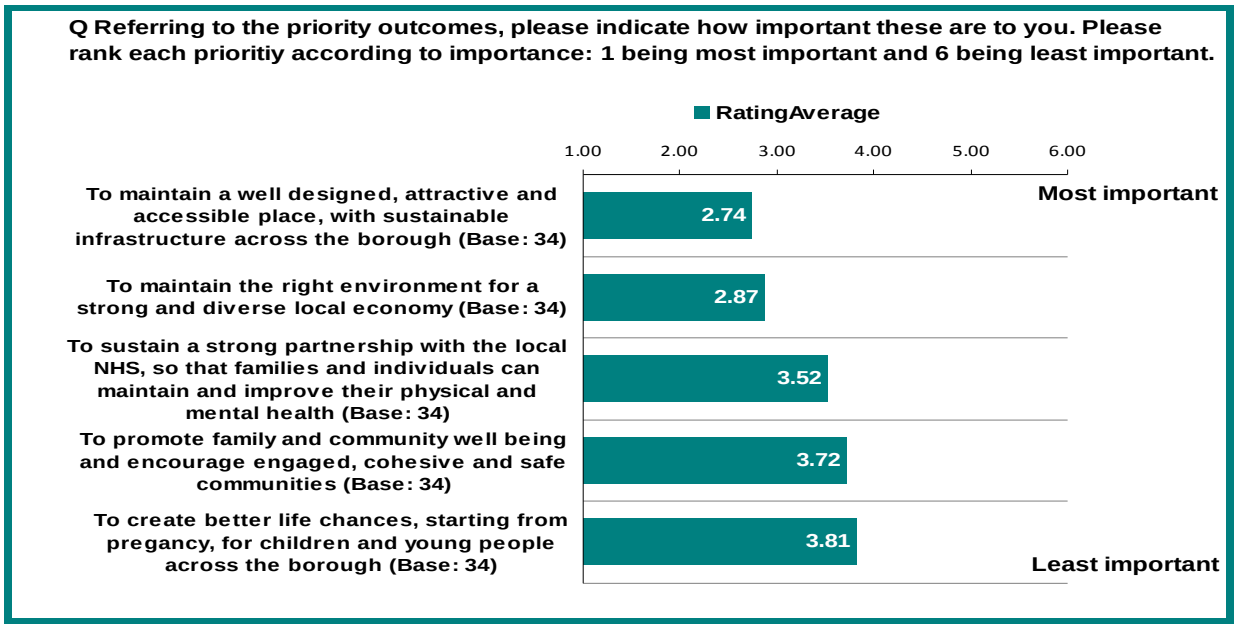
- Eleven respondents chose to include further comments which covered a range of issues
- Three respondents made reference to shops and local businesses
- These included comments that East Barnet shops were said to be derelict on account of the rates in the area, a request for the council to support local business, to keep Barnet Football Club in Barnet, and to keep Barnet market going by helping it to improve and diversify on its current site
- Other responses ranged from promoting the safety of children and adults, protecting the most vulnerable residents especially those who are disabled or on very low incomes, more focus on mental health services, promoting affordable housing, the availability of suitable primary school places, traffic, which was felt to be linked to all the priorities, providing public services within the borough and not outsourcing them to outside Barnet, and a concern about feelings of safety. All issues referenced above received one comment each.

3.2.6 Ranking of the council's priority outcomes

Respondents were asked to rank how important each of the priority outcomes was to them.

The chart over the page shows that **'to maintain a well designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough'**, was the most important priority. This was closely followed by **'to maintain the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy'**.

Chart 4: Ranking of the council's priority outcomes



3.2.7 Additional comments on the strategic objectives and priority outcomes

Respondents were asked for any other comments about the proposed priority outcomes and strategic objectives. Eight respondents provided comments:

- Three responses related to the clarity of language and meaning of the objectives and outcomes. It was felt that examples would help explicate the difference between 'a well designed accessible place' and 'the right environment' for example. Others wanted more explanation of the actions which would result and questioned the value in prioritising what they saw as interlinked objectives
- Mirroring an earlier response, one respondent felt that too much money was allocated to families with children, as opposed to adults with mental health problems or the lonely
- One respondent chose to raise issues with parking; it was felt to be too expensive with inflexible payment methods particularly disliked by the over 55s
- One respondent revealed that they were a shop owner on East Barnet Road and focused on the issue of high rates faced by shops there. It was felt that if new businesses were supported it would help the area and community
- More general comments related to improving standards of schools, health facilities and the feel of the high street.
- Two respondents disputed the necessity of ranking them as they required an "integrated approach," that improvements in one area needed to be carefully balanced with others.

3.2.8 Actions that the council should consider taking to achieve these outcomes and objectives

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments on actions that the council should consider taking to achieve these outcomes and objectives. There were extensive and varied comments from 10 respondents.

The types of comments are listed below:

- Ease traffic congestion; particular reference was made to badly timed traffic lights
- Keep the streets clean and tidy, citing they are getting noticeably worse every year
- Ensure the vulnerable are a priority
- Work with families rather than individual groups to identify how they can help themselves and their communities without financial burden on the rest of the community as well as supporting the services that they require
- Set up a volunteer service where people can meet
- New parking regime with reference to the current system actively discouraging visitors to the town centre which adversely affects high street and local economic activity, and consequently ongoing wealth and health of the borough
- Put up Council Tax inline with the rate of inflation so the council can continue to look after our borough to maintain standards
- Lower business rates or allow new businesses not to pay any rates for first two years so they can establish themselves
- Simplify communication and use simple language without jargon
- Don't outsource everything, with reference made to it diluting local accountability and democracy and services that may be out of touch with local need
- Get rid of unnecessary/outdated local acts or bills, laws and red tape.

SECTION 4

CONSULTATIVE EVENT

WHAT DRIVES RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

4. CONSULTATION TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S DRIVING RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS (28 January 2013) – DETAILED FINDINGS

A consultative event was held with members of Barnet's Citizens' Panel and Youth Board members. The event was designed to explore what is driving residents' perceptions, explore residents' views on the council's Corporate Plan priorities, and understand where residents would be prepared to accept further savings.

4.1.1 Aims

- To gain an in depth understanding of residents' priorities and expectations in the context of the council's budget challenges now and in the future
- To gain an in depth understanding of residents' top concerns
- To explore the results of the online Residents' Perception Survey and discover what drives residents' perceptions
- To discover residents' views on the draft outcomes for the Corporate Plan
- To explore residents' views on the council's efficiency savings, ideas for generating revenue, and where it might be acceptable to see a reduction in council services.

4.1.2 Sample

Participants were invited from the London Borough of Barnet Citizens' Panel. The full panel is a representative sample of Barnet's population. However, as usual with these events, the invitation did not generate a strong take up from residents aged under 25, so additional invitations were circulated to the Youth Board.

In total, 61 residents attended the event. There was a good mix of participants in terms of age, ethnic origin, gender and disability.

4.1.3 Methodology

Participants were split across 10 tables with a mix of demographics represented on each table. Council staff from across the organisation provided facilitation for table discussions and captured feedback.

Councillor Daniel Thomas, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, opened the event with a detailed presentation on the budget and demographic pressures facing the borough now and in the future. There were two workshops, each focusing on a main theme and composed of a number of exercises.

4.2 Workshop 1: Exploring concerns and the Residents' Perception Survey

Workshop 1 comprised of exercises and table discussions to look at the 2012 Residents' Perception Survey results and understand what is driving residents' perceptions of the borough, and what delegates are most concerned about.

The workshop comprised the following three exercises:

- **Exercise 1:**

Delegates were presented with a list of issues and asked to pick out the top three that they were most concerned about, and discussed within tables.

- **Exercise 2:**
  Tables were supplied with a document graphically displaying the results of the Resident's Perception Survey, and asked to discuss reasons behind one of the top three concerns and then to look at a lesser concern that had increased since the last survey.
- **Exercise 3**
  Tables explored three more findings from the Residents' Perception Survey in more detail, namely fear of crime, perception of engagement and 'my council doesn't do enough for people like me'.

4.2.1 Key findings from workshop 1

4.2.2 Exercise 1

Delegates identified on a wide range of concerns, but there were four in particular which received attention. These were: 'quality of health service', 'not enough being done for young people', 'crime', and 'lack of affordable housing'. Reasons for these as well as lesser concerns are outlined below.

- **Quality of health service**
  Most of the reasoning behind this related to the perception of poor connections between different parts of the health service, appointment systems, referral times, and accessing different services across the borough. There were a number of complaints about GPs' services, and suggestions that GP surgeries be more accountable to the council so residents can affect change to their local services.
- **Not enough being done for young people**
  Comments focused on lack of services and facilities for young people, and a general feeling that these had declined. It was felt that the council could do more to promote services that already exist, and to open up their facilities for use. Delegates suggested that clubs and organisations – particularly those using council assets – need to be incentivised to open up their doors to young people. Similarly schools that have available after school facilities could be opened up to young people who don't.

  Some delegates made a connection between lack of opportunities and services for young people, and crime, though others rejected this. There was some discussion of culture changes in schools and parenting and the effect on discipline.
- **Crime**
  This emerged unprompted as one of delegates' top concerns. Reasons are outlined below, where delegates unpacked the results of the Residents' Perception Survey.
- **Lack of affordable housing**
  This emerged unprompted as one of delegates' top concerns. Reasons are outlined below, where delegates unpacked the results of the Residents' Perception Survey.
- **Lack of jobs**
  Delegates voiced experiences of redundancies or lack of opportunities. Young people's schemes were sometimes felt to be tangled in bureaucratic processes which lost sight of the end goal of a real job. Delegates commented on the difference between more affluent residents who commute to London and people who want local jobs; this point was linked to the decline of the high street in local areas, and

businesses shutting down. It was felt that the council has a role here in ensuring that the local area can provide jobs.

- **Standard of education**
  It was felt that Barnet's reputation for excellent education was not deserved uniformly across the borough. One delegate put it down to affluent parents being able to provide extra tuition, and others put forward the view that schools' good reputations could often be deceptive. There was some general discussion over educational standards slipping.

- **Level of Council Tax/rising prices/interest rates**
  This emerged unprompted amongst of delegates' concerns. Delegates framed concerns about the level of Council Tax within the economic context of rising prices and just not having enough disposable income. Further reasons are outlined below, where delegates unpacked the results of the Residents' Perception Survey.

- **Not enough being done for elderly people**
  There were mixed views on this concern, with some elderly people stating that they were happy with the opportunities and services available for them, and some delegates including a care worker commenting that there were not adequate services available.

- **Poor public transport**
  Congestion was felt to be a problem, but delegates voiced the idea that car journeys were often more convenient because of inconvenient public transport routes across the borough which often involve multiple changes.

4.2.3 Exercise 2

- **Crime - top concern in the Residents' Perception Survey**
  The greatest concern was expressed over burglaries, followed by assault, muggings and stabbings. Delegates made a number of suggestions of actions which could be taken to address this. The top priority of these was greater police visibility on the streets; this could be more police or uniformed volunteer and community officers to keep costs down. Further comments were that police should focus on solving crime rather than alleviating the after effects, and that they sometimes didn't spend enough time on smaller issues. Other practical suggestions included: more CCTV in high crime areas (although CCTV should not replace active police presence); "naming and shaming" petty criminals in the local media, encourage a more organised role for neighbourhood watch groups, ensure criminals pay back to the community via full fines and community service, and improve street lighting where it is too dim. There was a feeling that some areas were neglected, for example Burnt Oak. Some delegates expressed the view that Barnet was seen as an affluent borough so it became easier to overlook certain areas. Some delegates made links between crime and lack of affordable housing or young people not having enough to do. Balancing out these views were the comments that media scaremongering played a big part in perception of crime levels.

- **Conditions of roads and pavements - second top concern in the Residents' Perception Survey**
  Potholes received the most attention, with delegates on one table agreeing that the North Circular was one of the worst areas. Delegates reported that there were good repair rates for potholes but that they were not of good quality and damage soon re-appeared. It was suggested that better follow-up and checks on quality of contractors

was needed. Other particularly bad areas were the hilly parts of the borough. Uneven pavements were a concern for older people in the group, with Hendon referenced by one delegate. One delegate asked that more grit supplies be provided by the council so that they are accessible for all properties. With regard to the parking system there was a suggestion for a more convenient "tap and park" system, like the oyster card system where parkers are able tap in and tap out.

- **Concern for level of Council Tax - third top concern in Residents' Perception Survey**

Delegates from the Citizens' Panel face to face event were generally opposed to raising Council Tax explaining their concern with reference to the wider economic context; as salaries are frozen and the cost of living is going up a Council Tax freeze seems like an increase in real terms. However, some questioned the freeze while seeing services cut but would only accept an increase in Council Tax if the council could demonstrate services were performing or had driven savings down. It was suggested that it was better to increase income from other sources (e.g. Planning) than increasing Council Tax. Delegates also expressed concern over people not paying who should be. Many delegates expressed the view that there was no problem with the amount of Council Tax they were paying, but found it problematic that at the same time they perceived services to be performing worse than two or three years. However local government was seen as more efficient than central Government or other parts of the public sector.

- **Increasing concern: litter and dirty streets**

Some delegates pointed out that the fact that street cleaning teams were not as visible as they have been may have coloured perceptions. But others felt that this was becoming more of a problem, because of a combination of more littering and less action to tackle it by the council.

Flytipping and dog mess were seen as specific growing problems. Practical concerns raised were that there were not enough bins on streets and that they weren't emptied often enough (also that litter around bins was not being properly removed). There was a good level of support for the notion of personal responsibility, and neighbourhoods working together to improve areas. There were also suggestions to increase awareness of litter problems through schools, and rewarding good practice. The idea of better regulation and policing was floated with comparisons to systems on the continent. There were positive comments about cleanliness and refuse collection, specifically on Barnet High Street.

- **Increasing concern: affordable housing**

Affordability of renting and buying in the borough was a concern for many; rents and purchase prices were said to be too high and it was felt this led to overcrowding. "Saturation" and "over population" were felt to be partly to blame, and delegates recognised that there had been a big rise in homelessness. But delegates also put this down to a lack of social housing, and high private rents and a number mentioned houses standing empty. The growth in one to two bedroom flats for commuters was highlighted, which affects the type of neighbourhood that crops up. The new developments at Colindale were viewed by some as too small and too expensive. It was felt that certain areas were becoming wholly unaffordable and delegates thought it necessary to ensure diversity in the housing supply; a good mix of affordable housing, rent to buy, and renting. One delegate said that there was not enough communication between services and organisations who served vulnerable people and who really needed affordable housing.

4.2.4 Exercise 3

- **Feeling safe during the night**

  There was a widespread fear of crime at night. This was seen as more of a policing than a council issue, but it was felt that authorities should invest in crime prevention. Neighbourhood Watch groups were raised and spoken of positively. At various times in the event delegates made the perceived connection between crime and young people not having enough to do, Lack of affordable housing was also referenced in this context.

- **Engagement**

  In terms of practical methods of communication by the council it was felt that these had improved a lot in the last few years, particularly the website, although Barnet First was seen as propaganda and described as 'an advert for the council'. There was a split between the younger and most of the elderly delegates who didn't use the internet and preferred to use local newspapers and advertising to find out about the council. Delegates liked the idea of ward specific news, as well as more localised consultation. The idea for an e-newsletter or feed from the website that residents could use to subscribe to the specific feeds which interested them was raised at one table. There was a perception among some delegates that the council may be operating inefficiently; that there was too much red tape and inefficiencies resulting from passing responsibilities back and forth between departments. Some delegates questioned why top level staff working for the council were getting bonuses.

- **"My council doesn't do enough for people like me"**

  Delegates felt the reason why the survey showed an increase in this perception was that many residents are above the threshold of having to require services from the council i.e. in terms of income or the fact that they do not require all of the council services. The council should make it clear what its role is so that expectations are managed. But delegates also made it clear that they wanted resources to support those most in need rather than waste scarce resources on those who can support themselves. Support for young people was an issue that arose in a number of different instances across the course of the evening, and at this point some of the young delegates voiced concerns that there not enough facilities or services on offer to them.

4.3 Workshop 2: Corporate Plan priorities and council changes

Workshop 2 consisted of a first set of table discussions to seek residents' views on the draft outcomes for the Corporate Plan, followed by another set on efficiency savings, generating income and where it would be acceptable to see a reduction in services.

The workshop comprised of two exercises:

- **Exercise 1: Corporate Plan and the council's priorities for the next five years**

  The same exercise was completed by all tables.

  A briefing note on the council's Corporate Plan was sent out to all delegates ahead of the event, and additional copies were provided on their tables. The note provided information on Barnet's emerging priorities in the context of the economic and demographic changes, and legislative developments. Delegates were provided with the Corporate Plan's three strategic objectives and asked to discuss and rank the set

of priority outcomes and provide additional suggestions if they felt there was anything that the council had missed or should change.

- **Exercise 2**
  Delegates were provided with a list of information on all council services and each table focused on one of the following topics: efficiency savings, generating more revenue, and reduction to services.

4.3.1 Key findings from workshop 2

4.3.2 Exercise 1: Corporate Plan and the council's priorities for the next five years

Most tables commented on the high level language used for the priorities, and some felt uncomfortable ranking them without more reference to what they meant and how they would be implemented. Though all were felt to be positive, they needed more information in order to interpret them. Others understood that the priorities had different focuses and were able to prioritise accordingly.

There were a range of prioritisations and various comments on specific priorities. Most tables recognised the preventative angles of certain priorities, and that others would follow as outcomes if these were put in place.

Two priorities were consistently rated highly:

"To create better life chances, starting from pregnancy, for children and young people across the borough"

The preventative aspect of this priority appealed to many delegates, who felt that focusing on early years and young people would foster residents who were less dependent on council services later in life. Discussions focused on making sure that young people acquired life skills as well as important technical skills. Some delegates suggested that the council should be encouraging local businesses to take on GCSE age students for work experience, because graduate level is too late.

"To sustain a strong partnership with the local NHS, so that families and individuals can maintain and improve their physical and mental health"

Some felt that this wasn't the council's responsibility, however many delegates voiced ideas about healthier people "costing less". Discussion also focused on the council's new public health role; it was felt that this offered an opportunity to localise what is seen as a very "national" NHS. Delegates commented that the council would need to engage with partners to prevent disengagement as well as duplication of work.

Food shops were mentioned on two tables. It was felt that the council could have some influence over supermarkets, which have an important role in ensuring that people made healthy food choices, and the number of fast food shops – it was felt that there were too many in Burnt Oak for example.

Mental health issues were a serious concern, and it was felt that not enough attention was given to these.

"To maintain the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy"

- Focusing on small and medium sized enterprises was felt to be a priority for many delegates, and it was felt that business rates should be fed back into promoting SME's

(small businesses) and cottage industries. It was felt that the council could take more practical steps to improve the local economic environment; a number of delegates mentioned the importance of parking spaces at low costs near to small local businesses. There was suggestion for re wording this "to ***create and promote*** the right environment for a strong and diverse local economy".

"To maintain a well designed, attractive and accessible place, with sustainable infrastructure across the borough"

It was felt that Barnet already did this well. Some delegates commented that design did not necessarily impact on people's behaviour.

"To promote a healthy, active, independent and informed over 55 population in the borough so that Barnet is a place that encourages and supports residents to age well"

Many felt that the older population were already well catered for which perhaps reveals why this priority did not emerge as a higher concern. Three delegates who raised particular concerns about care for the elderly had occupations in social care or health. Some pointed out the demographic pressures facing the borough and recognised the type of value that this group could add if enabled, and the types of problems that could be prevented by making sure they were healthy and active. There was suggestions for rewording 'To promote ***and educate'*** a healthy, active, independent and informed over 55 population in the borough so that Barnet is a place that encourages and supports residents to age well".

"To promote family and community well being and encourage engaged, cohesive and safe communities"

This received some support and was felt to be a positive priority but delegates struggled to articulate clear ideas or examples about how this might be achieved.

4.3.3 Exercise 2

- **Efficiency savings**

Key question:

- Where should the council look for efficiency savings?

There was a general consensus around fairness in terms of directing benefits and subsidies to the vulnerable and deserving, and not rewarding those who abuse the system or act irresponsibly. A number of delegates felt strongly that the council should clamp down on benefit fraud. In order to cut street cleaning costs children or young people who had committed crimes could clean litter from the streets.

More specifically there were suggestions to cut housing benefit to the private sector; to remove Council Tax subsidy for private tenants and for council tenants. Giving grants to the third sector to run services was proposed. Delegates at one table suggested the council runs an annual efficiency competition, to encourage young people in particular to come forward with ideas for efficiencies and to generate revenue.

There were suggestions of further cuts to management staff, and there were two specific references to Children's Services management. Many were also in favour of

outsourcing back office services and HR. Delegates raised concerns about making cuts which could cause pressure elsewhere in the system (for example on road services or healthcare).

➢ Increasing revenue/ better use of assets

Key questions:

- How should the council seek to generate more revenue?
- What would be acceptable and what would not be acceptable?

Increasing Council Tax was not a favourable idea on the whole and a number of delegates felt that the flat rate of Council Tax was unfair. Instead, a couple of delegates were in favour of the council putting efforts into more effective debt recovery. There was a consensus that charging businesses for certain services, such as Plan and energy advice would be a good way of generating revenue, and it was felt the council could be more entrepreneurial on this front, possibly working with a private sector partner. However, introducing a charge for services that delegates used personally was not popular, especially for those which are essential for some people.

There was lots of discussion around libraries; the idea of charging for the service was unpopular and delegates understood that this basic service could be very beneficial to young people in particular. However there were a number of suggestions as to how they could be used more efficiently, for example fusing libraries which had lower numbers of active users. Libraries could host partner organisations or businesses which could be charged, and users could be charged for "added value" services at libraries. One idea was to introduce phone charging docks into public spaces such as libraries, where users could charge their phones for a fee. Coffee shops at libraries were a popular idea, and one table suggested using them as an opportunity to develop social enterprises and opportunities for young people to build work skills. The most readily recognised council asset was space and facilities. A large number of delegates felt that council buildings and schools could be used more efficiently. For example, space could be sold if standing empty or rented out more efficiently so that a number of organisations could benefit from them and maximum revenue could be generated.

The idea of using advertising on council communications materials or in customer service centres to generate revenue split the group. Some felt that the independence of services could be compromised. Others felt that it would be better than cutting services. But there were a number of comments about the importance of transparency, and circumstances in which it would not be suitable. One table discussed the idea of commercial sponsorship, for example for local community groups, and more innovative use of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

➢ Reduction to services

Key questions:

- Which services would be acceptable to see a reduction in the level of service?
- Which services are the most important and should be the council's priorities?

Delegates were split on the issue of fortnightly rubbish collections. Some suggested that both refuse and recycling collections should be reduced to fortnightly collections

and to aid this people should be encouraged to compress their rubbish and recycle properly. Others wanted to protect weekly waste collections but improve recycling.

Other services which delegates felt comfortable with reducing were Environmental Health services, and street lighting, which some delegates felt was not needed in the early hours and that it had not affected feelings of safety when reduced in certain areas. There were suggestions that Trading Standards, consumer advice and licensing services should be merged with another borough to make savings.

There was wide spread agreement that there should not be a reduction to maintenance of roads and pavements or services for people who need them most; these were children, elderly and vulnerable people. Delegates also wanted to keep services that keep people well, such as leisure and healthcare.

4.4 Additional themes and general comments

There were two themes which emerged unprompted from a number of different delegates. Mental health was felt to be a serious and "hidden" problem, which should have been included or highlighted in more of the discussion items.

Several delegates had concerns about the standard of schools and the education system, commenting that schools are not always as strong as their reputation suggests. School places were also a concern.

The decline of the high street and more support for local shops was an issue that received attention at a number of instances throughout the event. Cheaper parking was one solution that was offered, as was the council's support for small and medium sized enterprise though re-investment of business rates.

There were also several comments over the course of the event that the authorities – the council, the police etc - had not responded or taken issues seriously in response to complaints or feedback from residents. This prompted the feeling that it may not be worthwhile reporting issues in the future. Delegates on one table commented that feedback from consultation events should be more explicit and immediate.

SECTION 5

Finance and Business Plan Budget

Service Consultations

Detailed Findings

5. SERVICE SPECIFIC CONSULTATIONS, BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET 2012/13 – DETAILED FINDINGS

5.1 CHILDREN'S SERVICES BUDGET CONSULTATION DETAILED FINDINGS:

The Children's Service has consulted on budget proposals to achieve savings of £4.493m for 2013/14. As part of this, three key proposals have been consulted on: youth services, sports development and substance misuse.

5.1.2 Technical details and method

In summary, consultation on the Children's Service budget proposals was administered as follows:

- Key stakeholders were emailed a consultation letter containing information about each of the key budgets proposals for the Children's Service and how to respond to consultation
- A Children's Service budget consultation webpage containing key documents and information
- A young person's online survey created by the Barnet Youth Board
- An online questionnaire
- An email address for people to send their comments or queries to
- A number of consultation meetings.

5.1.3 Proposals and feedback

5.1.3.1 Youth Services

There have been some key changes to the duties local authorities have to provide youth services and we are looking at a number of ways that savings could be found within the budget for youth services. The Government has issued new guidance which means that local authorities keep their duty to secure sufficient services and activities to improve the wellbeing of young people, to take into account their views and to work strategically with partners to do this. However, the Government will no longer prescribe which services and activities for young people should be funded or to what level.

There have also been changes to local authority duties to provide information, advice and guidance on careers to young people. From September 2012 schools have the responsibility and the funding to provide careers guidance that meets the needs of their pupils. The financial plan for 2013/14 agreed in February 2012 includes £958,000 of savings for youth services. However, having examined these savings against our priorities and in light of the riots in summer 2011, a smaller reduction of £500,000 is now proposed, with savings found through efficiencies in other areas instead.

There are four key proposals to achieve total savings of £500,000 for Youth Services.

Proposal 1A: Achieve better value for money across contracts, especially in youth homelessness provision. A reduction in mediation support for homeless young people is also proposed. To help reduce the impact of no dedicated mediation for young people, targeted youth workers would deliver support for homeless young people. Proposed saving: £120,000

Proposal 1B: Refocus and reduce back office and youth worker staff supporting targeted youth services, while continuing to guarantee provision of statutory duties. These duties include securing sufficient leisure-time educational and recreational activities for young people, and helping young people to participate in education and training. We would further target remaining resources and reshape our services to help ensure that the Council continues to support those that need it most and increase formal accreditation in activities and programmes for young people.
Proposed saving: £245,000

Proposal 1C: Reduce resources to publicise and support delivery of positive activities (for example special interest clubs, arts and cultural activities and sports activities). We would continue to work closely with partners to make the best use of remaining resources. This would include increasing formal accreditation across activities.
Proposed saving: £65,000

Proposal 1D: Schools now have responsibility and funding for careers information, advice and guidance. It is proposed to reduce Council support in line with this. However, there is some demand from schools to purchase careers support from the Council, which would generate income and would reduce the budget saving. There are also opportunities to generate income from play activities in schools.
Income generation: £70,000

42 people responded to the online survey. A summary of responses is shown in the table below.

Proposal	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
1A	8.3%	29.2%	0%	16.7%	45.8%	0%
1B	4.5%	18.2%	13.6%	31.8%	31.8%	0%
1C	4.8%	23.8%	28.6%	19.0%	23.8%	0%
1D	33.3%	42.9%	14.3	4.8%	4.8%	0%

60 children and young people between the ages of 10 and 24 responded to the young people's survey online and in hard copy. Their views are represented in the table below.

Proposal	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
1A	3%	33%	0%	52%	5%	3%
1B	7%	33%	42%	5%	5%	8%
1C	7%	45%	40%	0%	0%	5%
1D	68%	0%	3%	0%	25%	4%

5.1.3.2 Feedback

The £458,000 reduction in the original saving proposed was very positively received. Respondents felt that their views, including those expressed during last year's consultation, about the importance of youth services, had been taken into account.

Concerns were expressed by social care managers and Barnet Homes around the impact of ceasing dedicated mediation support for homeless young people and it was felt that the targeted youth workers would not be able to fully mitigate the impact of this proposal. Those who responded to the online survey also expressed concerns in relation to young people who find themselves homeless. Emphasis was placed on the need for targeted youth workers who were suitably experienced and trained to deal with the particular issue of homelessness. Some respondents were also concerned about the potential knock on effect for other young people if targeted youth workers spent more of their time focusing on young homeless people. It was suggested that there could be greater use of commissioning local organisations to help maintain services while still saving money. It was strongly felt that frontline workers should be protected from reductions.

Many respondents highlighted the benefits of positive activities, stating that they help to make a difference to young disadvantaged people, and that it is a unique programme which has allowed voluntary organisations to provide activities for some of Barnet's most vulnerable young people. There were some questions raised about the quality of alternative service providers and many respondents expressed concern about who would deliver services, and their relevant experience. Some felt that it was important to offer physical activity opportunities outside of school, and reducing options could impact on those who do not engage in traditional activities.

It was noted that there is a clear link between youth homelessness, substance abuse and mental health issues, and the need to ensure that this cut and those of previous years will not result in increased knock-on expenditure on youth offending and dealing with young people not in education, employment and training.

While Barnet Youth Board and UK Youth Parliament understood the pressures placed on local councils they expressed some concerns and wanted to ensure that cuts did not compromise the quality of services. Specific concern was expressed for young people who are vulnerable, particularly young people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. They felt that schools had numerous responsibilities and that some might find it difficult to offer all careers and advice provision and called for stronger links between agencies like the job centre and schools. It was felt that young people should continue to play a part in designing materials and promoting council services aimed at young people to help raise awareness of what is on offer and ensure continued participation from a wide range of groups.

5.1.3.3 Response to consultation

Youth services are being reconfigured to ensure the continued provision of statutory duties. The charging model introduced during 2012/13 would continue to be developed to help ensure that youth and play activities remain available to young people who are not identified as target groups. Formal accreditation in activities and programmes for young people such as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme is being increased and links strengthened with local schools. Positive activities and accredited programmes are being jointly planned and communicated and there is a continued commitment to the involvement of young people in the decision-making process.

It is acknowledged that the proposed reductions could have a negative impact on homeless young people, especially in relation to mediation support. To help mitigate

this, a dedicated targeted youth worker would work closely with the housing team and Barnet Homes to support homeless young people and those at risk of homelessness. Having a dedicated worker will help to reduce the knock-on effect on support provided by other targeted youth workers. To help further strengthen this, the Council is working closely with Barnet Homes to explore the possibility of securing funding from other sources for mediation work.

5.1.4 Sports Development

Proposal 2: Reduce support for sports development and continue to promote sports development without additional investment. To help reduce the impact, sports development would be carried out as part of positive activities work. We would also continue to work with partners, including health, schools and the voluntary sector, to encourage greater use of leisure facilities across the borough, especially through the sport and physical activity review.
Proposed saving: £90,000

A total of 42 people responded to the online survey. A summary of responses is shown in the table below.

Proposal	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
2	11.1%	16.7%	16.7%	22.2%	33.3%	0%

60 children and young people between the ages of 10 and 24 responded to the young people's survey online and in hard copy. Their views are represented in the table below.

Proposal	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
2	0%	23%	62%	0%	8%	5%

5.1.4.1 Feedback

Many respondents referred to the Olympic Games, held in London in 2012, and the importance of continuing that legacy with further investment in sport. Respondents were particularly mindful of the impact of obesity on children and young people in Barnet.

There were some concerns about ensuring that partners had the capability to provide effective services and whether schools were able to share facilities to the benefit of the wider community, in practice. The capacity of sports activities to create revenue was also raised as an issue and suggestions were made for a self-funding service to be created.

Several respondents felt that aligning these services with public health services would ensure a more coherent strategic direction for sport and physical activity and capitalise on opportunities to engage a wider range of residents in regular sport and physical activity.

It was felt that this proposal places an additional burden on the youth service, and it was noted that good sports provision can improve engagement and attainment.

5.1.4.2 Response to consultation

The Children's Service will work closely with colleagues in public health and through the review of sport and physical activity to make best use of the resources available across the partnership and identify opportunities to encourage external funding into the borough in support of sports and obesity reduction activities.

5.1.5 Substance misuse

Substance misuse services assist us to prevent and minimise the risk of harm of substance misuse to young people, their families and communities. Given the significant budget savings that have to be found across the council, savings in this area are proposed. The financial plan for 2013/14 agreed in February 2012, includes £150,000 of savings for substance misuse. However, in line with our priorities, a smaller reduction of £84,000 is now proposed, with savings found through efficiencies in other areas instead.

5.1.5.1 Proposal 3: Re-tender contract for young people's substance misuse services to provide better value for money and reduce commissioned services for supporting and preventing substance misuse. We would seek to mitigate the impact of this through more integration with our family focus team and the family support workers within our early intervention and prevention service.
Proposed saving: £84,000

42 people responded to the online survey. A summary of responses is shown in the table below.

Proposal	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
3	0%	35.3%	35.3%	5.9%	23.5%	0%

60 children and young people between the ages of 10 and 24 responded to the young people's survey online and in hard copy. Their views are represented in the table below.

Proposal	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
3	0%	20%	25%	45%	8%	2%

5.1.5.2 Feedback

Many respondents to this proposal were concerned about the specific experience and expertise that could be offered by Family Focus workers and felt that signposting to more specialist workers was a more realistic expectation of these members of staff. In particular there were concerns that this proposal may put at risk the Council's ability to reach more families with complex needs through the Family Focus team as a result of a reduction in capacity elsewhere.

Some respondents highly valued the current specialist provision and hoped that the best aspects of this would be retained. There were suggestions around widening the expertise of the third sector to provide alternative methods of engagement such as pod casts and peer-to-peer training.

5.1.5.3 Response to consultation

It is acknowledged that only some support for young people with substance misuse issues would be provided by family support workers, and that support would also be provided through clear signposting to national and any remaining London resources, which may help to partially mitigate the impact of the proposal. From April 2013 the funding for providing substance misuse services sits with public health and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). It is possible that a small substance misuse service for young people in Barnet may remain, but this is dependent on these funding sources, the extent of which is not currently known. The Children's Service is working actively with colleagues and partners on this.

5.1.5.4 Overall

It is now proposed to find almost half (48%) of the Children's Service budget savings through efficiencies. This includes reducing transport costs for children with SEN and children in care through better demand management and contracting, restructuring and reducing back office functions and the complex needs/SEN team, and carrying out services differently, for example, the way we carry out parenting assessments. Small increases in fees and charges related to children's centres are proposed. Savings are also anticipated from our investment in early intervention and prevention.

5.1.5.5 Feedback

Schools were keen to understand how their feedback from previous budget consultation had been taken into account. They were concerned about the impact the proposed reconfiguration of SEN might have on them and wanted to be updated on early intervention and prevention work.

Online respondents noted the need for the Council to make as many 'invisible' reductions as possible and drew attention to levels of spend on 'back office' functions including consultants.

There were significant concerns over ongoing reductions to youth services, and many respondents were keen to maintain these services, having had good experiences with them in the past. Attention was also drawn to the suspected impact of the welfare reforms on young people and the possibility of many being in greater hardship and therefore requiring more support.

Young people felt especially strongly that the growing population of children and young people in the borough meant that expenditure should be reduced in other areas that won't affect the future and support we currently have for children.

The Labour Group in particular fed back that reductions adversely and unfairly targeted youth services, where previous reductions have also been made. It was felt that this could not be sustained without disadvantaging large numbers of children and young people who required these services.

5.1.5.6 Response to consultation

Schools' feedback from the 2011/12 budget consultation process has informed the strategy around educational psychology time and resulted in the retention of targeted mental health support in secondary schools.

At this stage it is difficult to quantify the exact impact of reconfiguring SEN business processes on schools, although this would not impact on schools' budgets, which are governed by a national funding formula. Early intervention work has helped reduced numbers of looked after children, needs are being met in less expensive ways and indicators are that savings are being made.

It is acknowledged that youth services have experienced budget reductions in previous years. In recognition of the cumulative impact of this, the originally proposed savings of £958,000 for 2013/14 were revised down to £500,000, with savings found through efficiencies in other areas instead. The charging model for youth and play activities introduced during 2012/13 has been designed to help ensure that youth and play activities remain available to young people who are not identified as target groups, so that limited resources can be targeted towards those most in need.

5.2 ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND REGENERATION CONSULTATION

5.2.1 EPR Fees and Charges

Notifications in respect of annual increases to fees and charges across a range of EPR services were the subject of public consultation from 8 November to 21 December 2012. This enabled all residents to be made aware of the proposed increase in charges and their applicable date of change and invited feedback and comments prior to implementation.

Response to the survey

No response or feedback was received for any of the fees and charges proposed in the published schedule during the course of the public consultation. However, 10 responses were received in the publicised consultation mailbox in connection with allotment rents that were the subject of last year's consultation and already approved for implementation.

Key headlines

The majority related to comments on the allotment rent charges due to be implemented on 1 April 2013. One of the responses was an email from the Secretary of the Barnet Federation of Allotment and Horticultural Societies on behalf of allotment societies in Barnet. The comments relate to rent increase proposals that were approved following the 2011/12 budget setting and consultation process and are due to be implemented on 1 April 2013. As a result, they do not fall within the scope of the recently concluded fees and charges consultation. [Allotment rent increases are consulted on a year in advance of the proposed implementation].

The general sentiment of the majority of respondents (in the allotments community) is that the approved fee increase due to be implemented for 2013/2014 is unjustified, unfair and potentially detrimental to the council's reputation. They are calling for the allotment rent increases to be abandoned or delayed to ensure that the existing project to transition allotment sites to self management is fully completed.

However, the council is confident that the majority of the allotment portfolio will have transferred by April 2013. The council has committed resources to ensure that the process of transferring management of allotment sites across the borough meets this deadline. Any site which hasn't opted for the self management model will be subject to the new rent structure as approved in the Delegated Powers Report 1624 dated 29 March 2012. That report has also dealt with the Equalities Impact Assessment and council's response to the consultation representations.

APPENDIX A: Residents Perception Survey 2012

1. Summary

Barnet is making **£72.5m savings** between 2011 and 2015 and major changes to how we operate. Despite these pressures, the Residents' Perception Survey shows a broadly positive direction.

This Residents' Perception Survey (November 2012) provides an update from 2010/11. The survey has a large sample – 1600 residents. It is worth noting that the updated RPS was conducted in November; compared to the 2010/11 survey being conducted in February 2011. Differing weather conditions may influence some place-related satisfaction.

- Satisfaction with the local area is improving. Residents are more likely to think the council is doing a good job, offering value for money and improving their area than two years ago.

- Despite significant cuts and challenging local press coverage, overall satisfaction with the council - and the majority of services - is moving in right direction.

- However, the results suggest some challenges relating to perception of crime (including fear of crime after dark and a potential need to hold the police to account more effectively), anti-social behaviour and decreasing satisfaction with some specific services such as street cleanliness, leisure and Council Tax/housing benefit.

- Satisfaction with the council, the perception of the council's engagement with residents and the image of council has improved. Although Barnet is moving in a positive direction, we remain below the average for London authorities in terms of image and engagement.

2. Key Headlines

Overall satisfaction with the local area remains high and significantly above the national average

- The vast majority of residents (88 per cent) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live which is two per cent higher compared to 2010/11 (86 per cent) and is significantly higher than the national average (+ four per cent).

2.1 Residents' top three concerns have shifted slightly since 2010/11

- The top three concerns for Barnet residents are crime (31 per cent), conditions of roads and pavements (26 per cent) and level of Council Tax (23 per cent).
- In 2010/11 the top three concerns were conditions of roads and pavements, crime, and rising prices and interest rates.
- However, residents are also now more concerned with traffic congestion, litter and dirty streets, and lack of affordable housing compared to 2010/11.

- Crime, lack of affordable housing, lack of jobs, litter/dirty streets, the number of homeless people and poor public transport are much more of a concern for London compared to Barnet .
- Barnet residents are not significantly more concerned than London on any issues that were listed.

2.2 Overall satisfaction with the council is improving but still below the London average

- Overall satisfaction with the council has seen a significant increase since 2010/11 (63 per cent, +12 per cent). Caution should be applied when comparing the results of this question to 2010/11 due to a methodological change, as the placement of the question was moved within the survey to ensure consistency with other local authorities.
- Barnet is still four per cent below the London average for satisfaction with the council, five per cent below the outer London average and nine per cent below the national average.
- As with previous surveys, residents are much more likely to say they feel the council is doing a good job (72 per cent, up one per cent since 2010/11) compared to being satisfied with the council (63 per cent).

2.3. Residents' satisfaction with the majority of council services has improved

- Nine of our services saw significant increases in satisfaction compared to 2010/11 and the majority of these out performed outer London:

Repairs of roads	Social services adults	Parks, playgrounds and open spaces
Primary education	Social services children	Quality of pavements
Nursery education	Secondary education	Housing Benefit Service

- The RPS results indicate that Barnet is a place people want to live. However, four of our services saw significant decreases in satisfaction and three out of five are significantly below the outer London average. Not surprisingly:
  - parking services are down four per cent and is 11 per cent below the London average
  - council leisure facilities are down 4 per cent and is 16 per cent below the London average
  - Libraries are down three per cent and is 1 per cent below the London average;
  - Street cleaning is down three per cent and is 1 per cent below the London average.
- On the last point of street cleaning, it is worth noting that concern for litter and dirty streets is a theme that is echoed throughout this year's survey results.
- Three fifths (59 per cent) of residents who have contacted the council are satisfied with the service they received. However a further one quarter is dissatisfied.

2.3 The image of the council has seen a positive direction of travel compared to 2010/11, but many measures also remain below the London average

- Significant increases have been seen on six perception measures since 2010/11, five have remained consistent with 2010/11 and one perception measure has had a significant decrease.
- Compared to 2010/11, residents are significantly more likely to think the council is offering better value for money, is working to improving the local area, doing a better job than a year ago, involving residents when making decisions, listening to concerns of local residents and responding quickly when asked for help.
- However, with the exception of value for money, Barnet does not out perform the London benchmark on any image statements. Barnet's improvement against six image measures gives a positive direction. However, despite these improvements, the image of the council remains significantly below the London average.
- 'My council doesn't do enough for people like me'[3] was the only image statement that experienced a significant decline (plus five per cent, but in line with the outer London average).
- Other image statements that are in line with 2010/11 but performing worse than London are 'efficient and well run' and 'keeps residents informed about what they are doing'.

2.6 Community and cohesion perception measures remain high in Barnet

- There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of residents saying they volunteer compared to 2010/11 (an increase of 4 per cent).

2.7 There is a less positive picture for community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour

- Perception measures on feeling safe during the day remain very high, however perception on feeling safe during the night has seen significant drop since 2010/11.
- Anti-social behaviour, rubbish or litter lying around continues to be a top concern in the local area and has seen a significant increase since 2010/11. However people using or dealing with drugs is becoming more of a concern.[4]
- Satisfaction with Barnet Police and the council dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime in the local area have seen a significant drop since 2010/11.

3. Methodology

The survey was conducted on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet by ORS Ltd, an independent market research company.

Fieldwork took place from 1 October to 12 November 2012 with a representative sample of just over 1,600 residents from across Barnet. Telephone interviews were conducted using quota sampling to ensure the sample was representative of the wider population of Barnet. Quotas were set on age, gender, ethnic origin and housing tenure and were based on 2011 GLA population estimates. The data was

[3] This is a negative question so an increase in this perception is downward change

then weighted to correct any small discrepancies in terms of Barnet's actual population.

4. Trend, regional and bench mark comparisons

Trend data has been taken from Barnet's previous Residents' Perception Survey (last conducted in 10/11) and the former Annual Residents' Attitude Surveys (15 years of trend data and last conducted in 2007/08).

Some regional comparisons to London and national data have been made with the Survey of Londoners (12/13, TNS) conducted in October 2012 and the national Populous Survey (12/13) conducted from July to September 2012.

Further comparisons have been made to the former statutory Place and BVPI surveys; however caution should be applied when making direct comparisons to these former statutory surveys due to the different methodologies used.

APPENDIX B: Sense of Place research

1. Background

The Sense of Place research project was commissioned by Barnet Council in summer 2012 to explore how residents could be encouraged to do more in their local communities, and to explore ways to redefine the relationship between residents and citizens.

It was carried out in four wards selected to broadly represent Barnet's diverse localities: West Finchley, East Barnet, Burnt Oak and Garden Suburb.

The findings in this report are based on 1600 surveys with residents (split between the four wards), 51 surveys with frontline staff who work in these areas, 77 surveys with businesses, 12 discussion groups with residents, two discussion groups with staff, and two deliberative events.

2. Headline findings

2.1 Satisfaction with local area

- Satisfaction levels with area are consistently high except for Burnt Oak, where they were almost a third lower than the average for other areas (60% satisfaction in Burnt Oak versus 81% - 90% in other wards).

- There is a significant correlation between satisfaction and age – **satisfaction peaks for ages 35 to 44 and for people aged over 75.**

- Satisfaction was lowest among **those aged 55 to 64 (76%) and those aged 45 to 54 (79%).**

- 78% of respondents said that they feel their area is a place where people from different backgrounds and cultures get on well together, 11% disagreed. People who describe their ethnicity as White British were less likely to believe that their area is a place where people get on well than people from ethnic minorities.

- Burnt Oak residents are much less likely to believe that their area is a place where people from different backgrounds and cultures get on well together, with concerns over make up of the high street and integration of new communities raised as concerns.

2.2 Area-specific findings

- ***Burnt Oak*****:** Residents **valued shops, parks and green spaces, and transport links**. Parks were named by a lower proportion of people than the average for Barnet. People also valued the friendliness of the community and its diversity. The **most common things people wanted to change in Burnt Oak were the upkeep of the area and levels of anti-social behaviour**, particularly on the streets around the station. Some people also felt that the area was a less attractive shopping destination than it had been. There was some disagreement between residents about whether Burnt Oak has a sense of community.

- ***West Finchley*:** Residents **valued transport, parks and green spaces and shops**, and 'other services' such as children's centres or refuse collection. People were more positive about their area than in Burnt Oak. **Parking was an area where people advocated change**. Others felt that the area did **not have the right balance of shops**, and this meant that it was **less attractive** than it had been. Delegates were almost unanimous that the area has a good sense of community; though some people did feel that the area was changing, and that changing tenure patterns meant that population turnover was increasing.

- ***East Barnet*:** Residents were the most positive about their area in both discussion groups and surveys. **Parks and green spaces were by far the most popular** thing about the area, followed by shops – many people specifically referred to the fact that there are many local and independent shops, the library and the village feel. The **two most significant issues for residents were around anti-social behaviour and parking.** Several said that young people hanging around on the streets were a problem, and some reported drug dealing on their roads and problems with a particular pub. East Barnet residents had the **strongest belief that there was community spirit. People often connected this with the 'rural' or 'village' nature of the area.** A few people felt that sense of community was declining, this tended to be based on changing tenure patterns.

- ***Hampstead Garden Suburb*:** Residents of Garden Suburb particularly valued **shops, safety, and parks and green spaces** – particularly Hampstead Heath and the trees and green squares within the Suburb itself. Responses were more widely distributed than in the other three areas: **transport, sense of community, and the clean and peaceful nature of the area** also scored highly. Concerns about Garden Suburb were generally based on either the **lack of facilities in the area or on the speed of traffic**. Many people were unhappy about the relocation of the Institute and some regretted the lack of a secondary school for boys and girls which admits local children. Perceptions of sense of community in Garden Suburb were varied. Broadly, people who had lived in the area for longer tended to feel that it had a sense of community (although some of these felt it was declining), whereas newer residents tended to believe the opposite.

2.3 Knowledge and awareness of cuts

- **28% of residents were unaware that Barnet Council was making cuts**; 21% had experienced an impact and a further 27% fear an impact.
- **Over half of businesses (57%) said that they were unaware that Barnet Council was making cuts.** There was also confusion about what services are provided by the council – for example, over a quarter of businesses said that the council could help them by improving policing.
- This suggests that the council's work to prevent deep cuts to frontline services may have been broadly effective – although it is possible that this will change in the future with further reductions. However, it also creates a challenge: if residents don't realise that the current arrangement is broken and cuts are being made, negotiating a new deal will be a challenge.
- In terms of differences in attitude between local areas, **respondents in Burnt Oak were more than twice as likely to feel that their area was not treated fairly in terms of resource allocation, although they also felt most able to influence**

local decisions. Interestingly, respondents from Garden Suburb said they felt least able to influence local decisions.

2.4 Volunteering

- **The majority of Barnet residents have been involved in volunteering (40%) and/or informal caring (62%)** in the last year. This is true in all the areas we studied and of all age groups. Only 27% said that they were not involved in either.
- Both volunteering and caring are carried out by people of all ages, but **volunteering peaks for younger people and people aged 65 to 74**, probably because these groups are less likely to be economically active. Caring peaks at aged 45 to 54.
- The level of **help that people give varies** (from helping a neighbour with gardening a few times a year to providing full time care, from occasional involvement with school activities to weekly commitments), but there is a strong pattern of willingness to help.
- **Most people are reluctant to volunteer 'for the council'**. This tends to be because they feel this should not be their job, because they fear taking jobs from paid staff, and less loyalty to the council. However, **people will volunteer for council-run services like schools and children's centres**.
- Most people's motivations for volunteering include a mixture of some or all of enjoyment of the task, social pressure, belief in the cause, and extrinsic motivations – such as improving their CV.
- When presented with specific lists of volunteering opportunities, **more people said that they were interested in person-centric volunteering.**
- Common barriers to volunteering include difficulty finding out about local opportunities, a perception of excessive bureaucracy, and a fear that people could be forced to commit to something unsustainable which the recipient came to rely on.

2.5 Civic engagement

- The proportion of people agreeing or strongly agreeing that they have influence on decisions relating to their local area was relatively consistent across wards (33% to 38% agreement) except for Garden Suburb (26%). Conversely, Burnt Oak had the lowest rate of participation in local decision-making.

2.6 Profile of Barnet residents by 'Values'

- People living in our four research wards are more likely than people in the rest of England to be 'Prospectors'. This means that they are more likely to be motivated by self-esteem, esteem from others, and financial success. **'Prospectors' are the largest group in every ward and comprise at least 48% of the population** in all areas, and 51% overall. This compares to a national average of about 23%.
- The next largest group are '**Pioneers**', who tend to be motivated by ethics, aesthetics and making the world a better place. These make up about a third of the population, slightly lower than the national average of about 39%.

- The smallest group are '**Settlers**', who are motivated by tradition, safety, security and belonging. These make up about a sixth of the population of our four wards, rising to 22% in Burnt Oak. This compares to a national average of about 38%.

- White British people are much less likely than people from other ethnic groups to be 'Prospectors', and more likely to be 'Settlers' (20% versus 13% non-white British).

- 'Settlers' are more likely to be council or housing association tenants, and 'Pioneers' are more likely to own their own homes.

2.7 Businesses

We asked 77 local businesses across the four wards for their views on the council and community involvement. A third of these were branches of national or international organisations, and a third were local companies.

- Just under half of businesses were satisfied with their local area as a place to do business, but this varied significantly: 80% of branches of large firms, but only 31% of local companies.
- Parking emerged as the largest issue for businesses across Barnet – unprompted, 63% said that the council could help their business do better by changing parking restrictions or providing more parking. Concern about parking was highest in West Finchley and lowest in East Barnet.
- Just over half of all business people said that their company is involved in helping their community. This was highest for companies/branches with over 10 employees? and companies which are part of wider organisations. However, two in five sole traders and about half of smaller businesses were also involved.
- The most common ways to help were through charitable donations and free/products of services, but responses were very varied: from lawyers offering pro-bono work for vulnerable residents to a party goods company giving products to the local hospice.
- Despite this high level of current engagement, many businesses struggled to say how they could be encouraged to do more – this was often because of a very difficult financial environment.