

# **Appendix G**

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## **Business Planning 2023/24**

## **Final Report General budget consultation 2023/24**

**23 December 2022 – 4 February 2023**

**Consultation Team, Strategy**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the consultation findings from the General Budget Consultation 2023/24 which will be presented as part of the budget paper at Policy and Resources Committee on 23 February 2023 and Council on 28 February 2023.

### 1.1 Response to the consultation

- a total of 140 questionnaires were completed
  - the findings in this report are based on “valid responses”, i.e., all those providing an answer at each question (this may or may not be the same as the total response) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question.
- the majority (96%) of responses were from residents
- one written response was received via email

### 1.2 Summary of consultation approach

- the consultation ran from 23 December 2022 to 4 February 2023.
- the consultation consisted of an online questionnaire and summary consultation document which was published on [engage.barnet.gov.uk](https://engage.barnet.gov.uk).
- 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’ e newsletter, Barnet First resident’s magazine delivered to all household in the boroughs; the website; Twitter and Facebook ads.
- super-users, i.e., users of non-universal services, were also invited to take part in the consultation through the Barnet Together newsletter and other LBB service user newsletters and circulars.

## 1.2 Summary of key findings

### 1.2.1 Views on the overall budget for 2023/24

- A third of respondents agree (31%, 43 out of 140 respondents) with the council’s proposed budget for 2023/24, of which (3%, 4 out of 140 respondents strongly agree, and 28%, 39 out of 140 respondents tend to agree).
- Just under half disagree (46%, 64 out of 140 respondents) with the council’s proposed budget for 2023/24 (20%, 28 out of 140 respondents tend to disagree, and 27%, 36 out of 140 respondents strongly disagree).
- The remainder were either neutral (18%, 25 out of 140 respondents) or said they did not know or were not sure (6%, 8 out of 140 respondents).

## 1.2.2 Views on the council's Council Tax proposals for 2023/24

Overall, just over half of respondents (51%, 48 out of 94 respondents) **support some sort of Council Tax increase to help fund the budget gap in 2023/24** - a third support both Council Tax increases - the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% and the proposal to apply a further 2.0% Social Care Precept in 2023/24.

However, just under half of respondents do not support any increases in Council Tax in 2023/24 (49%, 45 out of 94 respondents).

- A third of respondent's (33%, 31 out of 94 respondents) support **both the council's proposals on Council Tax**: the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8%, and the proposal to apply a further 2.0% Social Care Precept in 2023/24
- A minority of respondents (11%, 10 out of 94 respondents) **support only** the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% in 2023/24
- A smaller minority of respondents (7%, 7 out of 94 respondents) **support only** the proposal to apply a 2% Adult Social Care Precept to Council Tax in 2023/24
- Just under half of respondents (49%, 45 out of 94 respondents) **do not support either of the council's proposals to increase Council Tax in 2023/24**: the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% and the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2023/24.

## 1.2.3 Views on theme committee saving and income proposals for 2023/24

- **Children's, Education and Safeguarding Committee received the highest level of support**, with half of respondents (50%, 47 out of 94 respondents) indicating they agree with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee for 2023/24
- **Public Health and Wellbeing Board**, which had no savings or income generation proposals, received **the second highest level of support**, with just under half of respondents (48%, 45 out of 94 respondents) agreeing
- **Adults and Safeguarding Committee received the third highest level of support** with two fifths of respondents (39%, 37 out of 94 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee for 2023/24.
- **Community Leadership and Libraries Committee, Housing and Growth Committee, and Environment and Climate Change Committee** all had similar levels of support, with around **a third of respondents agreeing** with the saving and income proposals identified within these committees for 2023/24:
  - Community Leadership and Libraries Committee 35% agreed (32 out of 92 respondents)
  - Housing and Growth Committee 34% agreed (32 out of 93 respondents)
  - Environment and Climate Change Committee 33% agreed (31 out of 94 respondents).
- **Policy and Resources Committee** received the **least support** for their saving and income proposals, with just over a quarter of respondents (27%, 25 out of 93

respondents) agreeing with the saving and income generation proposals identified within this committee for 2023/24.

### 1.2.4 Further comments on Theme Committee saving and income proposals for 2023/24

Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the saving and income proposals identified for each theme committee for 2023/24. Of those who responded to the consultation, 40 out of 140 gave a response to this question.

The responses to this question were varied and the most common themes, with a response of four comments or more, have been summarised below.

- *Disagree with / Can't afford Council Tax increases* (Seven comments)
- *Too much spent on Policy and Resources Budget/ management* (Seven comments)
- *Improvements needed to parks, pavements and facilities* (Five comments)
- *Increase spending needed on environment, climate change, public transport and active travel* (Five comments)
- *Not enough detail on where the money will be spent:* (Five comments)
- *Concern with the level of funding on Adult Social Care and the impact on the most vulnerable* (Four comments)
- *Concern over pressure from NHS for continuing care costs* (Four comments)
- *Need for more housing especially social/ affordable* (Four comments)

### 1.2.5 Further comments on the proposed budget for 2023/24

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make about the council's proposed budget for 2023/24. Of those who responded to the consultation, 53 out of 140 gave a response to this question.

Again, the responses to this question were varied and the most common themes, with a response of three comments or more have been summarised below:

- *Cost of living means council tax should be minimised:* (Seventeen Comments).
- *I would support a higher increase in Council tax:* (Nine comments).
- *Reduced Policy and Resources Budget/ management costs/ insourcing* (Three comments).
- *This seems to go against labour's manifesto promise:* (Three comments)
- *Budget not sustainable / Not credible:* (Three comments)

Further details of the types of comments received can be found in section three of this report.

## 2. CONSULTATION METHOD AND RESPONSE

### 2.1 Introduction

The budget proposals for 2023/24 have been subject to a formal public consultation.

This report sets out the full findings from the council's consultation on its Business Plan 2023/24. The findings will be considered by Full Council on 28 February 2023, where the final decision on the council's budget for 2023/24 will be taken.

### 2.2 Summary of consultation approach

The 2023/24 General Budget Consultation began after Policy and Resources Committee on 23 December 2022 and concluded on 4 February 2023.

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 2023/24 savings. The outcomes of these consultations are being reported into committee decision-making processes.

### 2.3 Technical details and method

#### 2.3.1 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 summary consultation document which provided 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 delivered to all households), the council resident's enewsletter, the council's website, local press, Twitter, and Facebook,
- super-users, i.e., users of non-universal services, were also invited to take part in the consultation through the Barnet Together Newsletter, and other LBB service user newsletters and circulars.

## 2.3.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents' views on the overall size and individual components of the proposed 2023/24 budget. In particular the consultation invited views on the:

- overall budget, and savings and income generation proposals for 2023/24.
- proposal to increase General Council Tax by 1.8% in 2023/24.
- proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% to help pay for adult social care.

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 further information on each of the Theme Committees' portfolio was also provided.

## 2.4 Response to the consultation

A total of 140 questionnaires were completed – all were submitted online. One written response was also submitted via email.

### 2.4.1 Response profile

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

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

Stakeholder	%	Base
Barnet resident	96%	89
A person working within the London Borough of Barnet area	0%	0
Barnet business	1%	1
Representing a school	0%	0
Representing a voluntary/community organisation	1%	1
Representing a public-sector organisation	0%	0
Other	0%	0
Prefer not to say	2%	2
<b>Total who answered this question</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>93</b>
Not Answered		47
<b>Total response to the consultation</b>		<b>140</b>

There was also one written response via e mail. The response has been incorporated into the findings and further details are provided in section 3.6 of this report.

### 2.4.2 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, sex, sex reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marital status.

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 over the page shows the profile of those who answered these questions. However, due to the low completion of these questions However, due to the low completion of these questions, it has not been possible to do any demographic analysis on the consultation findings.



## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

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

Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
Age		
16-17	1	1%
18-24	2	1%
25-34	10	7%
35-44	17	12%
45-54	9	6%
55-64	15	11%
65-74	17	12%
75+	8	6%
Prefer not to say	13	9%
Not answered	48	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sex		
Female	28	20%
Male	47	34%
If you prefer your own term	1	1%
Prefer not to say	13	9%
Not answered	51	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Is the sex you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?		
Yes, it's the same	72	51%
No, it's different	0	0%
Prefer not to say	13	9%
Not answered	55	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability		
Yes	8	6%
No	66	47%
Prefer not to say	15	11%
Not answered	51	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
Ethnicity		
Asian	6	4%
Black	3	2%
Mixed	3	2%
Other	4	3%
White	60	43%
Prefer not to say	12	9%
Not answered	52	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Faith		
Baha'i	0	0%
Buddhist	2	0%
Christian	28	15%
Hindu	2	5%
Humanist	0	0%
Jain	1	2%
Jewish	10	8%
Muslim	4	1%
Sikh	0	0%
No religion	20	24%
Other Faith	1	1%
Prefer not to say	12	14%
Not answered	52	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Pregnancy and maternity leave		
Pregnant	1	1%
On maternity leave	1	1%
Neither	29	21%
Prefer not to say	10	7%
Not answered	99	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	1	1%
Gay or Lesbian	3	2%
Straight or heterosexual	55	39%
Other sexual orientation	4	3%
Prefer not to say	24	17%
Not answered	53	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

Marital Status		
Single	12	9%
Co-habiting	5	4%
Married	47	34%
Divorced	4	3%
Widowed	3	2%
In a same sex civil partnership	0	0%
Prefer not to say	16	11%
Not answered	53	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2.5 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.
- Due to the small total sample size the findings have been reported on in terms of percentages and numbers.
- 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 the overall budget for 2023/24

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposed budget for 2023/24. 140 respondents completed this question.

Table 3 below shows that:

- A third of respondents agree (31%, 43 out of 140 respondents) with the council's proposed budget for 2023/24 (3%, 4 out of 140 respondents strongly agree, and 28%, 39 out of 140 respondents tend to agree).
- Just under half disagree (46%, 64 out of 140 respondents) with the council's proposed budget for 2023/24 (20%, 28 out of 140 respondents tend to disagree, and 27%, 36 out of 140 respondents strongly disagree).
- The remainder were either neutral (18%, 25 out of 140 respondents) or said they did not know or were not sure (6%, 8 out of 140 respondents).

**Table 3: Respondents' level of support for the proposed budget for 2023/24**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed budget for 2023/24?	%	Base
Strongly agree	3%	4
Tend to agree	28%	39
Neither agree nor disagree	18%	25
Tend to disagree	20%	28
Strongly disagree	26%	36
Don't know / not sure	6%	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>140</b>

### 3.2 Views on proposals to increase Council Tax in 2023/24

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following statements most closely aligns to their opinion in terms of the Council Tax proposals for 2023/24. 94 respondents completed this question.

Overall, around half of respondents (48%, 48 out of 94 respondents who completed this question) **support some sort of Council Tax increase to help fund the budget gap in 2023/24** - a third (33%) support both council tax increases. However, half of respondents do not support any increases in Council Tax in 2023/24 (49%, 45 out of 94 respondents)

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Table 4 below shows that:

- A third of respondent's (33%, 31 out of 94 respondents) **support both the council's proposals on Council Tax**: the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% and the proposal to apply a further 2.0% Social Care Precept in 2023/24
- A minority of respondents (11%, 10 out of 94 respondents) **support only** the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% in 2023/24
- A smaller minority of respondents (7%, 7 out of 94 respondents) **support only** the proposal to apply a 2% Adult Social Care Precept to Council Tax in 2023/24
- Around half of respondents (49%, 45 out of 94 respondents) **do not support either of the council's proposals to increase Council Tax in 2023/24**: the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% and the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2023/24.

**Table 4: Respondents' level of support for proposed Council Tax increases**

Please indicate which of the statements below most closely aligns to your opinion in terms of our Council Tax proposals?	%	Base
I support the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% in 2023/24 and also support the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2023/24	33%	31
I support the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 1.8% in 2023/24 only	11%	10
I support the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2023/24 only	7%	7
I do not support any of the proposals to increase general Council Tax or any increase on the Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax 2023/24	49%	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94</b>

### 3.3 Views on Theme Committee saving/income proposals for 2023/24

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with each of the saving and income proposals identified for each of the Theme Committees in 2023/24. 90 to 94 respondents completed these questions. Table 5 over the page shows that:

- **Children’s, Education and Safeguarding Committee received the highest level of support**, with half of respondents (50%, 47 out of 94 respondents) indicating they agree with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee for 2023/24.
- **Public Health and Wellbeing Board**, which had no savings or income generation proposals, received **the second highest level of support**, with just under half of respondents (48%, 45 out of 94 respondents) agreeing
- **Adults and Safeguarding Committee received the third highest level of support** with two fifths of respondents (39%, 37 out of 94 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee for 2023/24.
- **Community Leadership and Libraries Committee, Housing and Growth Committee, and Environment and Climate Change Committee** all had similar levels of support, with around **a third of respondents agreeing** with the saving and income proposals identified within these committees for 2023/24:
  - Community Leadership and Libraries, 35% of respondents agreed (32 out of 92 respondents) with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee
  - Committee and Housing and Growth Committee, 34% of respondents agreed (32 out of 93 respondents) with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee
  - Environment and Climate Change Committee 33% of respondents agreed (31 out of 90 respondents) with the saving and income proposals identified within this committee.
- **Policy and Resources Committee** received the **least support** for their saving and income proposals, with a quarter of respondents (27%, 25 out of 93 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income generation proposals identified within this committee for 2023/24.

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

**Table 5: Views on the savings and income proposals identified by each Theme Committee**

Theme Committee	Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Don't know / not sure		No comment		Total
	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	Base
Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee	50%	47	14%	13	21%	20	6%	6	9%	8	94
Public Health, Health and Well-being board	48%	45	13%	12	21%	20	9%	8	10%	9	94
Adults and Safeguarding Committee	39%	37	12%	11	34%	32	6%	6	9%	8	94
Community Leadership and Libraries Committee	35%	32	25%	23	27%	25	5%	5	8%	7	92
Housing and Growth Committee	34%	32	18%	17	35%	33	5%	5	6%	6	93
Environment and Climate Change Committee	33%	31	14%	13	43%	40	4%	4	6%	6	94
Policy and Resources Committee	27%	25	24%	22	30%	28	10%	9	10%	9	93

### 3.4 Additional comments on Theme Committee saving/income proposals

Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the saving and income proposals identified for each theme committee for 2023/24. Of those who responded to the consultation, 40 out of 140 gave a response to this question.

The responses to this question were varied and a summary of the most common themes, with a response of four comments or more, have been summarised below.

Further details of the type comments received are provided in table 6 over the page.

- *Disagree with / Can't afford Council Tax increases* (Seven comments)
- *Too much spent on Policy and Resources Budget/ management* (Seven comments)
- *Improvements needed to parks, pavements and facilities* (Five comments)
- *Increase spending needed on environment, climate change, public transport and active travel* (Five comments)
- *Not enough detail on where the money will be spent:* (Five comments)
- *Concern with the level of funding on Adult Social Care and the impact on the most vulnerable* (Four comments)
- *Concern over pressure from NHS for continuing care costs* (Four comments)
- *Need for more housing especially social/ affordable* (Four comments)

Table 6 over the page gives full details of the types of comments received.

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

**Table 6: Comments on the saving and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24**

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	40
Description / Type of verbatim comments	
<p><b>Disagree with / Can't afford Council Tax increases:</b> Each Committee budgets does not make sense against the last 2 years budgets. Overall the increase to Council Tax is going to be substantial, together with the Mayor's added increase, and the spending you have undertaken drawing down from reserves, overall looks like a significant increase beyond what is realistic and logical to maintain, in the long term will impact services overall at the expense of the Residents/ I do not agree with the 2% Precept, as a family we just can't afford this, on top of higher food prices, higher gas &amp; electric bills, higher mortgages due to interest rates increases. I am barely accepting the 1.8% council tax increase, but not the 2% Precept. / How much is the council spending outsourcing work to Capita? Surely this work could more efficiently, &amp; cost effectively managed in-house. We live in a small two-bedroom flat and pay over £200 a month in council tax. Raising it would be unaffordable/ Make more savings / Higher reductions should be put in place in all areas/ There is no detail to say what you're cutting back on/ Before you raise council tax for residents you should be able to show clearly that you have exhausted what you already have without waste.</p>	7
<p><b>Too much spent on Policy &amp; Resources Budget/ management:</b> I don't understand the breadth and need for the Policy and Resources Committee, which accounts for a quarter of the proposed budget. It sounds like this committee is responsible for the financial &amp; administrative activities of the council (more overhead-based), whereas the others are responsible for tangible services and activities. [...]more savings should come from that committee&amp; the others were restored based on their full anticipated needs. /Why do we need such a big budget for this? Too much bureaucracy, red tape and overpaid managerial jobs/ Sack your woke managers who contribute nothing at all/ more cost cutting in central services e.g. HR &amp; areas such as diversity training to fund [cleaning of streets, pavements and parks]/ I think policy &amp; resources budget should be further reviewed and the money saved could further increase the budgets of the areas of higher need/ I strongly disagree with the Policy &amp; Resources Committee having a budget of £94m, it is absolutely outrageous! This should be reduced to under £35m &amp; remaining £59m to be split between Adults &amp; Safeguarding/ Children, Education and Safeguarding/ I am uncertain what actually controls???</p>	7
<p><b>Improvements needed to parks, pavements and facilities:</b> If you are going to charge for tennis court hire, they need to be in good enough condition. Often the tarmac is uneven/cracked, the nets have holes in or have fallen. I agree with reduced weed spraying. Far better for the environment. Also, your neighbourhood Skips Service is too limited to large items. I am a single woman of 60 - how the heck am I supposed to lug a washing machine or a gate as far as the skip? I would give my broken toaster, etc, if accepted. The criteria for using skips is a bit silly and very limiting/ more resources needed to enable better cleaning of streets, pavements and parks that are frankly disgusting in Barnet / Reducing the weed spray levels is a mistake. The cost savings since 2010 are based on the Capita contract which you are abolishing and have always denied / Stop spending on Graham Park / Colindale / Burnt Oak, all community funding is wasted in one area. Spend in Muswell Hill - start by fixing the pavements - cleaning the streets - providing free bulky items collections. Build a leisure centre in Muswell Hill. Refurbish South Friern library. / Community skips unnecessary and a waste of money at this moment in time. Many community events are unnecessary at this moment in time. Subsidised rent developments unnecessary at this moment in time especially at 50% market rent</p>	5



## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	40
Description / Type of verbatim comments	
<p><b>Increase spending needed on environment, climate change, public transport and active travel:</b> would be great to see an increase in spending for environmental and climate change considering that a greener borough brings definitely an array of mental and physical health benefits to the public/ Environment and climate change committee needs more funding: we are severely lagging compared to neighbouring boroughs/ H&amp;G_sav2 - can more solar panels be installed on Council buildings with higher savings? Why no specific examination of widespread energy efficiency retrofits of Council buildings, partnering with the Green Finance Institute? ENV5 - Parking review does not mention the potential of examining installation of solar panels above parking lots which could generate revenue for council and make it more pleasant for people parking (avoiding rain, keeping cars cool). Council should review potential for differentiated parking charges for EV vs convention cars. ENV14 - Tennis courts - I oppose introduction of a charging/fee as this would negatively impact the health of people on low incomes by making people pay for our free parks. This is unjust and inequitable. SSOP1 - EV charging - I support roll out of EV charging for streets that lack off street parking but Council should allow residents to install their own as well, H&amp;G_sav31 - Sustainability team budget - No justification is given for reducing this budget, so it should be maintained, Assur_sav6 - Mayors office car leasing - ensure all are electric/ I strongly believe in environment I can't see where such budget has been or is to be invested and it seems to be going to pockets or into private firms (very concerning)/ For the Environment and Climate Change Committee's £34m, how much will go towards Public Transport and Active Travel infrastructure?</p>	5
<p><b>Not enough detail on where the money will be spent</b> Not enough detail on what the money will be spent on so hard for resident to give an informed view of whether you are doing the right thing. It is very disappointing and makes me feel that you don't really want my view, you just want to be able to raise taxes and say you consulted on it/ Based on this level of detail it seems very difficult for anyone to make an informed &amp; useful response/ Where are the details of the income generation proposals? Where are the details of where the Council's income comes from? / No information in the Budget Consultation document which describes exactly / Need more information on what each of these 7 Theme Committees spend money on. For example, without clear detail on what the £119.3 million spent on "Adult and Safeguarding" actually entails, it is impossible to comment on how that compares with or what the appropriate increase or decrease should be for next year versus £98.9 million spent on "Policy&amp; Resources" without knowing exactly what those entails.</p>	5
<p><b>Concern with the level of funding on Adult Social Care and the impact on the most vulnerable</b> Whilst I welcome the emphasis on Prevention in learning disability and mental health particularly I do have concerns at how the level of savings will be achieved and the impact this may have on eligibility thresholds. Frankly, I find the conclusion of the EIAs rather optimistic. It is important that the Council has the social work structure in place to support Prevention and that there is close working with provider organisations and their expertise/ We welcome the plans for progression work (Adult Social Care), but they will need to be carefully planned if they are to be effective. It is important to work with residents and families, so that they have information and confidence to make the envisaged changes. It is important to support preventative approaches to help manage demand fairly / Strongly Disagree. Yet another cut to the budget of one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Barnet's Community Care Assessments are being conducted illegally: the 9 areas of Wellbeing as identified under the 2014 Care Act are not being identified as all the areas of need. At present only 'Eligible Needs' are being met. The 9 Areas of Wellbeing needs which are not being met, are not recorded as unmet need, therefore the budget cannot take</p>	4

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	40
Description / Type of verbatim comments	
account of them. The 'eligible' needs that are met is what budget will allow and may not correspond to those identified by the vulnerable person as the most important for their Wellbeing. It was this poor practice that brought the Care Act into being. The assumption of 'progression' is both patronising, & for those with a permanent disability, disingenuous. As is the concept of 'Strengths Based Practise'. Changes in care packages that might lead to dissatisfaction cannot be legal under the Care Act. I am personally aware of service users who have either been offered services which don't meet their needs, or not offered services at all that would have qualified under the Care Act/ I am supportive of the council needing to spend more on vulnerable people.	
<b>Concern over pressure from NHS for continuing care costs</b> - While a 'saving' of £1m plus would be welcome for the Council in essence this is basically cost-shunting within the public sector - we were attempting this over 30 years ago and weren't too successful then! If you are successful what other services might be reduced by the NHS causing additional cost pressures on LBB / I think the tables should be clear against which committees the adult social care levy is being used and how this is enabling those budgets to grow proportionately faster than the other areas. This levy should be for additional investment in these areas, not to be offset elsewhere/ Why yet again are we paying for social care? This should be funded by the government / Surely there is discrepancies how so much of the budget is spent on this category. I don't have all the details but there surely can be much larger savings reducing this budget	4
<b>Need for more housing especially social/ affordable</b> More SOCIAL housing for rent is needed in Barnet/ Approve the intention to acquire housing as affordable housing and for housing applicants and temporary accommodation/ If you don't act now and do something about the housing crisis, it will lead to much bigger challenges in the future, on education, health, security, and other areas. / You are reducing investment in some of the areas that need it the most, especially housing. If you don't act now and do something about the housing crisis, it will lead to much bigger challenges in the future, on education, health, security, and other areas/ I strongly believe in less housing benefit support and more in housing growth support within return will benefit business and the resident housing crisis.	4
<b>Concern over Education budget:</b> This budget should increase by 20% at least to help protect and build whatever is our future which is largely depending on our children and their education. / The children and education proposals are noticeably incomplete. The impact on poorer families, of e.g. increasing income from traded services and DofE, do not seem to have been adequately assessed. There is less sign of truly transformative approaches being considered in this theme/ Barnet Early Years Alliance (BEYA) to start paying the £80k lease for St Margaret's from Early Years funding which previously the Council has been paying. This saving will only be taken forward if the increase in government funding to Maintained Nursery Schools, which has recently been consulted on, goes ahead/ The children and education proposals are noticeably incomplete. The impact on poorer families, of e.g. increasing income from traded services & DofE, do not seem to have been adequately assessed. There is less sign of truly transformative approaches being considered in this theme	3
<b>More funding needed for Public Health:</b> I wondered why there has been no plan by the Public Health, Health and Well-being board. Health and Well-being is the anchor upon which every other concern rest and able to thrive, survive/ I am very against closing Finchley Lido. The building, whilst poor in design, is well-used by a large cross-section of the community. If closed, I am convinced that alternative provision will not be forthcoming and that yet another public sports facility will be lost to Londoners. The negative impact on health cannot be underestimated. /NHS is very mismanaged, personally I've had the best customer service experience and worst in	3

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
<b>Number of respondents who completed this question</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Description / Type of verbatim comments</b>	
different NHS teams hence my comment. I believe the budget needs to be increased but much better scrutinised and correctly managed.	
<b>Comment on the proposal to reduce adult care dependency through work opportunity:</b> Approve of the intention to provide more home-based adult service to reduce the need for residential care. Concerned about the attempt to reduce "dependency" though providing job opportunities. / We welcome the employment initiatives and proposals to carve out council posts. It is important to support preventative approaches to help manage demand fairly.	2
<b>Comment on parking:</b> Don't see how the huge saving on "parking" is to be achieved. Is it a huge hike in parking charges, or cut in traffic wardens? / You have not been clear how you raise money from Parking charges.	2
<b>Concern of the creation of new tower blocks:</b> Building new units on top of existing ones is going to create tower blocks? Do we really need these? Can you not find other, lower-level Brown Field sites to use? Stop building houses & Flats	2
<b>Agree with Council Tax increases</b> I understand the desire to limit the increase, but the council tax in Barnet is so much lower than for neighbouring boroughs. It is crucial we increase funding for local services by the maximum possible each year for the next 5 years. We cannot look after vulnerable residents, house people that need help given how unaffordable it now is to live in Barnet, have clean and safe streets, and also tackle climate change without generating the income to pay for that. / We support the council using the maximum social care precept, and to maintaining services.	2
<b>Support for greater resident engagement:</b> We also strongly support the work to engage residents - children, adults and families, so that their voices are heard. The budget consultation notes mention the financial cost of COVID but we feel it is still having a huge social impact on people.	1
<b>Budget need more cuts in Adults and Safeguarding Committee:</b> 10 million more spending for adults and safeguarding spending is too much, which should be Re-distributed more evenly between the other committee.	1
<b>Not enough spent on Libraries:</b> Community Leadership and Libraries - why is there no provision for increasing funding for libraries to return to paid for staff?	1
<b>Too much spent on "Community Leadership and Libraries":</b> Do we really need to spend £15M on "Community Leadership and Libraries"? Is the money not better be put into Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee or Public Health needs?	1
<b>Reconsider advertising income from billboards:</b> advertising income from bill boards on Council buildings seems very crass commercialism. Please reconsider this.	1
<b>Reduce budget for environment&amp; climate change:</b> It is ridiculous to pump money into the Environment& Climate Change committee when people are struggling to survive	1
<b>Could not get links to work in consultation document</b>	1
<b>Total number of different types of comments</b>	<b>62<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Respondents gave more than one type of comment. A total of 62 different types of comments were received from the 40 respondents who answered this question.

### 3.5 Additional comments on the proposed budget for 2023/24

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make about the council's proposed budget for 2023/24. Of those who responded to the consultation, 53 out of 140 gave a response to this question.

Again, the responses to this question were varied and the most common themes, with a response of three comments or more have been summarised over the page.

- *Cost of living means council tax should be minimised: (Seventeen Comments).*
- *I would support a higher increase in Council tax: (Nine comments).*
- *Reduced Policy and Resources Budget/ management costs/ insourcing (Three comments).*
- *This seems to go against labour's manifesto promise: (Three comments).*
- *Budget not sustainable / Not credible: (Three comments)*

Table 7 over the page gives full details of the types of comments received under each theme committee. Comments that were only cited by one respondent are grouped as 'other' under each theme committee.

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

**Table 7: Further comments about the proposed budget for 2023/24**

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	53
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<p><b>Cost of living means council tax should be minimised:</b> With the rising cost of living, any amount of money required from residents is an added burden, reduction of families' disposable income and potential crime generator, shoplifting, for example. / There's no free cash with food, power etc going up. I fear that services will need to be cut / Should not be an increase of 2% precept on council tax as already the council tax increase of 1.8% is demanding to the residents. Should be found and discussed other ways to raise that money. Eventually, maybe agree and apply the increase of precept only when all other possibilities have been exhausted. / Everyone has to make savings times are hard / I know it's difficult to set a budget. However, even people who live in larger properties cannot afford to pay a Council Tax increase of 3% and counting. We have wages below inflation and huge bills to pay as well, you know. / 3.8% increase is unaffordable at present and the council should be cutting back further or not wasting money on unnecessary new projects like skips. / In light of the current cost of living crises with the massive increase in energy cost and rising prices all round, any further tax increase will send people into a state of being unable to live and the knock on effect of this will cause more local services to be required and a vicious circle of tax increases whereas lower taxes would relieve the burden partially resulting in less local services being required /This is a dramatic combined increase impacting households. Please re-consider and lower in increase to contributions to not more than 2%. / Please stop 1.8% council tax increase and the 2% adult precept. Nowadays we work just to cover bills and don't have left over to do anything else, we have to abstain from doing anything to get some joy in this life because what we earn covers just bills, mortgage and food. We just can't afford a council tax increase and a 2% adult precept in addition ... we are not cash cows ... please stop these increases! / The proposal to increase taxes from an already outstandingly high level during this economic crisis period for households is astonishing to me. Will taxes ever go back down from these sorts of levels where they will soon begin to approach PAYE levels and will be effectively another form of income tax on individuals and therefore be effectively doubling the already terribly high tax burdens. / Council tax is a huge amount of money every month to owners of properties and renters alike / Another tax increase, when people are already dealing with the biggest cost of living crisis in recent times, goes against everything we should stand for. Now is the time to alleviate taxation, especially for those who are struggling the most. / I can't afford any increases. I am working hard with no pay increases. / We are already paying high council charges, paying extra for recycling. Most people's wages have not increased in line with inflation which means that we are earning less but paying more for everything. Labour will not retain the council if they increase council tax in the current economic climate. They should freeze it - the cost of living crisis is too great for ordinary people to pay more. Most of the services you mention will not affect the great majority of paying council tax residents. / Yes, some of us will not get a pay rise in April and are struggling to pay Bill's but get no help as a so-called middle earner, I would be better off on benefits. And now you want to take even more from me / Cut council tax / There should be a reduction and not an increase due to the cost of living</p>	<p>17</p>

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	53
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<p><b>I would support a higher increase in Council tax:</b> I think councils should increase council tax to the maximum permitted - residents expect all sorts of services to be provided, how do they expect these to be funded? Not sure that central government should be able to dictate levels of council tax increases - surely these are local matters, otherwise why have a council at all? / Barnet's services have been decimated by the outsourcing experiment by the previous administration. Their attempts to deliver zero Council Tax increase during inflation was irresponsible. To bring the income up to the amount to deliver a half decent service, increases must be made, and I OPPOSE 1% REFUND of the social care premium from the previous year. The Campaign for Real Care will continue to fight for the full implementation of the Care Act to ensure that the service users remain in control of their needs, and services. / I think you should increase the council tax even more. I can afford it and there are people in need. I know that would go against a Labour Party promise, so your hands are tied. / I value good local services and care for the vulnerable in our community. Therefore, I agree with the increase in the council tax and the 2% increase in adult social care precept / I disagreed with the refund of the 1% increase planned for 2022-23. I thought this was an unwise election gimmick in the current economic climate. I would like to see the tax for 2023-24 increase by 2.8%, not 1.8% / I understand you cannot go back on a political promise for the 1%, but please stop making promises to do expensive and unnecessary things like collecting bins every week, rebating tax increases. We need to create a more equitable and sustainable society. So please think about playgrounds and parks, caring for our elderly, and insulating and increasing the number of affordable homes. / An option to increase Council Tax by 3% should be included. Have there not been years or decades of under-taxation? / I appreciate that you have a commitment from the manifesto to 'refund' some of last year's increase - however I believe that much of Barnet's financial issues stem from not applying the full increase allowed in previous years and the cumulative effect of that. I think that the full C Tax increase allowed without a referendum, plus the Social Care precept should have been considered, and at least offered as an option in this exercise. / We understand the council's manifesto commitment but feel that council tax rises could be higher than 1.8%. Barnet has under-used its tax-raising powers in recent years and we need more investment in local services. The pressure on contract prices is having an impact on recruitment and retention in the VCS. We appreciate the potential impact on residents who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and would want to see these impacts mitigated.</p>	9
<p><b>Budget not sustainable / Not credible:</b> How can anyone believe what you have proposed, it is not credible. You are spending from the reserves. This is NOT sustainable. / Wasteful expenditure increased cuts in the wrong places overall a very poor show/ / This budget is unnecessarily high and should be reconsidered in all areas. / Barnet Council has received notoriety for mismanagement over the years. After such a long period of suffering from bad leadership &amp; management residents are now being asked to pay for a recovery. Where is the evidence that increased council tax will provide better services. Also, why is the top priority safeguarding for adults rather than public health, for AK and informal education and housing?</p>	3

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	53
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<p><b>Reduced Policy and Resources Budget/ management costs/ insourcing.</b>                      The council can do much more to reduce office costs with remote working, reducing carbon footprint and use increased saving in areas of more need. There is also a need to reduce senior manager costs and return services inhouse, including housing functions. / I think the levels of Council Tax levied in Barnet are already far too high. I was disappointed in 2022 to see some of that money (per a ward update leaflet I received) being spent on the harassment of homeless people. Barnet remains one of the few boroughs in North London with no food waste collection. Barnet Council outsources many of its services to Capita, and also uses Capita-owned companies to carry out aggressive and disproportionate debt collections (including bailiffs who act outside the law—I have experienced this myself). I would strongly recommend you seek savings through in-housing services and making cuts to management expenditure rather than squeezing those of us unlucky enough to live here. / Save money by reducing the layers or bureaucracy and waste in the Council</p>	3
<p><b>This seems to go against labour's manifesto promise:</b> 1% rebate now seems like a con. / The Labour manifesto was for a cut/ proposal is very disappointing in terms of democracy. Election was less than 1 year ago &amp; the Labour councillors were clear in their manifesto that they were opposed to increasing council tax. We had a rise this year, so there should have been no rise for 23-24. The claim they have delivered on the manifesto by increasing it by less than they would have done otherwise appears deceitful. It undermines the democratic process and trust in the party. There are many first-time Labour voters living here and this is a really disappointing experience. If there is to be a rise for 2023-24 then this should be communicated as a 2.8% increase plus a reversal of last year. There would then need to be a refund to all households of the 1% extra they paid in 22-23. / You clearly stated in your manifesto that you were refund the 1% social care precept from last year's proposal. But as will all politics, you have u-turned on that.</p>	4
<p><b>The squeezed middle get no services:</b> People in the middle are always getting targeted with new taxes. We have nothing in return. No zebra crossings along GPW, lots of rubbish and leaves across the streets, unsafe neighbourhoods. Try tackling these issues first and make some citizens happy too. / Yes, some of us will not get a pay rise in April and are struggling to pay Bill's but get no help as a so called middle earner, I would be better off on benefits. And now you want to take even more from me</p>	2
<p><b>More expenditure on improving roads and pavements:</b> Much more needs to be spent on rectifying the very poor road and pavement conditions in Barnet/ Would like the pavement and more drop kerbs to relayed for a wheelchair user</p>	2
<p><b>Not enough detail on where the money will be spent:</b> Give some detail on the plans and I'll be able to tell you. The consultation document is far too basic for any insight whatsoever. / Please provide a breakdown of each thematic expense</p>	2
<p><b>Housing should be a priority:</b> Housing is very important.</p>	1
<p><b>Looking forward to service improvements:</b> I look forward to seeing all the improvements that the detailed document indicates.</p>	1

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24

Do you have any comments to make about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each committee for 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	53
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<b>Council tax rate shouldn't be based on size of house:</b> Not sure i understand what he value/size of a house has to do with how much tax is paid. On a daily basis i see people is "small" accommodation, paying low rates of tax, but using two rubbish bins, parking on pavements, causing noise/air etc pollution and no one from the council seems to care (please don't ask me to call your "help" numbers - do try calling them yourselves to see the lack of any meaningful response) - I strongly believe that everyone should be either paying the same tax irrespective of the size of their house or even better create a system where people pay for whatever facilities they use.	1
<b>More money must be spent on cycle infrastructure:</b> Although money should be spent on to help decarbonise, more money must be spent on cycle infrastructure than EV chargers. As well as decarbonising, cycling is better for health and would reduce pressure on health services,	1
<b>No more development of new homes:</b> Stop building houses & flats - The borough is overcrowded as it is with no additional doctors/dentists etc.	1
<b>No expenditure on community events:</b> Cancel all expenditure on woke events such as black history month - it is divisive. Winter Festival? do you mean Christmas?	1
<b>Unsure about the adult social care levy:</b> I agree with the 1.8% increase in council tax but am unsure about the adult social care levy of 2%. Only because the system needs a shakeup first and streamlining before pouring more money into it because you need a review first to see which areas require funding most and then do a consultation on this.	1
<b>My area needs regeneration:</b> My doctors' surgery is in an old house not a nice new building like so many people enjoy. the stairs are rickety, and the whole environment is one of at least 70 years ago	1
<b>There should be a voluntary higher rate of council tax:</b> A well-publicised option and campaign should be created for people with relatively higher incomes to voluntarily pay additional Council tax i.e., if XX thousand people paid the 3% increase, it could close X% of the budget gap	1
<b>Safer streets a priority:</b> Stop wasting money on the environment and increase the safety of our streets	1
<b>Council tax increase should be in step with economic growth:</b> Council Tax increases to that extent under the current markets is not the correct approach to cover budgets. Council Tax increase of 0.5% and reviewed every 2 years makes sense from economic growth. However, mismanaged reflect all community. Additional Medium size business support from tax reliefs or employment support would multiply our economy growth. The higher earning few businesses should have tax contribution obligation to make up the budget growth which in return should prioritise children education sector.	1
<b>Could not get links to work in consultation document</b>	1
<b>Total number of different types of comments</b>	<b>55</b>



## 3.6 Written response to consultation

One response was received via e mail from a Barnet resident and referred to roads and potholes in Barnet:

- *When will something be done about our roads? The potholes just get bigger and bigger, and you cannot avoid them. It's disgusting that they are not fixed correctly instead of just patching them up.*