

## Appendix C

### Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee

#### Consultation findings

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the key findings from the 2015/16 Budget and Strategic Plan to 2020 consultation from across the council as well as more detail on the findings from the Community Leadership Committee. It also includes the full findings from the Special Educational Needs Transport consultation.

For more information on the background and method to the consultation you can read the full consultation paper [here](#).

The consultation involved three strands;

- General budget consultation on the 2015/16 budget
- Service specific 2015/16 proposals: Special Educational Needs Transport
- Strategic Plan to 2020: Corporate Plan Priorities, Theme Committee Commissioning Plans, and the overall MTFs from 2015 - 2020

##### **a. Responses to the survey**

A total of 333 people took part in the three strands – with 181 completing the various online surveys as part of the open consultation (61 for 2015/16 budget, 28 for Strategic Plan to 2020 and 92 for SEN Schools transport) and 149 taking part in the Strategic Plan to 2020 workshops.

As part of the consultation residents from the Citizen's Panel, a group of 2000 residents who are statistically representative of the population of Barnet, were targeted to ensure a consultation responses reflected Barnet's demographics. A further quota was set to ensure, as much as possible, a cross section of the population attended the workshops from the panel. Moreover, two workshops were arranged with service users, including those who use children's services, to ensure those who use targeted services got the opportunity to feed into the consultation.

As the response rate to the Strategic Plan to 2020 consultation was only 28 respondents, it is not possible to determine whether certain protected groups supported certain proposals more than other protected groups. Moreover, the characteristics of the 17 respondents to the Children, Education, Safeguarding and Libraries Committee questions cannot be broken down from the 28 making analysis of individual committee respondents impossible.

## 2. FULL COUNCIL FINDINGS

### STRAND 1: Open Consultation on 2015/16 Budget Savings

In total 61 questionnaires were submitted on the 2015/16 budget. Over two-thirds of respondents (34 of the 56 respondents) disagreed with the council's proposed savings in terms of balance between efficiency savings, income generation and cuts to services, with only 8 of the 56 respondents believing the council had got the right balance.

The key reasons for people disagreeing with the balance of savings were;

- Services cannot be reduced
- Council Tax should be increased
- Library service should not be cut.

In regard to Council Tax for 2015/16, the majority of respondents to the open consultation disagreed with the council's proposal to freeze Council Tax, with residents stating that a small increase could support services, with a particular focus on preservation of the library service.

In regard to comments on the balance of savings for each committee respondents felt;

- The council should increase Council Tax
- Cuts are too heavy, with a particular objection to reductions in the Adults and Safeguarding budget and the Library service.

Both the 2015/16 Budget savings and Strategic Plan to 2020 consultation were open at the same time as other major consultations such as the Library Strategy Consultation. It is reasonable to assume that some residents have responded to the three strands of this consultation programme as well as the individual service specific consultations.

From the comments received as part of the consultation it is evident residents have used the vehicle of these consultations to make clear their feelings on the proposed reduction in funding to the library service.

### STRAND 2: Open Consultation on Special Education Needs Schools Transport

Of the 92 respondents to the SEN Transport consultation, the most popular part of the council's approach to help make the necessary SEN savings was *'Parents should be able to explain their child's individual needs and transport preferences before individual travel plans are completed.'* The least supported element of the council's approach was *'where possible parents should be encouraged and supported to be travel escorts for their child'* (18 respondents)

Where people disagreed with the response, the most prominent response emphasised how important escorts were for children and the safety of the individuals and others and that public transport was not a suitable option (24 respondents).

Suggestions for ways to make savings included making cuts elsewhere, planning bus journeys better and increasing council tax.

General feedback that there had been no problems with current service and it is working well.

*Full findings are found in section 4 (page 12) of this document.*

### **STAND 3: Workshops for Strategic Plan to 2020**

The workshops found that when residents had to prioritise services in the context of the financial restraints the council is under, residents' priorities broadly matched the council's current proposals for savings up to 2020.

It was clear from the workshops that residents prioritised targeted support for vulnerable children and adults over universal services such as waste collection and libraries. In general, residents wanted the council to make less reduction to adults and children's service budgets and slightly more savings for Environment Committee.

The findings of the workshops stand in contrast with both the open consultation and the Residents' Perception Survey, where the larger numbers of users of universal services naturally leads to these services being given greater importance in quantitative surveys.

The greater review and discussion of services in the workshops, and the prioritisation of services and funding that the workshops demanded led residents to accept compromises in universal services in order to protect services for the most vulnerable.

#### **a. Key Themes**

##### **Support to the most vulnerable is a priority**

Across all workshops there was a strong belief that the council should target support at the most vulnerable, findings which match those from the first round of the Priorities and Spending Review in 2014. The majority of residents' priorities can be summarised by the following comment on emergency temporary housing for the homeless;

*"These are the most vulnerable people in our society. If we can't help them what's the point?"*

##### **Prevention is a good use of resources**

The workshops which focused on services for adults and children saw residents prioritise services that supported the prevention agenda as well as the most vulnerable;

*"Prevention is better than cure. I think the more one can support those families to get through the year, the better the outcome, the less will be required from the council."*

Prevention proved popular in the context of potential cuts as residents thought that prioritising prevention services could reduce the cost to the council in the long term and improve the outcomes for those supported. This was felt to be both just, and a good use of resources.

### **The importance of a safe environment**

Safety was an underlying theme of why many residents prioritised services. This was especially evident in the learning disability workshop. Safety was an issue in regard to safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children as well as safety for all residents through universal services such as street lighting and street cleansing.

Resident's emphasised the importance of street lighting because: *"If you have lights on you are actually saving lives"*.

#### **b. Theme Committee Priorities**

The focus of the workshops was on those services which most impact on residents, these were generally services within the remit of Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding; Adults and Safeguarding; and Environment Committees.

### **Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding**

As part of the workshop focused on Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, residents prioritised the following services;

- Children's mental health
- Short Breaks
- Support for young adults leaving care.

Those services which attendees felt, within the context of council's reductions, had the most potential for savings were;

- Educational support to schools
- Special Educational Needs transport
- Libraries
- Children's Centres.

In later discussions residents still emphasised the importance of these services, but in context they were seen as more palatable options to reduce costs.

For example, although people in the workshops were supportive of libraries as a service, they were not seen as a priority when compared to targeted services which supported the vulnerable. This was a theme not only when focusing on the **Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding** Committee but also in the context of wider council services.

As each specific proposal within the remit of the CELS committee is bought forward, individual consultations will be conducted. The library proposal is currently under

active consideration and the outcomes of the library consultation will be reported to the CELS committee in June.

Resident's preference within the workshops was to make less service reductions in the remit of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee than the council has proposed.

### Adults and Safeguarding

As part of the workshop focused on the Adults and Safeguarding Committee, residents prioritised the following services;

- Support offered to carers
- Preventative work for people with learning disabilities
- Short term and residential care for people with mental health issues
- Support to community/voluntary groups for the elderly
- Direct payments for people with physical disabilities
- Leisure centres.

Those services which attendees felt, within the context of council's reductions, had the most potential for savings were the more expensive services of;

- Supporting older people in their homes
- Residential care for older people.

Again there was an emphasis on prevention, with one resident stating that (in regard to short term mental health support): *"It's much better in cost terms than rehabilitation. Short term they can improve and get better rather than, possibly, being institutionalised"*.

Resident's preference was to make less service reduction in the remit of the Adults and Safeguarding Committee than the council has proposed.

### Environment Committee

As part of the workshop focused on Environment Committee, residents prioritised the following services;

- Street lighting

Those services which attendees felt, within the context of the council's reductions, had the most potential for savings were the more expensive services of;

- Rubbish and recycling collection
- Town centre cleaning
- Green waste
- Management of the council's bowling greens.

Residents, on balance, prioritised residential street cleaning over town centres, whilst the main reason for prioritising street lighting was to protect safety. Residents saw the commercial benefit of increasing the number of events in parks but would be worried if a lot of access to parks was not available to the general public.

On balance, the view seemed to be that a fortnightly rubbish collection was good idea, but a weekly collection of recyclables should remain. It was felt by many that this policy may encourage more recycling.

Residents preferred was to make slightly more savings from the Environment Committee budget than the council has proposed, with residents preferring to prioritise services which supported vulnerable children and adults.

### **c. Barnet's 'Commissioning Council' Approach**

Participants were asked to give their views on the council's 'Commissioning Council' approach. This means that the council's primary concern is about the quality of local services, whether they achieve stated outcomes and whether they are value for money, rather than how services are delivered and by whom. Generally as part of the workshop there was an acceptance (rather than endorsement) of the concept, but with a concern about whether the council would have the management capacity or skills to manage a broad and range of contracts.

There was a general agreement with the principle of the Commissioning Council model and the following comments give a good summary of the discussion and opinion;

*"It's all right by me as long as it's done properly with proper controls and transparency"*

*"I think that's completely unrealistic. In principle, in theory, if it's done to the same quality, yes ....but that's not what happens."*

*"As long as the service remains the same it's not detrimental"*

Key concerns were about accountability, especially in regard to private sector organisations with a level of mistrust about large businesses being involved in the delivery of core council services.

In contrast to the workshops, respondents to the open consultation appear to be more negative about the commissioning approach, with 13 out of 23 respondents being strongly opposed to this approach, with only 6 out of 11 respondents either strongly or tended to support this commissioning model.

### **d. Council Tax**

Within the workshops, the majority of respondents attended from the Citizens' Panel were supportive of increasing Council Tax, compared to only a third of the service

users who attended workshops, where the majority of attendees preferred a freeze on Council Tax.

The key reason for choosing an increase in Council Tax was that they felt that it was value for money to pay slightly more per resident but minimise cuts to services. Those that chose to freeze or reduce Council Tax felt that Barnet Council Tax was higher than some neighbouring boroughs and was high enough already.

Residents taking part in the open consultation were heavily in favour of raising Council Tax, with the most common responses to open ended questions for each committee being about increasing Council Tax to protect services.

#### **e. Open Consultation on Strategic plan to 2020**

Those who responded online supported the council's four proposed priorities as well as the majority of priorities and outcomes for all the Theme Committees. However, as with the 2015/16 Budget feedback, there was a clear emphasis from residents that service reductions were too large, libraries should be protected and that social housing was a priority.

### **3. CHILDRENS, EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE FINDINGS**

This section covers the findings from the Strategic Plan to 2020 consultation. 17 residents responded to the open consultation online survey for this committee, compared to 18 residents took part in the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding focussed workshop.

#### **a. Open Consultation**

#### **Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee's Priorities**

The vast majority of respondents (15 out of 17 respondents) agreed with all of the priorities that have been identified.

- Ensure Barnet remains one of the best places in the country for children to grow up
- Support children and families who currently do less well in life to overcome barriers to success, thus allowing all children the opportunity to thrive
- Make sure children and young people are safe in their homes, schools and around the borough.

Some residents commented that the priorities were vague and therefore hard to disagree with, whilst other raised issues on particular services or issues they felt were important.

#### **Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee's Outcomes**

When asked how much they agreed with the outcomes that have been identified within the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee, the majority



(12 out of 16 or more) agreed with all of the outcomes on Safeguarding, Education, Health and Wellbeing, Preparation for Adulthood, and Parenting and Libraries.

Some residents commented on the outcomes, with a focus on particular services, including libraries (2 respondents), foster care and work placements for young children with disabilities.

### **Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee's Approach**

Respondents were asked how much they agreed with the approach that has been identified within the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee. Whilst over half (9 out of 16 respondents) agree with the approach of 'Target support to those who need it to allow opportunity for all', only 5 out of 16 respondents agreed with the approach 'Explore alternative ways to deliver services, in partnership with other organisations and residents' and only 2 out of 15 respondents agreed with the approach of 'Give people more choice and control over their services'.

4 respondents raised issues, stating that the council should put up the community charge, remove Capita and that services should remain in-house, as well as specific concerns raised about libraries.

### **Balance of savings**

Respondents were asked how much they agreed that the Committee has identified the right balance of savings in order to achieve its priorities. There was a mixed response with almost half of the respondents (9 out of 16) disagreeing, while over a third (5 out of 13) agreed and the remaining two respondents were neutral in their response.

Some residents felt that children with disabilities should be protected, whilst others libraries should be protected (3 respondents).

### **b. Workshop Findings**

18 residents took part in the Children's, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding focussed workshop. In this workshop residents prioritised services that supported the most vulnerable as well as prevention services, as summed up in the quote below; *"Prevention is better than cure. I think the more one can support those families to get through the year, the better the outcome, the less will be required from the council."* Increasing current support (to meet demographic growth) for children with mental health was clearly a high priority for respondents, as was protecting the caseload of child protection social workers.

Maintaining the current service for libraries, children's centres and education support were the least popular.

In regard to savings, residents' preference was for a similar level of savings as the approximate allocated savings for the council.

The services which were prioritised by the Citizen's Panel members were;



- Children’s mental health services
- Short breaks services (respite care)
- Leaving care
- Child Protection Social worker caseloads
- Youth offending
- Troubled Families.

The services which saw the biggest reduction were;

- Libraries
- Educational support
- Special Educational Needs transport
- Fostering and adoption
- Children’s Centres.

The table below summarises discussion on each service as well as selected quotations from residents, which aim to give a flavour of the discussions.

Area	Feedback and example comments
<p><b>Educational support to schools</b></p> <p>Includes school improvement, special educational needs support, school admission and catering</p>	<p>Those with children of school age were particularly likely to prioritise this service. One thought Barnet provided excellent education that was “the envy of the rest of London” but another thought “they don’t get enough (funding) now so should not be cutting back” and quoted the extent of community fund raising that was carried out to get “extra things” for schools. Both opinions expressed were expressions of the desire to ensure the quality of Barnet education and maintain current standards.</p>
<p><b>Family respite care short breaks</b></p> <p>Providing short breaks for children with disabilities to spend time away from their main carers</p>	<p>There was a strong consensus on why residents had prioritised this service, summed up below;</p> <p><i>“Prevention is better than cure. I think the more one can support those families to get through the year, the better the outcome, the less will be required from the council.”</i></p>
<p><b>Special educational needs transport</b></p> <p>Supporting children with disabilities to get from home to school</p>	<p>Placing children with disabilities at local schools was generally considered to be the best option.</p> <p><i>“Families with children with disabilities are under a great of pressure and this can become an absolutely huge problem out of all proportion to how it seems on paper. Because it is all about getting their children to the right place at the right time – supporting other children that, perhaps, have to be ferried in the opposite direction and it can create very stressful situations. So it may not seem to be good value for money to some people but I think it is”</i></p>

	<i>"If there wasn't any transport for these children, it would make it difficult for the family carers and the parents"</i>
<p><b>Children's mental health services</b></p> <p>Assessment and treatment for young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties</p>	<p>Increasing funding available to children with mental health issues to support more children (as increase with demographic growth). This linked closely to the widely held opinion that prevention was better than cure.</p> <p><i>"Absolutely, yes, it feeds into things like youth offending. If you've got a troubled child and you are able to speak to him (or her) early and give support, then, hopefully, they don't turn into a troubled adult when you need, as we saw, a big chunk of money spent on social care but maybe if you get them early, they won't need that support"</i></p>
<p><b>Fostering, adoption and residential care</b></p> <p>Supporting children in the borough who need to be taken into care.</p>	<p>It was a very expensive option and this may have inhibited residents. The service options were dominated by mentions of fostering and foster carers and most residents focussed on fostering rather than adoption or residential care.</p> <p><i>"Taking on a child, especially a troubled child, I don't know how much money is too much" and...</i></p> <p><i>"I think when we pay so much money they are not doing it for the right reasons. They are doing it for the money. I know you've got to have that incentive – but sometimes people's priorities change"</i></p>
<p><b>Leaving care team</b></p> <p>Provides support to children leaving the care system</p>	<p>Positive reasons for supporting a smaller case load for the Leaving Care Team focussed on the difficulties facing young people as they came out of care</p> <p><i>"Obviously children in care have particular needs and in order to develop and contribute to society that we all live in and to ensure our future then money needs to be spent to ensure that they are capable of contributing in the way that they should"</i></p>
<p><b>Social workers</b></p> <p>The majority of this budget is spent on social workers who provide child protection services.</p>	<p><i>"You've got to think about the pressure on the social worker and how many of them will leave due to the stress and then the system creaks. No one wants to go into social work anymore because the workload is just so heavy and it's hard to form a relationship with more people. More people fall through the cracks, the more work social workers do."</i></p>
<p><b>Library service</b></p> <p>Libraries budget provides access to information and</p>	<p>Only 3 residents allocated sufficient money (points) to make this a top priority to avoid the worst case scenario of option 1 - 80% less funding. Varying opinions;</p> <p><i>"We've seen so much in Barnet about libraries and things. I</i></p>

<p>literacy for children and adults through a combination of physical libraries buildings, digital access, information and advice and activities.</p>	<p><i>just don't think we want to start shutting more libraries again."</i></p> <p><i>"I just don't see having a physical library is the best use of resources. I think these days a lot of access is in digital form"</i></p> <p><i>"I think the reason why people go to libraries is there is a strong community element and that always used to be an interest"</i></p> <p><i>"It's somewhere different to go and they are trying to close them down. All they want to do is save money, money, money, all the time"</i></p>
<p><b>Children's centres</b></p> <p>Early years funding is mostly spent though children's centres, supporting families with additional needs to live within the community and support children to develop.</p>	<p>This was an expensive option which may have caused some residents to delay prioritising this service, but there was positive response</p> <p><i>"I think this was the area where I spent all my top priorities. If you come from a family where your parents have not been given the right parenting skills – or learnt them – or had their problems in the past - and are not equipped to ... it just effects so much the way you are going to grow up and effect my quality of life. This is the area that deserves most investment"</i></p>
<p><b>Youth offending and targeted support</b></p> <p>Targeted support for young offenders and young people in need to help them turn their lives around</p>	<p>For some this was a key issue – important for both residents and young offenders</p> <p><i>"Youth offending is what makes an area go down. So a poor youth culture in an area makes that an undesirable place to live in. I think another way of looking at it - our youth is our greatest asset and if you are not going to invest in them you are making a mistake."</i></p>
<p><b>Troubled Families</b></p> <p>Supporting troubled families in the borough to help them turn their lives around</p>	<p>Neglecting troubled families can impact the whole community</p> <p><i>"One troubled family can have so many ramifications in other areas – neighbours and everything"</i></p> <p><i>"It feeds into other things – social care and child protection, so focus more on troubled families"</i></p>

## 4. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT FINDINGS

### a. Introduction

The only service consultation that was consulted on as part of Business Plan and Budget Consultation 2015/16 was on Special Education Needs: Home to schools transport savings:

- The consultation was published on the council's engage space <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/> which gave detailed information about the council budget, the challenges the council faces and a hyper link to consultation document on how the savings were going to be addressed. Collection of respondents' views were fed back via an open online self-completion survey. Hard copies were also available on request. Letters were sent out to all parents or carers of children who use SEN home to school transport, explaining the proposal and inviting them to take part in the consultation.
- The questionnaire was also widely promoted through: the December edition of Barnet First; a press release; social media; Community Barnet's Newsletter; Communities Together network, the Youth Board; and various service user groups and partnership boards.

#### 4.1 Response to the survey

In total 92 questionnaires have been submitted via the online survey. No paper copies have been received.

#### 4.2 Demographic Breakdown of savings

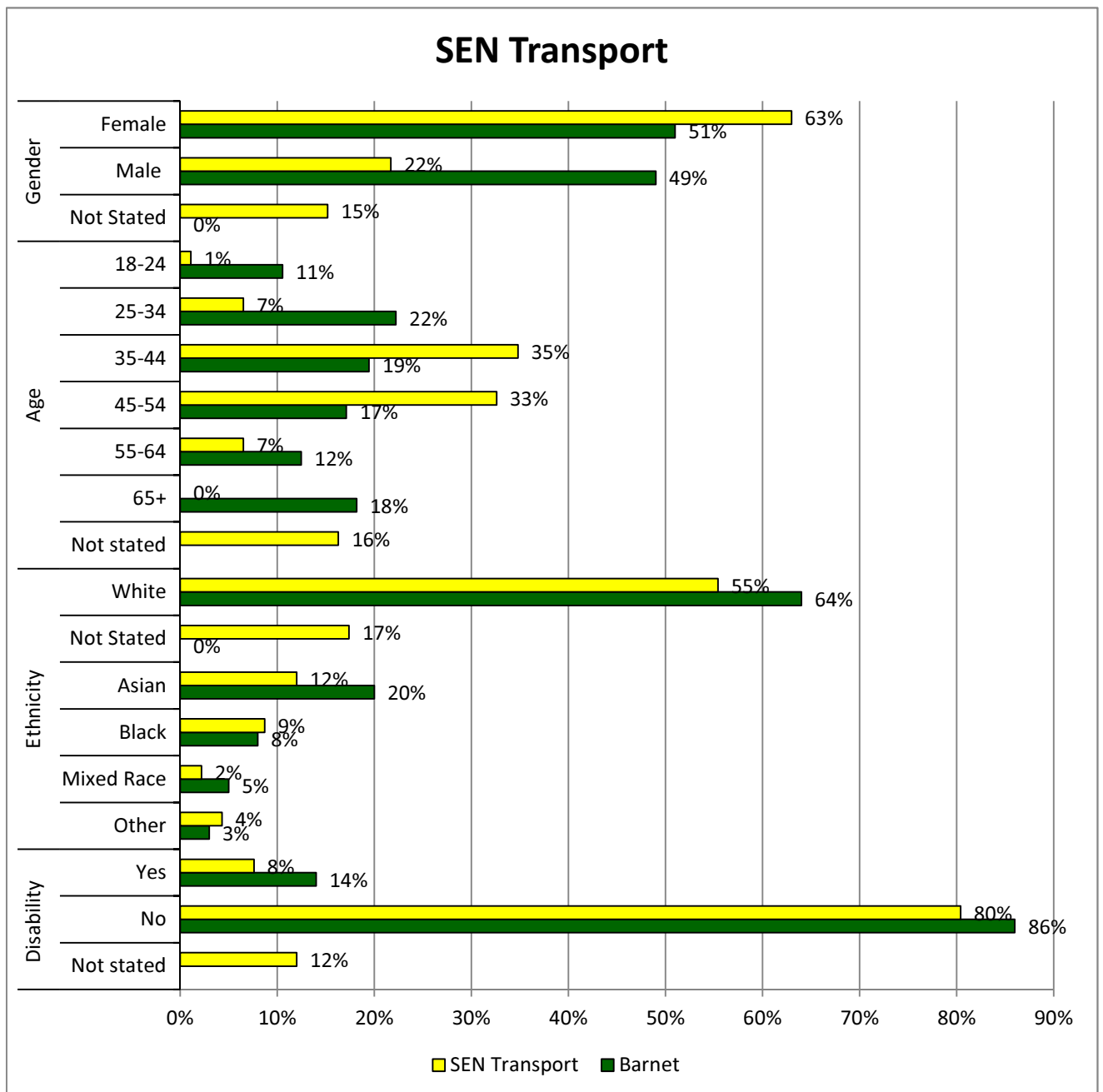
The chart below shows the demographic profile of those who responded to Special Educational Needs: Home to schools transport consultation.

Due to the relatively small number of responses, whilst there has been some analysis of the variations in respondents of the consultation as a whole, there has been minimal analysis on demographic variations for particular questions as the sample size is too small.

The majority of respondents were Barnet Residents (81 of 92 respondents) who were parents/carers for child/ren with Special Educational Needs (91 respondents and went to school in Barnet (86 of 92 respondents). The majority of respondents to the consultation were female (58 of 92 respondents, 63 per cent) compared to the Barnet population of 50 percent. The majority of respondents (63 of 92 respondents, 68 per cent) were between 35 and 54, compared to 37 per cent of Barnet population. 14 per cent of respondents (13 of 92 respondents) stated they had a disability, higher than the 8 per cent of the general population.

In 64 per cent population of Barnet. 11 respondents (12 per cent) were Asian, lower regard to ethnicity, 51 of the 92 respondents (55 per cent) were white, fewer than the than the Barnet population of 20 per cent.

The table below summarises the key protected characteristics where it offers meaningful analysis as part of the consultation.



Of those who responded, 57 were heterosexual, 3 bi-sexual, whilst 17 preferred not to say and 15 skipped the question.

In regard to religion/belief, 31 respondents were Christian (38 per cent), 15 Jewish (18 per cent), 8 had no religion (10 per cent), 7 Hindu (9 per cent) and 4 Muslim (5 per cent). 12 preferred not to say and 10 skipped the question.

There were no respondents who were pregnant or on maternity leave, 7 respondents (9 per cent of those who answered the question) who identified themselves as having a disability.

The table below summarises the key protected characteristics where it offers meaningful analysis as part of the consultation.

Those who responded saying they had a disability listed the following;

<b>Please select the definition/s from the list below that best describes your disability/disabilities: (Please tick all that apply)</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Vision (such as blind or fractional/partial sight. Does not include people whose visual problems can be corrected by glasses/contact lenses)	1
Speech (such as impairments that can cause communication problems)	2
Mobility (such as wheelchair user, artificial lower limb(s), walking aids, rheumatism or arthritis)	3
Physical co-ordination (such as manual dexterity, muscular control, cerebral palsy)	1
Learning difficulties (such as dyslexia)	4
Mental illness (substantial and lasting more than a year, such as severe depression or psychosis)	1
Prefer not to say	1
Other (please specify)	1
<b><i>answered question</i> 7</b>	
<b><i>skipped question</i> 85</b>	

## 5. Detailed findings

The council plans to make the £500,000 savings from its home to school transport budget through a mixture of efficiencies, placing more children locally so that transport is not required and working with parents to better plan the arrangements for their child's journeys to school.

A project has been established to find efficiencies in the way services are provided, such as how bus routes are planned, which services are run directly by the council and which are delivered by other providers. This consultation does not cover that work, as these efficiencies will not directly impact the nature of the service to users,

but focuses instead on working more closely with parents to plan, resulting in, for example, an increase in the number of pupils who can travel independently and tailoring the assistance required more closely to individual needs.

Parents were informed that the council believes it can contribute to the required savings by careful application of existing policies and through a closer dialogue with parents and carers.

Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with various elements of the approach.

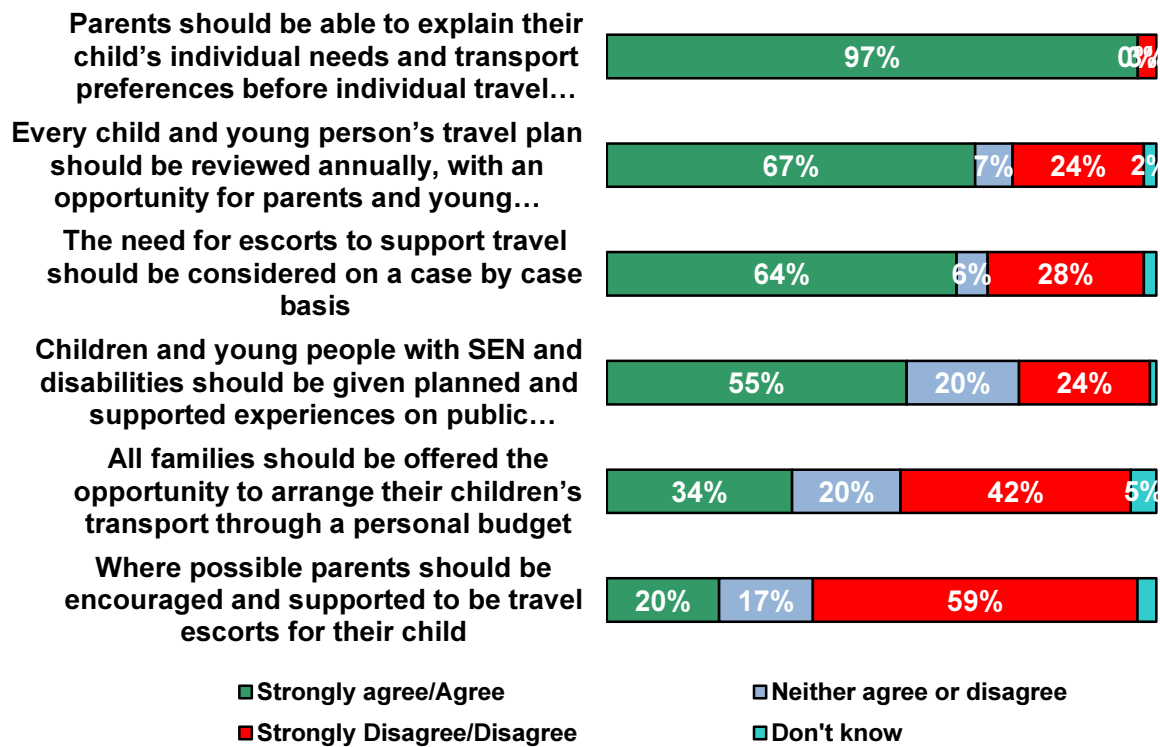
### **Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our planned approach in ensuring there is a closer dialogue with parents and carers?**

The chart below shows the most popular part of the council's approach to help make the necessary SEN savings was '*Parents should be able to explain their child's individual needs and transport preferences before individual travel plans are completed*' (89 of 92 respondents agreed with this). This was followed by '*Every child and young person's travel plan should be reviewed annually with an opportunity for parents and young people to take part*' (62 of 92 respondents agree).

Over half (59 of 92 respondents) agree with '*The need for escorts to support travel should be considered on a case by case basis*'. 26 of 92 respondents disagreed and the remainder were neutral (7 respondents).

There was much less support for '*All families should be offered the opportunity to arrange their children's transport through a personal budget*' with only 31 out of 92 respondents agreeing with this. Even fewer agree with '*where possible parents should be encouraged and supported to be travel escorts for their child*' (18 respondents)





**Question 2: Following this question, respondents were asked to say whether they disagreed with any of the above and to give reasons why;**

The most prominent response emphasised how important escorts were for children and the safety of the individuals and others and that public transport was not considered a suitable option (24 respondents).

Other respondents focused on the impact on a parent's ability to work and the potential impact on parents emotionally and physically (22 respondents).

Some parents (15 respondents) emphasised that minibuses were the best safest and most cost effective method of transporting children to school.

The table below gives further detail on the responses;

<b>whether they disagreed with any of the above and to give reasons why</b>	<b>Count</b>
Escorts are vital for these children. They cannot travel on their own / Use public transport / They are too vulnerable/ Need to protect others and themselves	24
Cannot act as escort as working / May impact on ability to work	22
Parents as escorts is an impractical proposition for most / Other children have to be considered/ Can't be in two places at one time	20
Parents have too much to handle already without having to arrange transport need / Do not overwhelm parents with this duty / Asking more of parents who are already stretched emotionally and physically is cruel	20
Minibuses provided are best, safest method and most cost effective method	15
Escorts must be trained people	10
Annual reviews unnecessary / Wastes council and parents time / bureaucracy / Only review if a change/ Would cost more	9
Arranging transport personally would be more expensive / Not a good use of available funds / Individual budgets just take money out of the pool	8
Agree that students must learn independence	5
The private bus to school is an integral part the school day, where he has a driver and escort and gets on the bus with peers / They can benefit greatly from the independence from parents	4
Parents do not necessarily know anyone trustworthy enough to arrange transport / Not a practical proposition / Would need DBS check	3

### **Question 3: Do you have any other suggestions on how we could make these savings?**

The most common response to this question was that the council should make cuts elsewhere (25 of 92 respondents), whilst other respondents stated that improved planning of routes (7 of 92 respondents) and increasing council tax (7 of 92 respondents) were other options.

The table below gives further detail on the responses;

<b>Do you have any other suggestions on how we could make these savings?</b>	<b>Count</b>
Make cuts elsewhere. Already too many cuts in this service area	25
Plan bus journeys better/ Plan routes better	7
Increase Council Tax	7
Ensure that every child that uses the service is eligible / Ensure child remains eligible/ Reviews	4
Recruit permanent drivers / staff thus reduce expensive agency fees	4
Parents contribute small sum towards travel	3

#### **Question 4: Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve the way we make decisions about SEN transport?**

The most popular response to how the council can improve decision making for SEN transport was that parents so far had no experienced problems and that the service did not need changing (23 out of 92 respondents).

The table below gives further detail on the responses;

<b>Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve the way we make decisions about SEN transport?</b>	<b>Count</b>
I have not experienced any problems / It's been working fine so far / If it ain't broke don't fix it	23
Individual children's needs and capabilities, including behavioural, need to be taken into account before reaching decisions / Assess actual child rather than from a form	4
Consult parents more fully/ Include parents in Panel decisions so that information can be given straight away, thus less delay, instead of information asked for, given, then have to wait for next meeting.	4
The requirement should be on the statement or EHCP and reviewed annually	3

#### **Question 5: Do you have any other suggestions, from your experience of home to school transport, about how we can deliver a better service and use our resources more effectively?**

As with question 4, the most popular response to suggestions of improving the service was that the current service was good and there was no need for change (20 of 92 respondents).

Other respondents stated that the council could improve planning of routes (10 of 92 respondents) and that consistency of drivers was important to improve relationships and provide continuity (7 of 92 respondents).

The table below gives further detail on the responses;

<b>Do you have any other suggestions, from your experience of home to school transport, about how we can deliver a better service and use our resources more effectively?</b>	<b>Count</b>
The existing service is satisfactory / Good / Effective / Do not change / Invaluable	20
Plan routes better / Stick to schedules	10
Have consistency regarding drivers / Builds a good relationship / Continuity	7
Better communication if there are delays / People to man telephones so that information can be obtained - especially in early morning	5
Drivers and escorts given other duties inbetween school pick up and drop off, thus optimising resources / Use school staff as escorts	4
Better trained escorts / Escorts who understand the challenging behaviour	3
Better communication generally	3

### **Question 6: Any further comments**

Further comments focused on respondents being happy with the current service (10 of 92 respondents) or that cuts should be made elsewhere as this area was a priority (8 of 92 respondents). The table below gives further detail on the responses;

<b>Any further comments</b>	<b>Count</b>
Happy and grateful for service / child could not attend without it / It works well, why change	10
Make cuts elsewhere - not with young vulnerable people who need your help - This service very important - children would be in danger without it	8
Parents are exhausted, overstretched and fraught and are already suffering the effects of cuts in other areas, particularly respite care.	6