

Appendix I

Business Planning 2019/20-2023/2024

General Budget Consultation 2019/20

Detailed findings

12 December 2018 – 16 January 2019

Consultation, Commissioning Group

1. Introduction

This report sets out the detailed consultation findings from the General Budget Consultation 2019/20 which will be presented as part of the budget paper at Policy and Resources on 18 February 2019 and Full Council on 5 March 2019.

2. Summary of approach

The 2019/20 General Budget Consultation began after Policy and Resources Committee on 12 December 2018 and concluded on 16 January 2019.

In terms of service-specific consultations the council has a duty to consult with service users where there are proposals to vary, reduce or withdraw services. Where appropriate, separate service-specific consultations have already taken place or will take place in the next few months for the 2019/20 savings. The outcomes of these consultations are being reported into committee decision making processes.

2.1 Technical details and method

In summary, the consultation was administered as follows:

- The general consultation consisted of an online questionnaire published on <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk> together with a consultation document which provided detailed background information about the council's budget setting process and the financial challenges the council faces. Paper copies and an easy-read version of the consultation were also made available on request;
- As part of the council's statutory duty to consult with National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) payers, letters were sent out to all the council's NNDR payers inviting them to take part in the consultation;
- The consultation was widely promoted via the council's residents' magazine, Barnet First; the council residents' e newsletter, the council's website; local press; Twitter; Facebook; and posters in libraries and other public places;
- Super-users, i.e. users of non-universal services, were also invited to take part in the consultation through the Communities Together Network, Youth Board, Delivery Unit newsletters/circulars and super-user mailing lists.

2.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents' views on the overall size and individual components of the proposed 2019/20 budget and options on how to meet the budget gap over the MTFS 2019-24 period. In particular the consultation invited views on:

- The overall budget and the savings and income generation proposals for 2019/20;
- General Council Tax increases;
- How to bridge the remaining budget gap from 2020 to 2024.

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Throughout the questionnaire and where applicable, hyperlinks were provided to the relevant sections of the consultation document and to the detailed savings and/or income proposals for each committee. Links to the Theme Committee's Business Plan papers were also provided as additional information.

Those respondents who elected to receive a paper copy were also sent the consultation document and the 2019/20 savings and/or income proposals.

2.3 Response to the consultation

A total of 198 questionnaires have been completed -197 online, and one paper questionnaire.

2.3.1 Response profile

The table below shows the profile of those who responded to the questionnaire.

Table 1: Profile of those who responded to the General Budget Consultation

Stakeholder	Questionnaire response	
	%	Base
Barnet resident	89%	119
Working within the London Borough of Barnet area	2%	2
Barnet business	2%	2
Representing a voluntary/community organisation	3%	4
Representing a public-sector organisation	0%	0
Representing a school	0%	0
Other	2%	2
Prefer not to say	3%	4
Total	101%¹	133
Not Answered		65

There were also nine written responses: five from businesses; two from community groups and two from residents. These responses have also been incorporated into the findings and further details are provided in section 4.4 of this report.

A petition was also received that was against the council's proposals regarding the Education Services Grant. This petition has been looked at separately.

¹ The total adds up to more than 100% due to rounding

2.3.2 Profile of protected characteristics

The council is required by law (the Equality Act 2010) to pay due regard to equalities in eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people from different groups.

The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

To assist us in complying with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 we asked the respondents to provide equalities monitoring data and explained that collecting this information will help us understand the needs of our different communities and that all the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely in accordance with our responsibilities under data protection legislation (such as the General Data Protection Regulation or the Data Protection Act 2018).

Table 2 below shows the profile of these who answered these questions. However, due to the low completion of these questions (51% to 58%), it has not been possible to do any demographic analysis on the consultation findings.

Table 2: Protected Characteristic, profile of those that completed the questionnaire

Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
Age		
16-17	1	1%*
18-24	1	1%*
25-34	11	10%*
35-44	21	19%*
45-54	29	26%*
55-64	24	21%*
65-74	20	18%*
75+	6	5%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	85	43%
Answered	113	57%
Total	198	100%

Disability		
Yes	20	18%*
No	94	82%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	84	42%
Answered	114	58%
Total	198	100%

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Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
Gender		
Female	50	45%*
Male	62	55%*
If you prefer your own term	0	0%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	86	43%
Answered	112	57%
Total	198	100%

Is your gender identity different to the sex you were assumed to be at birth?		
Yes, it's different	1	1%*
No, it's the same	111	99%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	86	43%
Answered	112	57%
Total	198	100%

Disability		
Yes	20	18%*
No	94	82%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	84	42%
Answered	114	58%
Total	198	100%

Ethnicity		
Black	1	1%*
Asian	10	9%*
White	87	82%*
Other	8	8%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	92	46%
Answered	106	54%
Total	198	100%

Faith		
Baha'i	0	0%*
Buddhist	2	2%*
Christian	37	36%*
Hindu	5	5%*
Humanist	1	1%*

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Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
Jain	1	1%*
Jewish	19	18%*
Muslim	0	0%*
Sikh	0	0%*
No religion	38	37%*
Other Faith	1	1%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	94	47%
Answered	104	53%
Total	198	100%
Pregnancy		
Pregnant	1	2%*
On maternity leave	1	2%*
Neither	46	96%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	150	76%
Answered	48	24%
Total	198	100%
Sexuality		
Bisexual	2	2%*
Gay	1	1%*
Heterosexual	96	96%*
Lesbian	0	0%*
Other	1	1%*
Prefer to define your sexuality in other terms	0	0%*
Not answered / prefer not to say	98	49%
Answered	100	51%
Total	198	100%

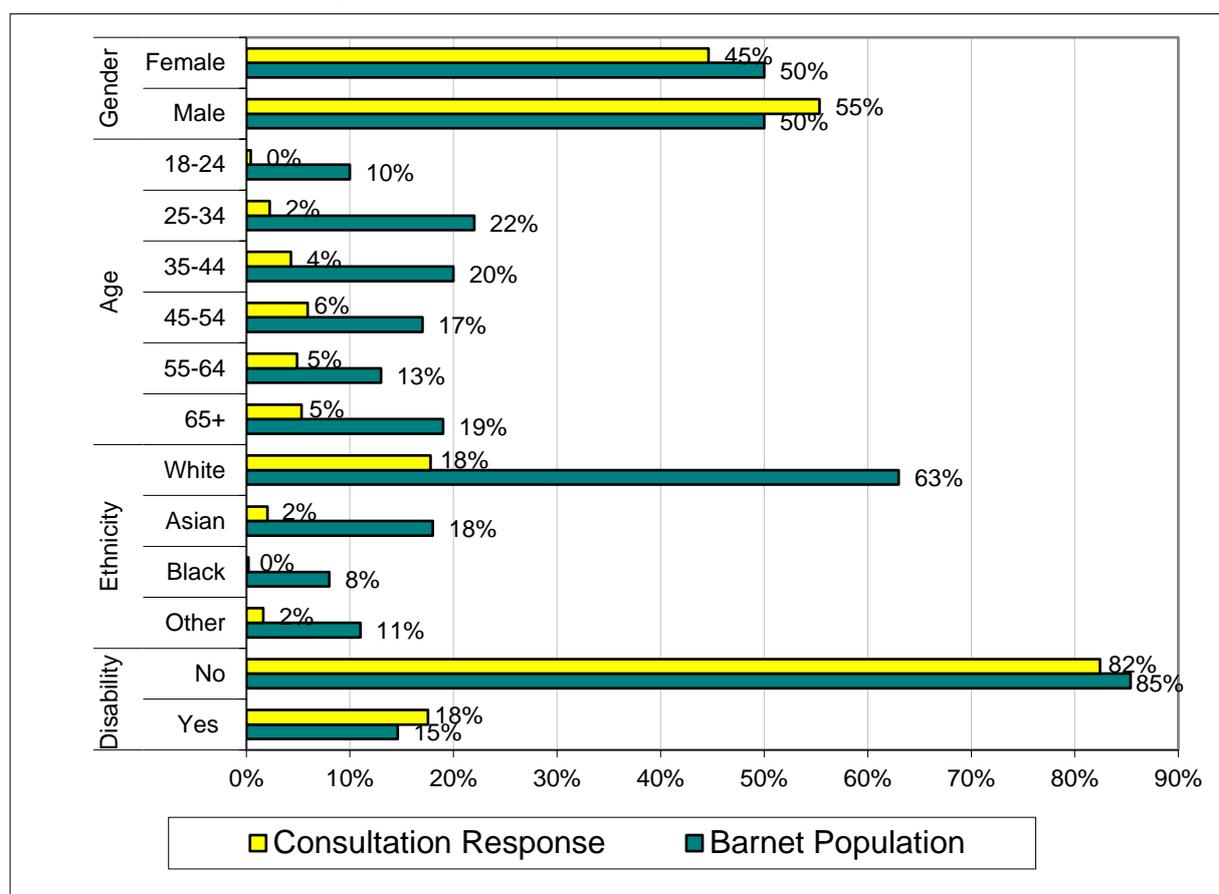
* Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered the question.

2..3.3 Profile of key demographics

Chart 1 over the page shows the profile of those who responded to the questionnaire in terms of key demographics compared to the population of Barnet.

However, again due to the low completion of the diversity monitoring questions (51% to 58%), it is difficult to draw any conclusions on how representative the response to the consultation is in terms of the borough's actual population.

Chart 1: General Budget Consultation profile – key demographics



2.7 Calculating and reporting on results

- The results for each question are based on “valid responses”, 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.
- Where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded - i.e. respondents could give more than one answer. The open-ended questions are multi-coded, as respondents could write in more than one comment, and therefore the tables on verbatim comments add up to more than 100%.
- All open-ended responses have been classified based on the main themes arising from the comments, so that they can be summarised. It should also be noted that the responses were very varied, however there were a number of common themes that were evident, and the most common themes have been summarised in this report.

3. Results in detail:

3.1 Views on a General Council Tax increase

Respondents were asked to what extent they support the council's proposal:

- To increase general Council Tax by 2.99% in 2019/20;
- To increase general Council Tax by 2.99% annually from 2020/21 to 2023/24.

Respondents were also asked if they would be willing to accept an increase in general Council Tax of more than 2.99% if this option became available from central government in the future.

A summary of the response to these questions is provided below and a full break down can be found in table 3 over the page.

3.1.1 The council's proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.99% in 2019/20

Over half of respondents (56%) support the council's proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.99% in 2019/20. Just over a quarter of respondents (28%) oppose the increase, with the remainder indicating they 'neither support or oppose' (11%) or that they 'don't know' (5%).

3.1.2 The council's proposal to increase general Council Tax annually by 2.99% from 2020/21 to 2024.

There are similar levels of support (51%) for a further annual general Council Tax increase of 2.99% in the subsequent MTFs years, 2020/21 to 2023/24. A third of respondents (34%) oppose an annual increase of 2.99% of General Council Tax in subsequent years, with the remainder indicating they 'neither support or oppose' (9%) or that they 'don't know' (6%).

3.1.3 A general Council Tax increase of more than 2.99% if this became available in the future

There was slightly less support for an increase in general Council Tax of more than 2.99% if this became available. Two fifths of respondents (40%) support an increase in general Council Tax of more than 2.99% if it became available. However, more respondents oppose this further increase (47%), with the remainder indicating they 'neither support or oppose' (8%) or that they 'don't know' (6%).

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Table 3: Respondents level of support for general Council Tax increases

	General Council Tax of 2.99% increase in 2019/20		General Council Tax of 2.99% annual increase 2021 to 2024		General Council Tax increase of more than 2.99% if it became available	
	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base
Strongly support	35.12%	59	29.45%	48	21.28%	30
Tend to support	20.83%	35	21.47%	35	18.44%	26
Neither support nor oppose	11.31%	19	9.20%	15	7.80%	11
Tend to oppose	7.74%	13	14.11%	23	13.48%	19
Strongly oppose	20.24%	34	19.63%	32	33.33%	47
Don't know	4.76%	8	6.13%	10	5.67%	8
Total	100%	168	100%	163	100%	141

3.2 Further options for closing the budget gap from 2020/21 to 2023/24

Respondents were presented with further options for closing the remaining budget gap from 2020/21 to 2023/24:

- Reduction in the council's investment programme;
- Make further savings within our Theme Committees;
- Make further use of limited reserves.

Respondents were first asked to indicate to what extent they support or oppose each option, and then asked to rank each proposal in order of their preference.

3.2.1 Level of support for each option

Table 4 shows making further use of limited reserves received the most support (45%), followed by further savings within Theme Committees (33%). There was much less support for reducing the council's investment programme (25%).

Table 4: Level of support for each proposal

To what extent do you support or oppose the three additional options presented?	Support		Neither support nor oppose		Oppose		Don't know / not sure		Total
	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	
Making further use of limited reserves	45%	65	20%	29	27%	39	8%	12	145
Making further savings within our Theme Committees	33%	48	16%	23	43%	63	8%	11	145
Reduction in the council's investment programme	25%	36	16%	23	54%	79	5%	7	145

3.1.2 Ranking of options to close the budget gap

Respondents ranked the proposals in the same order as their level of support:

- 1st preferred proposal: Making further use of limited reserves.
- 2nd preferred proposal: Making further savings within the Theme Committees
- 3rd preferred proposal: Reduction in the council's investment programme.

Table 5: Ranking of proposals to close the budget gap from 2020/21 to 2024

Further proposals	Score	Rank ¹
Making further use of limited reserves	291	1
Making further savings within our Theme Committees	267	2
Reduction in the council's investment programme	241	3

4. Overall budget and saving/income proposals for 2019/20

4.1 Overall budget for 2019/20

Respondents were asked if they had any comments to make on the overall budget for 2019/20. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, 121 out of 198 gave a response to this question.

The type of comments received were varied, however there were some common themes that were evident.

The most common themes that received a response of 6% or more has been summarised below. Percentages are based on those who answered this question²

- Concerns about Barnet's Leadership / Ability to implement change / Ability to deliver services, 12% (14 respondents);
- Agree with an increase in Council Tax, 11% (13 respondents);
- Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee: Concerned about Education budget, concern for cuts / Too little budget for Education, 10% (12 respondents)
One resident who submitted a written response was also concerned about education;

¹ Weights were assigned to each option. The respondent's most preferred choice (which they rank as 1st) has the largest weight, and their least preferred choice (which they rank in the last position) has the lowest weight. The total score for each option has been calculated with the highest ranking being the most preferred option

- o 1st preferred choice has a weight of 3
- o 2nd preferred choice has a weight of 2
- o 3rd preferred choice has a weight of 1

²- Many respondents gave more than one type of comment so percentages will add up to more than 100%. A total of 216 different types of comments were received from the 121 respondents who answered this question.

- Policy and Resources is excessive / Takes a large amount of the available funds / P & R could deliver more efficiencies, 9% (11 respondents);
- Concerns on Barnet Council's financial management abilities / Allocation of financial resources / Concerns for causes of deficit (including Capita), 8 % (10 respondents);
- R5 Garden Waste Savings recovery plan: Disagree with charging for Green waste, 8% (10 respondents). One resident who submitted a written response was also against this saving line;
- Comments on the consultation / Consultation document: More information required / More transparency needed / Less positive spin required / Lacked policy impact details, 8% (10 respondents).
- Adults and Safeguarding Committee, E6 Meeting eligible needs in more cost-effective settings proposal: Not supportive of this saving line/ Disagree with / Turning the clock back on disability rights / Savings line is against Human Rights, 6% (7 respondents). Two written responses received from representatives of a community group also cited similar concerns about this saving line;
- Shouldn't have frozen Council Tax in recent years, 6% (7 respondents).

Respondents also made comments on the Environment, R2 line: Revised Waste Offer. This proposal was marked as information only. The proposal is not going ahead and is not part of the savings proposals.

- Respondents cited that they were against any reductions in weekly recycling and/or refuse collection, 15% (18 respondents). Two residents who submitted written responses also cited similar concerns about R2.

Table 6 over the page provides full details of the types comments received on the overall budget for 2019/20. The comments have been coded by Theme Committee. It should be noted that respondents wrote extensive responses, often giving views on many different topics. These comments have been coded into themes and are set out in the table below. To provide context, examples of some of the types of comments are listed. Comments that were only cited by one respondent have been grouped under 'other'.

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Table 6: Comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget.

Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
Adults and Safeguarding Committee		
<p>E6 Meeting eligible needs in more cost effective settings: Not supportive of / Disagree with/ Turning the clock back on disability rights/ Saving line is against Human Rights: Not supportive of the proposal to force disabled people into care homes / Sad to learn elderly people in their own home being subjected to pressure to be moved into a Care Home to help the council meet its financial obligations / Disabled people should have a choice to where they live under the Human Rights Act a right to a family life / Against "removing the right to 'community by default' placements in adult support plans".</p>	7	6%
<p>Concerned about the cuts/staffing reductions in the area of adult social care: Very unhappy with the proposed cuts / Concerns re: staffing efficiencies and focuses on disbanding the Safeguarding - concerns for quality and practice team / No detailed consideration as to delivery - must protect front-line mental health services for adults.</p>	4	3%
Other Adults and Safeguarding Committee Comments	3	2%
Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee		Number of comments
		%
<p>Comments about increasing revenue from Assets Regeneration and Growth: To what extent is the new regeneration being sensibly used to generate increased revenue? / Did you considered selling some of your assets, commercial, residential, financial investments etc. to deal with the budget constrains? / Increase revenue through council tax from the thousands of flats built in the borough in recent years? / The council is missing opportunities - engage proper property professionals (not Capita) to advise a proper strategic review of assets.</p>	5	4%
Other Asset, Regeneration and Growth Committee comments	3	2%
Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee		Number of comments
		%

¹ Percentage based on number of respondents who answered this question, 121

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
<p>Concerned about Education budget, Concern for cuts / Too little budget for Education: Concerned about the planned cuts in funding for schools in Barnet / More money needed for Education / I feel very strongly that the council is risking our children's education with the proposal in your estimated 2019 - 2020 budget / Transfer some from P&R to schools / Try not to cut on children education / There is severe underfunding in all schools and there is a desperate need for more secondary school provision particularly in the N3 area.</p>	12	10%
<p>Concerns about reducing Children and safeguarding budget: Children must be protected as far as possible / Concerned Adult budget is higher than the Children, Education and Safeguarding budget - should invest in children.</p>	3	2%
Other Children, Education, and Safeguarding Committee comments	2	2%
Community Leadership and Libraries Committee	Number of comments	%
Other comment: Painfully little is going to be spent on libraries.	1	1%
Environment Committee	Number of comments	%
<p>R2: Revised Waste Offer to increase recycling (This proposal was marked as information only. The proposal is not going ahead is not part of the savings proposals). Against any reductions in weekly recycling and refuse collection: Against having the bins collected every 2 weeks / I am very unhappy - we will see fly tipping occurring / Please collect every week in order to keep our streets clean and healthy / 1 year ago it was a major campaign issue in the last local election to keep regular bin collection / Against changes to current bin collections as this will lead to overflowing bin increase in vermin / Totally opposed to any reduction in the blue and grey bin collection service / As a family of four our bin is full each week. If collections are reduced our bins will not close and then bin men.</p>	18	15%

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
<p>R5 Garden Waste Savings recovery plan: Disagree with charging for Green waste: Idea of charging for green bin is dreadful - We pay enough council tax so its outrageous / Charging for green waste collection will simply lead to fewer people participating, and more compostable rubbish will end up in landfill / The cheek of asking us to pay for bin collection too / Totally against having to pay for recycling rubbish - Things will be dumped either on the streets or into other people's dustbins if there is a charge / Charging - those who have the lowest income would be worst affected.</p>	10	8%
<p>Concerns with proposed cuts to Environment / Environment Committee budget should be increased: The proposed savings are much bigger (proportion) than in the other areas – why? / Saving on environmental services is detrimental to residents / This is one of the most front-line areas of the council spending with the biggest impact on all residents. Cuts here would really harm the desirability of the borough / Environmental committee should be upped to £2 million.</p>	5	4%
<p>Concerns about recent bin collections / Reorganisation of bin collections: The bin collections have not been working since days were changed in December / Barnet council cannot manage a successful bin collection service at all / Barnet has failed to collect Blue and Black bins on time on the correct date / Attempt at savings on general waste collection bringing in larger lorries are not successful.</p>	6	5%
<p>More money needs to be spent on repairing roads and potholes: I am a 75-year-old cyclist and appalled at the state of the potholes in the roads / Please spend more on roads and pavements.</p>	3	2%
<p>Parts of Barnet feel in decline / No longer a 'pleasant, well-maintained borough': So many parts of Barnet feel in decline / East Finchley has a terrible litter problem on all the roads -shouldn't cut back on is litter picking.</p>	3	2%
<p>Agree with increased CPZ parking restrictions / Raise the cost of parking or PCN tickets.</p>	2	2%
<p>Please bring back brown bin collection: I was very upset to have the brown composting no longer taken.</p>	2	2%
<p>Other Environment Committee Comments</p>	8	7%

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
Housing Committee	Number of comments	%
Not enough being spent on housing: Painfully little is going to be spent on housing / Amount being spent on housing seems to be very low considering housing issues / The amount allocated for housing seems very low, especially considering the implications of the Grenfell findings / There seems to be very little budgeted for housing.	6	5%
Other Housing Committee comments	1	1%
Policy and Resources Committee	Number of comments	%
Policy and Resources is excessive / Takes a large amount of the available funds / P & R could deliver more efficiencies: Policy and Resource Committee budget looks excessive / Policy and Resources Committee Tackles vital strategic policy decisions but it takes up 26% of the council's budget / P & R savings should be upped to £2 million / More could be done to encourage the policy and resources line to deliver efficiencies to make up the funding gap (7% is considerably less than central government departments have been expected to reduce similar administrative expenditure over the same period) / Savings should be made by reducing or cutting waste, efficiency measures and savings made from back office services / Seems excessive compared to Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee.	11	9%
Other Policy and Resources Committee comments	4	
Public Health	Number of comments	%
Public Health budget seems very low/ Much more needs to be spend on healthcare funding	2	2%
Other Public Health comments: Making savings from within the Public Health Budget - Many public health programmes have poor evidence of improvements in health outcomes.	1	1%

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
Comments on Council Tax	Number of comments	%
<p>Agree with an increase in Council Tax: Happy that you increase your local taxes as appropriate / You need to raise council tax in order to afford the services that our communities need / I support raising the council tax as long as front line services are maintained - or even improved / I fully support the funding gap being filled as far as possible with an increase in council tax and the social care precept by 2.99% / Prioritise providing high quality shared services above freezing council tax / We need to pay more in Council Tax to maintain our borough properly which is not being done at present / I would propose that Council Tax rates are uplifted by the maximum amount possible.</p>	13	11%
<p>Suggestions to increase Council Tax past the suggested 2.99%: Band D households pay an increase of 4% pa to help balance the deficit / Council taxes need to increase, I would be happy to consider increase above 2.99% / Would prefer that there be a higher rate of increase in council tax if referendum supports it.</p>	4	3%
<p>Shouldn't have frozen Council Tax in recent years: Why did the council choose to reduce council tax or keep it unchanged in the last few years even though it was entirely obvious that Barnet's finances were in poor shape? / Policy of no increase in council tax, which contributed to its current dire budgetary condition / Failed to manage the deficit effectively through a failure to raise Council Tax income / Ideological mantras about keeping taxes lower - It got Northampton into bankruptcy / The Council should prioritise providing high quality shared services above freezing council tax which is a false economy.</p>	7	6%
<p>Please ensure council tax not increased: Very much against a Council Tax rise already one of highest London rates/ You increase our rates annually, and we're not all millionaires/ I do not agree with your proposals to raise the council tax bill - My wages do not go up in line with all these increases and it puts my family under huge financial pressure.</p>	5	4%
Other Council Tax comments	1	1%

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
Other comments not relating Theme Committees	Number of comments	%
<p>Concerns about Barnet's Leadership / Ability to implement change / Ability to deliver services: Deeply concerned that the planning, strategy and management failures are deep seated / You would save a fortune if you delivered all services "right first time"/ Is there a more badly run council than Barnet? / Barnet really needs a change in leadership / Needs a cohesive can-do attitude from those implementing and managing the changes. I have seen nothing in recent years that demonstrate that Barnet council have the capability to achieve this / The executive appears to have lost all control of its officers and its outsourced services / I voted for you to manage and do the work efficiently / Council should cancel all non-essential expenditure that benefit only members / Whether there needs to be 32 London Boroughs plus the City is a hard question but there is certainly no case for 32 London Borough Chief Executives and their Corporate Management teams/ I think too much money is allocated to safeguarding in general - maybe a service restructure is in order.</p>	14	12%
<p>Concerns on Barnet Council financial management abilities / Allocation of financial resources / Concerns for causes of deficit (including Capita): Are you sure that you at Barnet Council used all money properly? / Without a clear understanding of what went wrong, how can we be sure the council will avoid it in future? Some reassurance on this matter would be appreciated / To what extent has Capita's failings and your own incompetence contributed to this deficit? / Compared to four other London boroughs I have lived in over the last decade, I would say Barnet is the least competent and poorest value / Concerns money is not being utilised effectively and business rate retention would not aid financial position / You are lending Saracens £30million to build a stand at their stadium. The money is needed elsewhere / Get your house in order - Salaries for executives are out of control (should be comparable to nurses) / If you hadn't wasted all our money on ridiculous contacts with Capita and provided services yourselves then maybe we wouldn't be in this mess / Much greater scrutiny of the value of third party contracts.</p>	10	8%
<p>Agree with 2019/20 budget consultation proposals: Agree with use of reserves in so far as is prudent and agree with cutting loan and saving on interest/ The proposals seem sound / The council has taken the right approach to plan with a longer-term perspective / I like the 3- priorities set out in the consultation document. / I am pleased that the Council has taken a medium-term approach to financial planning / I'm generally very happy with Barnet as a borough and think it is one of the nicest in London.</p>	6	5%

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
<p>Comments on understanding the difficult decisions the council has to make: Enormous sympathy with the difficult choices that must be made / The council clearly needs to go over budget in order to address the needs of the local borough and let the government know that their contribution is inadequate / I appreciate that Government policy has squeezed and cut funding to local authorities / I do not envy the decisions that will have to be made and deciding where and how to allocate resources is a very difficult one / It is a fine balance that the council has to do between providing essential services and keeping within budget / You need the wisdom of Solomon to try and accommodate all that our borough needs.</p>	6	5%
<p>Barnet Council should lobby central government for more funds: Implore you to raise these education concerns with the Secretary for Education and the Treasury/ Central government funding is insufficient / Council has a duty to lobby central government for an increased grant / Tell government that their contribution is inadequate.</p>	4	3%
<p>Concern's that the council priorities don't align to the cuts / Not honest in approach: Your set of priorities are odd as to date you have done nothing but cut and neglect these areas / Your priorities seem strange when these are areas you are neglecting / Apologise for having had to make such drastic cuts and for continuing to have to make more - be honest in your approach.</p>	3	2%
Consultation process/literature	Number of comments	%
<p>Comments on the consultation / Consultation document: More information needed / More transparency needed/ Less positive spin required / Lacked policy impact detail: I don't feel I have enough knowledge of what things cost and what expenditure the council has to comment / You do not clearly state the impact to services of your policies / The information is presented on an opaque manner - It would be refreshing to credit Barnet residents with the understanding that hard choices are being made and to attempt to get a genuine view of what is least bad. The positive spin merely obscures the real issues and denies true democratic participation / All resident should receive the Consultation document by post / It is somewhat impenetrable as there is no indication of what Policy Theme Committee might spend money on / Greater transparency in the information needed as to if its budget driven or service improvement / The consultation document is inadequate. It does not provide any real sense of what the choices in budget planning mean in practice / proposals are presented at such a high level that it is very difficult to give any opinion.</p>	10	8%

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Do you have any comments on the council's 2019/20 proposed budget?		
Total Sample	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	121	61%
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	77	39%
Types of comment	Number of comments	%¹
Consultation access difficulties: Consultation document was unobtainable and feel excluded/ Consultation document was not accessible / Unable to access either page 7 or 8 at question 1 or 2 in the questionnaire.	3	2%
Positive comment on the consultation document: Thank you for the consultation document - it's a good length and easy to understand / Good length.	2	2%
Other Comments	Number of comments	%
General concerns in cuts: Very worry to read about more cuts to front line services/ services already cut to the bone.	2	2%
Total number of different type of comments	216	175%

4.2 Theme Committee saving/income proposals for 2019/20

Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the saving and income proposals identified for 2019/20. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, 60 out of 198 gave a response to this question. The most common themes which received a response of 6% or more have been summarised below. Percentages are based on those who answered this question¹. Further details of all the comments are provided in table 7.

Again, the response to this question were varied and the most common themes, have been summarised below:

- Adults and Safeguarding Committee, E6 Meeting eligible needs in more cost-effective settings: *Not supportive on this saving line / Disagree with / High concerns / Not legal / Going in the wrong direction / Turning the clock back on disability / It's against human rights*, 15% (9 respondents). Two written responses from representatives of a community group also cited similar concerns about this saving line;
- Environment, R5 Garden Waste Savings recovery plan: Disagree with charging for Green waste, 10% (6 respondents). One resident who submitted a written response was also against also against R5;
- Environment, *Bring back food waste recycling/brown bins*, 8% (5 respondents);

¹ As on the previous question many respondents gave more than one type of comment so percentages will add up to more than 100%. A total of 117 different types of comments were received from the 60 respondents who answered this question.

- ARG income suggestions: *Consider selling off assets/ Barnet should partner with Housing Associations and convert commercial assets into residential developments / bring empty private properties into use to increase revenues, 8% (5 respondents);*
- Comments about the consultation document: *Make an easier to read document that includes everything / Lack of executive summaries - the planned cuts are easily hidden in the complexity / Is not easy to access all the elements: 6%, (4 respondents).*

Again, respondents also made comments on the Environment, R2 line: Revised Waste Offer. This proposal was marked as information only. The proposal is not going ahead and is not part of the savings proposals.

- Respondents cited that they were against any reductions in weekly recycling and/ or refuse collection, 20% (12 respondents). Two residents who submitted comments in writing were also against R2.

Table 7 over the page gives full details of the types of comments received on the savings and income generation proposals. The comments have been coded by Theme Committee. It should be noted that respondents wrote extensive responses, often giving views on many different topics. These comments have been coded into themes and set out in the table below. To provide context, examples of some of the types of comments are listed. Comments that were only cited by one respondent have been grouped under 'other'.

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Table 7: Comments on the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2019/20.

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2019/20?		
Total Base	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	60	30%
No comment	136	69%
Adults and Safeguarding Committee	Number of comments	%¹
<p>E6 Meeting eligible needs in more cost-effective settings: Not supportive on this saving line / Disagree with / High concerns / Not legal / Going in the wrong direction / Turning the clock back on disability / It's against human rights: Going in the wrong direction and potentially illegal / This is the opposite to the guidance of the Dept of Health and Social Care, the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia 2020 and Mayor London's Dementia Pledge May 2018 / Residential provision will not be sustainable as it becomes impossible to recruit and retain staff / Appalled and terrified you are proposing imprisoning disabled people in residential care - right to a family life is based on needs not cost / Contradiction with R9 and residential accommodation may not be the cost saver that you think it is / It breaches the council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act, the Public Sector Equalities Duty and is against the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities / Hidden this within appendices to the main consultation document.</p>	9	15%
Other Adults and Safeguarding Committee comments:	4	7%
Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee	Number of comments	%
<p>ARG income suggestions: Consider selling off assets/ Barnet should partner with Housing Associations and convert commercial assets into residential developments / bring empty private properties into use to increase revenues: Sell some of your assets, commercial, residential, financial investments etc. Empty houses used to deal with the budget constrains? / Sale of strategic assets and Utilisation of sale proceeds to more efficient schemes; Barnet should partner with Housing Associations and convert commercial assets into residential developments / Bring empty private properties into use to increase revenues.</p>	5	8%
Asset, Regeneration and Growth other comments	2	3%
Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee	Number of comments	%
<p>Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee - Service Reform section comments: S8 Remodelling of placements to reduce number of children in high cost placements: This line item is vague / S4: The cost savings against the partnership board should reflect expectations by partners or regulatory bodies.</p>	2	3%

¹ Percentage based on number of respondents who answered this question, 60

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Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2019/20?		
Total Base	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	60	30%
No comment	136	69%
<p>Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee - SDSG High Needs Block (trying to avoid an overspend on the High Needs budget): Concerned about the transfer of 0.5% of schools block funding to the high needs block in 2019-2020 / Cost savings and realignments of budgets from schools block to the high needs block may have a disproportionate impact for those with certain disabilities, e.g. Autism or ADHD who will have difficulty achieving their potential without services (s17 Children Act duty) but not yet have in place an EHC plan, particularly given the expectation that the number of EHC assessments will likely reduce. Similarly, the proposals to significantly reduce high cost care packages may disproportionately impact on children with certain disabilities and their carers.</p>	3	5%
<p>Concerns relating to schools: Concerned about all school improvement services moving to a traded service, for maintained schools as well as academies / Reducing money for schools will only move the problem to them which will ultimately increase the call on council services. It won't fix the problem.</p>	2	3%
Other Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee comments:	8	13%
Community Leadership and Libraries Committee	Number of comments	%
Other Community Leadership and Libraries Committee comments	4	7%
Environment Committee	Number of comments	%
<p>R2: Revised Waste Offer, against any reductions in weekly recycling and refuse collection recycling (This proposal was marked as information only. The proposal is not going ahead and is not part of the savings proposals): I am against any kind of reduction in waste collection it is an important service in this Borough / You must not suspend weekly recycling and rubbish collections - it would be a public health risk and would also increase the filthiness of Barnet streets / Have concerns that this will lead to less recycling (people will use Grey bins instead) and in hot summer months, any waste that is degradable waste will become toxic / Already full to the brim for the weekly collection / My blue bin is full every week because it is shared with two households (ground floor flat and first floor flat). We would need 2 blue bins if the collection was alternate weeks, and less would be recycled as it wouldn't all fit in the blue bin / The savings you will have to also mitigate the increase in clearing fly tipping this whilst also tightening up prosecutions to reduce it again.</p>	12	20%

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Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2019/20?		
Total Base	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	60	30%
No comment	136	69%
Environment Committee	Number of comments	%
<p>R5 Garden Waste Savings recovery plan: Disagree with charging for Green waste Our green bins are presently full with fortnightly collections - we shouldn't be charged for this service from our properties. When there is excessive garden waste this is usually taken to Summers Lane / Barnet should concentrate on giving the residents a better service not charging for reducing the service / You've already changed that to fortnightly which meant that we had to purchase an extra bin. How is this going to help? / Charging is likely to be counterproductive, leading people to put garden waste in with general refuse.</p>	6	10%
<p>Bring back food waste recycle / brown bins: You must reinstate the food bins - the government requires it / Defeats the purpose of compulsory recycling food waste / You've taken away food recycling and now can't get the other collections right - bring it back / Waste management is key / I'm also extremely unhappy about the fact that you have just stopped the food recycling collections.</p>	5	8%
<p>Concerns about current bin collections: Changes to refuse services are not currently working / Two months of bins being left out on the street. The bins overflowing, streets not being cleaned. You propose to collect more recycling, how when you can't get it right now? / The current missed bin collections have shown that missing just one collection leads to waste piling up on the streets and very angry residents. It will encourage fly tipping, it is unhygienic especially through the summer months when flies and maggots occur.</p>	3	5%
<p>Support/ Agree with R2 Revised Waste Offer, reductions in weekly recycling and refuse collection (This proposal was marked as information only. The proposal is not going ahead and is not part of the savings proposals): Agree that bins could be emptied every other week and I think you should encourage neighbours to share bins if theirs is full up / Environment Committee, R2. Bi-weekly non-recyclable refuse collections are now the norm in some areas. This has the potential to drive up recycling rates and waste awareness and could make a substantial saving to the budget in a short-space of time / Large blocks of flats do not yet have food-waste collections - suggest this is reviewed to support offer.</p>	3	5%
Other Environment Committee comments	10	17%
Housing Committee	Number of comments	%
Other Housing Committee comment	6	10%

GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2019/20

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2019/20?		
Total Base	198	
Number of respondents who completed this question	60	30%
No comment	136	69%
Policy and Resources Committee	Number of comments	%
First and fore most get rid of Capita / Stop wasting money on Capita and bring back value for money in house.	2	3%
Other Policy and Resources Committee comments	10	17%
Public Health	Number of comments	%
Other Public health comments	3	5%
Comments not relating Theme Committees		
Council Tax comments	Number of comments	%
Agree with an increase in Council Tax: Agree to raising the Council Tax / I'm sure most people would be happy to have an increase in council tax if it was going to be reinvested in the borough instead of lining the pockets of Capita / Rather than looking for savings we should be making a case to raise council tax.	3	5%
Comments on Consultation	Number of comments	%
Comments about the consultation document Make an easier to read document that includes everything / Lack of executive summaries - the planned cuts are easily hidden in the complexity / Is not easy to access all the elements: It would have been helpful to put together in an easier to read document with a precis/executive summary of these proposals - we have to go to several places to find the information / How are we expected to comment on such an opaque process? It is almost as if you are trying to hide the planned cuts, but that cannot possibly be the case, no? / I think the format of this questionnaire is deliberately unhelpful and intended to disincentives people from having their say. Is this a deliberate ploy by Barnet to prohibit meaningful consultation with residents?	4	6%
Problems accessing the Committee Reports: Committee reports were unobtainable - so I cannot make a comment / No access to the committee report.	2	3%
Other Comments	Number of comments	%
Other comments	9	5%
Total number of different type of comments	117	180%

4.3 Alternative suggestions the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings

Respondents were also asked if they had any alternative suggestions that the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, 73 out of 198 gave a response to this question. The most common themes have again been summarised below. Percentages are based on those who answered this question¹.

- Stop outsourcing / Get rid of Capita, 18% (13 respondents);
- Increase Council Tax to pay for services, 14% (10 respondents);
- Increase charges and penalties, 14% (10 respondents);
- Charge, fine and find other ways of raising income through waste and recycling 10% (7 respondents);
- Reduce staffing / Reduce Staffing Costs / Agency staff costs: Reduce salaries, 10% (7 respondents); s
- Reduce Senior Salaries / Executive salaries, 8% (6 respondents);
- Challenge Central Government for more funding, 8% (6 respondents);
- Reduce waste, 7% (5 respondents).

Table 8 over the page gives details of all the types of suggestions respondents put forward as alternative suggestions that the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings. Comments that were only cited by one respondent have again been grouped under 'other'.

¹ Many respondents gave more than one type of comment so percentages will add up to more than 100%. A total of 118 different types of comments were received from the 73 respondents who answered this question.

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Table 8: Alternative suggestions the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings

Do you have any alternative options that the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings?	Base	%
Total Base	198	100%
Number of respondents who gave a comment	73	37%
No comment	125	63%
Type of comments made:	Number of comments	% ¹
Stop outsourcing / Get rid of Capita: Revoke the Capita contract and bring back services in-house) / Get rid of Capita / Stop outsourcing / Get rid of expensive contracts / Review the services currently provided by Capita and the equivalent costs of running them in house.	13	18%
Increase Council Tax to pay for services: Consider referendum to increase Council Tax by more than 3% in one year / I would rather pay more Council Tax to keep our services especially social services schools and refuse / Increase Council Tax, if money spent wisely.	10	14%
Increase charges and penalties: Greater penalties and increased surveillance of fly tipping / Enforce fines for littering / Enforce fines for not cleaning up after your dog / Impose speeding restrictions and fines on residential roads / Make the entire Borough a CPZ / Introduce a residents parking scheme for Burnt Oak / Further charges for parking, e.g. multiple cars not kept on driveways etc. / Introduce a camera to generate income, in addition to the yellow box at top of Burnt Oak Broadway, junction of Watling Avenue / Charge a surcharge to owners of empty homes, who are based outside the borough.	10	14%
Charges, fines and find other ways of raising income through waste and recycling: Charge for green bin collection but make sure the service is reliable / Sell the compost produced from the garden waste collection to local allotment and gardening societies to generate income and also support community activities / If you reduce bin collections to every other week, give residents the option to opt into a weekly charged for collection service / Fine people for not separating their household waste / Patients should have the option of taking their yellow sharps boxes to a nearby hospital and collecting a new one rather than having it picked up from their doorstep.	7	10%

¹ Percentage based on number of respondents who answered this question, 73

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Do you have any alternative options that the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings?	Base	%
Total Base	198	100%
Number of respondents who gave a comment	73	37%
No comment	125	63%
Type of comments made:	Number of comments	% ¹
Reduce staffing / Reduce Staffing Costs / Agency staff costs: Reduce staffing / Restructure the council / Stop hiring ridiculously expensive consultants / Reduce use of agency staff / Change the way all council staff are paid - pay them same grades as Nursing Staff in NHS hospitals who have more responsibility.	7	10%
Reduce Senior Salaries / Executive Salaries: Cut the salary of those on highest pay and remove bonuses / The senior executives should have a pay cut by at least 50% to help mend our pavements, cleaner streets and collect the rubbish on a regular weekly basis / Reduce or freeze the salaries of the Chief Exec & similar.	6	8%
Challenge central government for more funding: Lobby central govt - local council cuts have gone far enough / Ask central government to adequately fund / Lobby Nick Gibbs more powerfully to reduce the brutal cuts to education / Challenge Local Government about their continued 'austerity' measures / Fight for the needs of the local community regarding the lack of funding for local councils and the crisis this creates.	6	8%
Reduce waste: Don't waste resources on unnecessary expenditure / Get rid of outdated costly Barnet magazine / Go paperless and stop photocopying / Find more sustainable ways of doing flowers outside the town hall and other places / Stop increasing amount of street furniture.	5	7%
Join up with other councils: Merge top team with another adjoining London borough / Further explore sharing systems and staff for back office roles with other local authorities / Unite with other councils regardless of political stripes.	3	4%
Work more with partners: Work more with local partners. We have already demonstrated (e.g. via library delivery) that we can add significant value and find new approaches which maintains services for residents / Find more ways to work with charity partners to provide or supplement social services / Partner with Amazon to provide electronic library books with access for all. Then close physical libraries.	3	4%

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Do you have any alternative options that the council has not considered to help generate income or make savings?	Base	%
Total Base	198	100%
Number of respondents who gave a comment	73	37%
No comment	125	63%
Type of comments made:	Number of comments	% ¹
Support local businesses and shops: Lower business rates and cap business rents to generate more shops and businesses to bring in more revenue for the council instead of nothing from empty shops / Introduce 60 mins free parking in all high-streets to support local businesses and prevent continued closure of shops / Invest more in local town centre so people do not have to travel to amenities and you need to get major corporations to come with employment to Barnet.	3	4%
Stop Saracens investment and loans: Scrap plans to loan Saracens Rugby club £22million. Money much needed by Barnet residents / Don't invest in schemes like Saracens / Stop wasting money on projects like the Saracens stand funding when this money can be better used elsewhere.	3	4%
Base Council Tax rises on affordability: Those in high-value properties can afford to pay higher percentage tax rises than those in lower income families / Council Tax should be moved to an income basis / Landlords letting houses of multiple-occupation can easily afford to pay Council Tax at a higher rate.	3	4%
Comments on reducing councillors / Cutting members allowances: Reduce number of councillors to two per ward and, or combine wards / Cut councillors' allowances.	3	4%
Housing and infrastructure: Make developers deliver more truly "affordable" housing and this could dramatically reduce your housing costs / Force developers to pay a greater share of infrastructure costs in the borough.	2	3%
Comments on increasing school funding: Introduce a small annual charge to parents for schools such as £40 per school year or £20 per term / Involve private companies with maintaining, sponsoring and developing ties with local school to save some of the council's capital investment. The progress made by TTA School in securing external funding suggests this can be a feasible option.	2	3%
Better Leadership / Employee Management: Better Leadership and Employee Management will create a better customer experience and people will be happy to pay more in Council Tax / Better management.	2	3%
Other comments	30	41%
Total number of different comments	118	163%

4.4 Written responses to the consultation

There were also nine written responses (seven e-mails and two letters): five from businesses; two from community groups; and two from residents.

Full details of the written responses have been summarised below and where applicable have been referenced under the most common themes that were apparent in response to the questionnaire in section 4.1 and 4.2 of this report.

Residents' comments:

- The council should keep things as they are against charging for green waste collections could cause fly-tipping problems, and moving to fortnightly bin collections could result in smelly bins (citing non-hazardous clinical waste).
- The council needs to go over budget to support all local needs and no cuts should be made at all. Secondary schools as they are severely underfunded.
- Funding should be taken from central government to support the local community - especially considering the increase in housing needs in Barnet.

Businesses' comments:

- The council should remove off main road (i.e. side road) parking restrictions, otherwise businesses will close in the North Finchley area.
- Two businesses mentioned they have recently closed because of the increase in Business Rates. One also cited the effects of Brexit, while the other mentioned unfair competition from internet companies who pay virtually no tax in the UK.
- Another business suggested that immediate action should be taken around Business Rates, and that the current basis of charging is archaic and should be charged relative to the trading operation of the business
- Another felt that all small businesses who currently pay £0 business rate charge should pay £1000 per year in Business Rates to help the council reduce the effect on services due to lack of funding.

Community Groups

- One community group cited they had difficulty with completing the online questionnaire.
- Two representatives from a community group commented on the Adults and Safeguarding Committee savings and income proposals, E6 Meeting eligible needs in more cost-effective settings. One felt that the proposal to move individuals from community to residential care would be against an individual's human rights if they wished to remain in community care. The second representative very strongly opposed the proposal and felt it would also severely affect the elderly and those with a sensory impairment such as hearing and sight loss.