

# **Appendix G**

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## **Business Planning 2024/25**

## **Final Report General Budget Consultation 2024/25**

**21 December 2023 – 21 January 2024**

**Consultation Team, Strategy**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the findings from the General Budget Consultation 2024/25 which will be presented as part of the budget paper at Cabinet on 6 February 2024 and Council on 27 February 2024.

### 1.1 Response to the consultation

- a total of 114 questionnaires were completed
- the majority (92%) of responses were from residents
- additionally, two written responses were also received via email, one from a resident and one from a local business.

### 1.2 Summary of consultation approach

- the consultation ran from 21 December 2023 to 21 January 2024.
- 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' weekly newsletter, Barnet First resident's paper magazine delivered to all household in the boroughs; Barnet Together newsletter, the website; and X (formerly Twitter).

### 1.3 Summary of key findings

#### 1.3.1 Views on the overall budget for 2024/25

- **Around a quarter of respondents agree** (24%, 27 out of 114 respondents) with the council's proposed budget for 2024/25 (4%, 4 out of 114 respondents strongly agree, and 20%, 23 out of 114 respondents tend to agree).
- **Under half disagree** (47%, 53 out of 114 respondents) with the council's proposed budget for 2024/25 (24%, 27 out of 114 respondents tend to disagree, and 23%, 26 out of 114 respondents strongly disagree).
- The remainder were **either neutral** (19%, 22 out of 114 respondents), said they **did not know**, or **were not sure** (11%, 12 out of 114 respondents).

## 1.3.2 Views on the council's Council Tax proposals for 2024/25

**Overall, over half of respondents** (55%, 41 out of 75 respondents who completed this question), **support one or both of the Council Tax increases** to help fund the budget gap in 2024/25. This includes around a third (32%) who support both council tax increases. Under half of respondents do not support any increases in Council Tax in 2024/25 (45%, 34 out of 75 respondents):

- Around a third of respondents (32%, 24 out of 75 respondents) **support both the council's proposals on Council Tax**: the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.98% and the proposal to apply a further 2.0% Social Care Precept in 2024/25
- Around one in seven respondents (15%, 11 out of 75 respondents) **support only the proposal to increase general Council Tax** by 2.98% in 2024/25
- Around one in twelve respondents (8%, 6 out of 75 respondents) **support only the proposal to apply a 2% Adult Social Care Precept to Council Tax** in 2024/25
- Under half of respondents (45%, 34 out of 75 respondents) **do not support either of the council's proposals to increase Council Tax in 2024/25**: neither the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.98% nor the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2024/25.

## 1.3.3 Views on Directorate saving and income proposals for 2024/25

- **The Public Health (PH) Directorate**: around a third of respondents (32%, 24 out of 76 respondents) agreed with the savings and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Just under a third of respondents (30%, 23 out of 76 respondents) disagree with the savings identified within this directorate. Around a fifth of respondents indicated they were neutral (21%, 16 out of 76 respondents). The remainder said they did not know, (11%, 8 out of 76) or had no comments to make about the PH savings (8%, 5 out of 76).
- **The Communities, Adults and Health (CA&H) Directorate**: just over quarter of respondents (27%, 21 out of 77 respondents) agree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. However, more respondents, with around two fifths of respondents (43%, 32 out of 77 respondents), indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder indicated they were either neutral (14%, 11 out of 77), they did not know (9%, 7 out of 77), or did not wish to comment on these savings (9%, 6 out of 77 respondents).
- **The Children and Family Services (C&FS) Directorate**: around a quarter of respondents (26%, 20 out of 76 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Around two fifths of respondents (38%, 29 out of 76 respondents), indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (17%, 13 out of 76), or indicated they did not know (9%, 7 out of 76), or did not wish to comment on these savings (9%, 7 out of 76).

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- **The Customer and Place (C&P) Directorate:** around a quarter of respondents (24%, 18 out of 76 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. A third of respondents (33%, 25 out of 76 respondents), indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (22%, 17 out of 76), or indicated they did not know (9%, 7 out of 76), or they did not wish to comment on these savings (12%, 9 out of 76).
- **The Strategy and Resources (S&R) Directorate:** just under a quarter of respondents (23%, 18 out of 77 respondents) agreeing with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Just over a third of respondents (35%, 27 out of 77 respondents) indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (17%, 13 out of 77), or said they did not know (12%, 9 out of 77), or they did not wish to comment on these savings (12%, 9 out of 77 respondents).
- **The cross-cutting council savings:** around a quarter of respondents (26%, 20 out of 77 respondents) agree with the saving and income proposals identified for 2024/25. Just under a quarter (23%, 18 out of respondents) disagree with the saving and income proposals within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (13%, 10 out of 77 respondents) said they did not know (16%, 12 out of 77), or the did not want to comment on these savings (22%, 17 out of 77).
- **The Assurance Directorate:** around a fifth of respondents (21%, 16 out of 77 respondents) agree with the savings and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. However, similar to CA&H, C&FS C&P and S&R), more respondents (30%, 23 out of 77 respondents) indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within the directorate. The remainder were either neutral (19%, 15 out of 77), said they did not know (13%, 10 out of 77), or indicated they did not wish to comment on these savings (17%, 13 out of 77 respondents).

### 1.3.4 Further comments on Directorate saving and income proposals for 2024/25

Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the saving and income proposals identified for each Directorate for 2024/25. Of those who responded to the consultation, 31 out of 114 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 three comments or more, have been summarised below.

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

- *Comments on Adult Social Care: (Six comments)*
- *Would like more details of the of the savings / Further breakdown of savings required / Not enough detail provided on specific savings in plain English: (Six comments)*
- *Disagree with Council Tax increases / Total increase in Council Tax is unaffordable for people and families struggling more than ever: (Four comments)*
- *Comments on funding to Strategy and Resources: (Four comments)*
- *More savings should be made: (Three comments)*

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

### 1.3.5 Additional further comments on the proposed budget for 2024/25

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make about the council's proposed budget for 2024/25. Of those who responded to the consultation, 40 out of 114 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.

- *I do not agree with the Council Tax increase/ it is too big: (Fifteen Comments).*
- *Central government should provide more funding to local: (Four comments).*
- *Council should ensure there is no expenditure wastage: (Three comments).*
- *I support a greater increase in Council tax: (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 2024/25 have been subject to a formal public consultation.

This report sets out the full findings from the council's consultation on its Business Plan 2024/25. The findings will be considered by Council on 27 February 2024, where the final decision on the council's budget for 2024/25 will be taken.

### 2.2 Summary of consultation approach

The 2024/25 General Budget Consultation began after Cabinet on 21 December 2023 and concluded on 21 January 2024.

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 2024/25 savings. The outcomes of these consultations are being reported into Directorate 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 e newsletter, the council's website, the Barnet Together Newsletter, the Barnet Business Buzz Newsletter, and Twitter.

## 2.3.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents' views on the overall size and individual components of the proposed 2024/25 budget. In particular the consultation invited views on the:

- overall budget, and savings and income generation proposals for 2024/25.
- proposal to increase General Council Tax by 2.98% in 2024/25.
- 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 Directorate. Links to further information on each of the Directorate's portfolios was also provided.

## 2.4 Response to the consultation

A total of 114 questionnaires were completed – all were submitted online. Two 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	%	Number
A Barnet resident	57.9%	66
A person working within the London Borough of Barnet area	0.9%	1
A Barnet business	0.9%	1
Representing a school	0.0%	0
Representing a voluntary/community organisation	0.9%	1
Representing a public sector organisation	0.9%	1
Other	0.9%	1
Prefer not to say	0.9%	1
<b>Total who answered this question</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>72</b>
Not Answered	36.8%	42
<b>Total response to consultation</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>114</b>

There were also two written responses 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, race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

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, 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	%
<b>Age</b>		
16-17	0	0.0%
18-24	1	0.9%
25-34	7	6.1%
35-44	9	7.9%
45-54	11	9.6%
55-64	11	9.6%
65-74	10	8.8%
75+	12	10.5%
Prefer not to say	8	7.0%
Not answered	45	39.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Sex</b>		
Female	26	22.8%
Male	32	28.1%
If you prefer your own term	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	10	8.8%
Not answered	46	40.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
<b>Gender reassignment</b>		
Yes, it's the same	58	50.9%
No, it's different	1	0.9%
Prefer not to say	9	7.9%
Not answered	46	40.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	8	8.8%
No	66	42.1%
Prefer not to say	15	7.9%
Not answered	51	41.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Race</b>		
Asian	3	2.6%
Black	4	3.5%
Mixed	2	1.8%
Other	2	1.8%
White - British	33	28.9%
White - Other	4	3.5%
Prefer not to say	19	16.7%
Not answered	47	41.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Religion or belief</b>		
Buddhist	0	0.0%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	25	21.9%
Hindu	0	0.0%
Jewish	10	8.8%
Muslim	0	0.0%
Sikh	0	0.0%
No religion	16	14.0%
Prefer not to say	17	14.9%
Other religion/belief (please specify)	0	0.0%
Not answered	<b>46</b>	<b>40.4%</b>
	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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Protected Characteristic	Response	
	Number	%
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>		
Pregnant	1	0.9%
On maternity leave	0	0.0%
Neither	26	22.8%
Prefer not to say	7	7.0%
Not answered	79	69.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		
Bisexual	2	1.8%
Gay or Lesbian	3	2.6%
Straight or heterosexual	41	36.0%
Other sexual orientation	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	20	17.5%
Not answered	48	42.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>		
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	12	10.5%
Married	31	27.2%
In a registered civil partnership	0	0.0%
Separated, but still legally married	1	0.9%
Separated, but still legally in a civil partnership	0	0.0%
Divorced	2	1.8%
Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	0	0.0%
Widowed	4	3.5%
Surviving partner from a registered civil partnership	1	0.9%
Prefer not to say	16	14.0%
Not answered	47	41.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</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 2024/25

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposed budget for 2024/25. 114 respondents completed this question.

Table 3 below shows that:

- Around **a quarter of respondents agree** (24%, 27 out of 114 respondents) with the council’s proposed budget for 2024/25 (4%, 4 out of 114 respondents strongly agree, and 20%, 23 out of 114 respondents tend to agree).
- **Under half disagree** (47%, 53 out of 114 respondents) with the council’s proposed budget for 2024/25 (24%, 27 out of 114 respondents tend to disagree, and 23%, 26 out of 114 respondents strongly disagree).
- The remainder were **either neutral** (19 %, 22 out of 114 respondents) or said they did **not know or were not sure** (11%, 12 out of 114 respondents).

**Table 3: Respondents’ level of support for the proposed budget for 2024/25**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed budget for 2024/25?	Number	%
Strongly agree	4	3.5%
Tend to agree	23	20.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	22	19.3%
Tend to disagree	27	23.7%
Strongly disagree	26	22.8%
Don’t know / not sure	12	10.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.2 Views on proposals to increase Council Tax in 2024/25

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following statements most closely aligns to their opinion in terms of the Council Tax proposals for 2024/25. 75 respondents completed this question.

Overall, **over half of respondents** (55%, 41 out of 75 respondents who completed this question) **support some sort of Council Tax increase to help fund the budget gap in 2024/25 – this includes around** a third (32%) who support both council tax increases. However, around half of respondents do not support any increases in Council Tax in 2024/25 (45%, 34 out of 75 respondents).

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Table 4 below shows that:

- A third of respondent's (32%, 24 out of 75 respondents) **support both the council's proposals on Council Tax**: the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.98% and the proposal to apply a further 2.0% Social Care Precept in 2024/25
- Around one in seven (15%, 11 out of 75 respondents) **support only the proposal to increase general Council Tax** by 2.98% in 2024/25
- Around one in twelve (8%, 6 out of 75 respondents) **support only the proposal to apply a 2% Adult Social Care Precept to Council Tax** in 2024/25
- Under half of respondents (45%, 34 out of 75 respondents) **do not support either of the council's proposals to increase Council Tax in 2024/25**: neither the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.98% nor the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2024/25.

**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?	Number	%
I support the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.98% in 2024/25 and also support the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2024/25	24	32.0%
I support the proposal to increase general Council Tax by 2.98% in 2024/25 only	11	14.7%
I support the proposal to apply an Adult Social Care Precept on Council Tax of 2% in 2024/25 only	6	8.0%
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 2024/25	34	45.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 3.3 Views on directorate saving/income proposals for 2024/25

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with each of the saving and income proposals identified for each of the directorates in 2024/25. 77 out of 114 respondents completed these questions. Table 5 over the page shows that:

- **Public Health (PH) Directorate** (which also had identified the least savings) received **the highest level of support**, with around a third of respondents (32%, 24 out of 76 respondents) agreeing with PH savings. Under a third of respondents (30%, 23 out of 76 respondents) disagree with the savings identified within this directorate. A fifth of respondents indicated they were neutral (21%, 16 out of 76 respondents), and a further 11% (8 out of 76) indicated they did not know or had no comments to make regarding the PH savings (8%, 5 out of 76).
- **Communities, Adults and Health (CA&H) Directorate** just over a quarter of respondents (27%, 21 out of 77 respondents) agree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Around two fifths of respondents (43%, 32 out of 77 respondents), indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder indicated they were either neutral (14%, 11 out of 77) did not know (9%, 7 out of 77), or they did not wish to comment on this directorates savings (9%, 6 out of 77).

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- **Children and Family Services (C&FS) Directorate** around a quarter of respondents (26%, 20 out of 76 respondents) agreed with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Around two fifths of respondents (38%, 29 out of 76 respondents), indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (17%, 13 out of 76), did not know (9%, 7 out of 76), or did not wish to comment on these savings (9%, 7 out of 76).
- **Customer and Place (C&P) Directorate:** around a quarter of respondents (24%, 18 out of 76 respondents) agreed with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. A third of respondents (33%, 25 out of 76 respondents) indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate . The remainder were either neutral (22%, 17 out of 76), indicated they did not know (9%, 7 out of 76), or did not wish to comment on these savings (12%, 9 out of 76).
- **Strategy and Resources (S&R) Directorate:** around a quarter of respondents (23%, 18 out of 77 respondents) agreed with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Just over a third of respondents, (35%, 27 out of 77 respondents) indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (17%, 13 out of 77), said they did not know (12%, 9 out of 77), or indicated they did not wish to comment on these savings (17%, 9 out of 77 respondents).
- **The cross-cutting council savings:** around a quarter of respondents (26%, 20 out of 77 respondents) agree with the saving and income proposals identified for 2024/25. Just under a quarter of residents (23%,18 out of respondents) disagree with these saving proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (13%, 10 out of 77 respondents) said they did not know (16%, 12 out of 77), or the did not want to comment on these savings (22%, 17 out of 77 ).
- **Assurance Directorate received the lowest level of support:** around a fifth of respondents (21%, 16 out of 77 respondents) agreed with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate for 2024/25. Just under a third of respondents (30%, 23 out of 77 respondents) indicated they disagree with the saving and income proposals identified within this directorate. The remainder were either neutral (19%, 15 out of 77), said they did not know (13%, 10 out of 77), or indicated they did not wish to comment on these savings (17%, 13 out of 77 respondents).

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

Directorate	Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Don't know / not sure		No comment		Total
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	#
Public Health	31.6%	24	21.1%	16	30.3%	23	10.5%	8	6.6%	5	76
Communities, Adults and Health	27.3%	21	14.3%	11	41.6%	32	9.1%	7	7.8%	6	77
Children and Family Services	26.3%	20	17.1%	13	38.2%	29	9.2%	7	9.2%	7	76
Cross-council	26.0%	20	13.0%	10	23.4%	18	15.6%	12	22.1%	17	77
Customer and Place	23.7%	18	22.4%	17	32.9%	25	9.2%	7	11.8%	9	76
Strategy and Resources	23.4%	18	16.9%	13	35.1%	27	11.7%	9	13.0%	10	77
Assurance	20.8%	16	19.5%	15	29.9%	23	13.0%	10	16.9%	13	77

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### 3.4 Additional comments on Directorate saving/income proposals

Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the saving and income proposals identified for each Directorate for 2024/25. Of those who responded to the consultation, 31 out of 114 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.

- *Comments on Adult Social Care: (Six comments)*
- *Would like more details of the savings / Further breakdown of savings required / Not enough detail provided in plain English: (Six comments)*
- *Disagree with Council Tax increases / Total increase in Council Tax is unaffordable for people and families struggling more than ever: (Four comments)*
- *Comments on funding to Strategy and Resources: (Four comments)*
- *More savings should be made: (Three comments)*
- *Comments on funding for Public Health: (Two comments)*
- *The need for better targeting and means testing: (Two comments)*
- *Comments on funding for Assurance: (Two comments)*
- *Reduce expenditure on cycle lanes/ environment& climate change: (Two comments)*

**Table 6: Comments about the savings and income generation proposals that have been identified in each Directorate for 2024/25**

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	32
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<p><b>Comments on Adult Social Care:</b> I'd like to see more expenditure on elderly care/ I don't see ways of encouraging people to return to work where there is illness: is that a government duty of yours? / Happy to pay extra council tax as long as social care help is available to all not just those on benefits / Communities, Adults and Health - I do not see how you can reduce spending in this area as there is a very definite need in the borough to increase funding here / The following are the most important in my view: Children &amp; family services Communities, adults &amp; place; Public health; Communities, adults &amp; health - as the largest spending area, this should try&amp; find more savings&amp; come out with a 2024-25 spend of £148m (134.2+24-10.6=147.6) / C &amp; F Services; Communities Adults and Health - the emphasis on investment in Prevention Services is welcomed as this should enable potential future expenditure to be reduced, or at least postponed. However, I have concerns that contracts with external providers for care services are given uplifts that reflect the increases in staffing costs and the need to attract more staff given recruitment and retention issues across the care sector.</p>	6

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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 2023/24?	
Number of respondents who completed this question	32
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<p><b>Would like more details of the of the savings / Further breakdown of savings required / Not enough detail provided in plain English:</b> How will the cross-council savings be delivered? although this looks like a good idea from an overall budget perspective there needs to be some plan to deliver it / It's unclear as to what many aspects of the council budget refer to - 'strategy&amp; resources' is very vague, where do parks, environment, &amp; green spaces fall for example? / It is very hard to make comments unless you show us a detailed breakdown of how money is actually spent not a grand total of each division / I found the tables did not always make sense regarding savings described and the bottom line / The entire diagram needs better explanation, particularly for how you tie all figures together. The Cross Council section is incomprehensible with unexplained red figures &amp; minus signs / First most people will not even understand what each section for budget allocation does ie assurance or customer and place. You have a duty to make this clear in plain English. You have not / There is nowhere near enough detail in the consultation document to comment on / endorse the proposals. How can someone comment on any proposed cuts without knowing which specific services are going to be axed/curtailed? Have no way of judging the proposals except for comparison with 23-24.</p>	6
<p><b>Disagree with Council Tax increases / Total increase in Council Tax is unaffordable for people and families struggling more than ever:</b> You are proposing a total increase of over 5 percent in council tax - after record inflation over the past 18 months, why are you hitting working people even harder? / It would be nice to see how best you can address a 2% rise rather than 2.98 which is only just below the legal limit and for many an additional unwelcome burden. How can 2% be achieved with the minimal effect / Council tax rises are untenable at a time where people and families are struggling more than ever. Would be a cynical move/ I do not believe that an increase would lead to a better service provided given the high rate we pay to what we get in return compared to other boroughs in London.</p>	4
<p><b>Comments on funding to Strategy and Resources:</b> Strategy and resources is also vague and undefined yet accounts for a huge slice of the pie / There is no clear indication of the savings detail which is intended. In particular there is general and increasing unease within the general public of the number and cost of unproductive jobs. The greatest of these is the number and cost of new posts such as 'diversity officer &amp; supporting costs'. Can you state how many new posts (or recently created posts) have been made under the new Labour administration &amp; their full costs (including pensions). Many residents and or council taxpayers including the writer fail to see any benefit in the quality of service provided and see these costs as a diversion of honest money earned by honest taxpayers / I don't understand what each directorate is responsible for, but I think you spend a lot on comms that is not statutory or essential front-line services, that could be cut. Barnet First magazine could be abolished&amp; less money spent on e newsletters such as fortnightly emails from Barnet First, business buzz&amp; wellbeing matters. Overall, the council could spend less on IT such as Office 365, Teams&amp; laptops. Overall, the council should spend less on directors such as all the shadow management at The Barnet Group council owned company, that could save £3 million very quickly / More cost cuts should be made from areas that do not add financial value to residents such as strategy&amp;resources. £3.8m for what?? More strategies on staff? Better for residents</p>	4
<p><b>More savings should be made:</b> Your absolute priority should be to cut services to balance the budget not make working people poorer / I think more savings can be made/ Make savings and stop squandering money</p>	3



## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2024/25

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	32
Description / Type of verbatim comments	Number of comments
<b>Comments on funding for Public Health:</b> From my professional experience of working with the public there is not enough resources for supporting health -both mental and physical as well as domestic violence support. The charities are not supported with sufficient funding, and they either don't support Barnet (due to lack of funding) or have very long waiting list (Like IAPT 12 months for example) due to staff shortages / The following are the most important in my view: Children and family services; Communities, adults and place; Public health	2
<b>The need for better targeting and means testing:</b> There is no means testing I am aware of, wasting money on people that are able to work and live on benefits / Far too often, council services that are targeted for individuals are abused or misused. Some of the items we can think of the are so call special needs, or permanent care. Many times, the beneficiaries are led to believe that they are in need, but this is often due to the lack of care from those who should be caring for them. e.g. parents should be taking care of their children and not let councils pay for their care whilst they go out to work. This should be curtailed and discouraged.	2
<b>Comments on funding for Assurance:</b> / Assurance - considering the table on p7 of your consultation doc, 2024/25 spending should remain the same as 2023/24 / You do not define or explain what assurance is in your PDF consultation document, how anyone possibly comment?	2
<b>Reduce expenditure on cycle lanes/ environment &amp; climate change:</b> No wasting money on unused cycle lanes and LTNs (low traffic neighbourhoods) / Stop wasting money on net zero nonsense	2
<b>Increase should be below inflation:</b> Just a general point that really total council tax should not go up by more than inflation	1
<b>More support needed for carers:</b> The budget is not helpful to family carers and Barnet council need to take care of the full-time unpaid family carers. Carers should be supported more. More needs to be focussed on diversity issues too	1
<b>More funding should be made available for your Council Tax Support scheme.</b> I am not sure which directorate this sits under, but I would like to see more funding being made available for your Council Tax Support scheme. It is one of the harshest in the UK and does little to support the people in our community on low incomes. There is little point offering help to these groups with one hand and then taking it away with another. 28% contribution with no other income is extreme, and 48% for band two is worse!	1
<b>Improvements needed to road, pavements parks and facilities:</b> Council has not mentioned road repairs such as potholes which need fixing, as do uneven pavements.	1
<b>Concern over specific local development proposals:</b> Delighted to hear the proposed move of the Vue cinema complex to Lodge Lane has been scrapped. Just hope the same applies to the ridiculous bus lane planned for Whetstone - High Barnet which will decimate the shopping canoe and restaurants in Whetstone. Short sighted plans to destroy a thriving area... Kindly cancel this proposal	1
<b>Issue with links to documents:</b> Links above don't work <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>Total number of different types of comments</b>	<b>34<sup>2</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> If respondents mention their links do not work this could be to do with their browser/ device

<sup>2</sup> Respondents gave more than one type of comment. A total of 31 different types of comments were received from the 28 respondents who answered this question.

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2024/25

### 3.5 Additional comments on the proposed budget for 2024/25

Respondents were also asked if they had any further comments to make about the council's proposed budget for 2024/25. Of those who responded to the consultation, 40 out of 114 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.

- *I do not agree with the council tax increase/ it is too big:* (Fifteen Comments).
- *Central government should provide more funding to local:* (Four comments).
- *Council should ensure there is no expenditure wastage:* (Three comments).
- *I support a greater increase in Council tax:* (Three comments)
- *Not enough detail provided:* (Two comments)
- *Reduce funding on events:* (Two comments)
- *Reduce salary expenditure:* (Two comments)

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

**Table 7: Further comments about the proposed budget for 2024/25**

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	Number of comments
<p><b>I do not agree with the council tax increase/ it is too big/ not affordable:</b></p> <p>I think what is in place now is fair &amp; does not need to be increased / It is proposing a 2.98% increase. A desultory 0.02% below the legal maximum / As a single person household, these increases would cripple a lot of others and I don't see where they are being spent. I think the council needs to help less, the onus should be on the family and individual rather than the council to care for their elderly and children. Please consider lowering the proposed increased, particularly the social care tax / I am disgusted that you would propose a rise of CT when the borough is in such a state / you are making life harder for working people who are already struggling - this is unfair / I am horrified that you are proposing to raise tax when you said you wouldn't / Make further savings. Your citizens are making savings everyday even on essentials, you are increasing council tax will be unfair&amp; squeezing people harder / Saying that council tax can be raised by 3% but you are only planning on raising it by 2.98% is lip service. There is hardly any difference at all. How do you expect people to meet an increase, including the adult social care precept? More people will be forced to ask for assistance, and may be made homeless, which will mean that the council will have to spend more money assisting these people / What happened to the 1% Labour promised to give back? I see no mention of it in all the glossy comms. How do you think people can afford this increase plus the Mayor's increase? Councils might be going bust but so are people / We are in a cost-of-living crisis already and the proposed increase directly contravenes the council's pledge to keep council tax low / It's a cost of living crisis we can't afford higher council tax / With a living crisis it is already a struggle to pay bills, a tax increase is not realistic or unaffordable / Why increase council tax when people are struggling / Increasing the CT by only 2.98% against the 3% maximum is surely only tokenism</p>	<p>15</p>

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2024/25

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	Number of comments
<b>Central government should provide more funding to local councils:</b> the government should fund more so that the CT does not need to rise / I would hope that next year's budget gives a 0% council tax rate or 100% relief for those unable to pay / paid by taxes on wealth, capital, profits and unearned income / adult social care should be central government funded as it affects the whole country / The governments gutting of local budgets is to blame for this and should be restored from the top rather than taken from more general taxation.	4
<b>Council should ensure there is no expenditure wastage:</b> No [further comment] as long as I can't notice any money wastage / Every year council tax rises and every year there is immense wastage and wasted money. Make savings, not tax rises / Stop wasting money on vanity projects	3
<b>I support a greater increase in Council tax:</b> You need to increase Council Tax, you cannot keep cutting services like you have been doing / It's a pity you can't increase council tax even further, as it would solve a lot of problems and free up time to tackle other things. It looks like a lot of people, obviously not all, have plenty of money. Speaking for myself, I would like to pay more in order to get better services / the increase in Council Tax and the social precept are both quite small but crucial to help plug important gaps	3
<b>Not enough detail provided:</b> Again, we need to have access to a breakdown of all costs to be able to make an informed decision. What are the actual costs of each section / there is such a lack of transparency-of where the money goes. An itemised statement should be produced& freely available for us who pay it to view.	2
<b>Reduce funding on events:</b> Save money by withdrawing support for some events e.g. pride in the park / I would rather the money was not spent on community events	2
<b>Reduce salary expenditure:</b> Increases for residents to pay for more staff? No - time for redundancies to save the budget and no more costs from the residents / some high paid staff pay salary should be cut	2
<b>Reduce budget for environment&amp; climate change:</b> and stop wasting money on chasing Net Zero and the so-called Green Agenda / Fix the potholes, spend less on public health and climate change	1
<b>Public sector should learn more from the private sector:</b> To get support you need to give more details as you would find in Management accounts prepared by private companies. We in the private sector who run companies know how hard it is to generate income (especially with lock-down, fuel increases from external forces (war in Ukraine) and other factors in supply chains. This requires costs to be trimmed, not increased, yet this obvious factor seems not to be applicable in the public sector, likely because of lack of real business experience. Things need to change in the public sector, or we end up with more councils going bankrupt (Croyden, Woking & others) or becoming endless tax increases and waste as seen clearly under the socialist SNP government in Scotland	1
<b>Choice of which services we want and which to pay for:</b> The cost-of-living crisis, energy bills and Ulez are all having an impact on citizen finances. It would be a magnanimous gesture not to make matters worse. If I could, I would not pay the GLA precept and would like to see a change where we cherry pick the services we want and need... not pay for services we do not need	1
<b>Reduce expenditure on compensation:</b> Barnet avoiding cases going the Ombudsman and being forced to pay compensation	1
<b>Use of unpaid overpayments:</b> Perhaps you can use the millions of pounds of unclaimed overpayments for council tax that you have a hold of	1

## GENERAL BUDGET CONSULTATION 2024/25

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	Number of comments
<b>More expenditure on improving roads and street scene:</b> The Council needs to use its resources better to ensure the roads are safe and not full of potholes& to clean streets& repaint yellow& white lines which have worn or become obliterated.	1
<b>Additional training for officer on efficiencies and savings:</b> Every Council employee should be aware of the necessity to maximise efficiency and savings when Council Taxpayers are experiencing financial difficulties at this time	1
<b>Council tax should be increased for some residents:</b> people who own very expensive properties and own more than one property council tax should increase for them and owners tenants who are using houses to run babysitting services without paying tax registering and claiming they are looking after each other's few friends children, and those residents who block disabled peoples driveways need to pay parking charges a lot of illegal activities going on council need to keep an eye on. people who own houses and go abroad from long periods of time without informing the DWP pension service and GP and come into UK to pick up medication get vaccination for free NHS treatment need to be taxed more	1
<b>Reliance on fees and taxes that are not sustainable should be reduced as we move to net zero.</b> While I'd like to see the motorist punished for unnecessarily large SUVs, which take up road space and pose a danger to our streets, I'd like the council not to rely on this income should they need to remove parking spaces in our streets and towns as we go to a more sustainable net zero carbon time.	1
<b>Adult social care budget should be frozen:</b> We have seen a massive rise in adult social care. Often this is claimed by those who know the system and how to play it. Adult social care budget should be frozen. e.g. If anyone is claiming benefit, they should not then get free lunch, free travel, free medicine, free food etc. They should be taught to manage with the benefits they get, just like the incoming earning people have to manage what they earn. Far too often, benefit seekers tend to spend money on luxury items that earning members don't.	1
<b>Expectation of service improvements:</b> There will be high expectations for quality services alongside a raise in council tax.	1
<b>There needs to be more means-testing of UC recipients:</b> Means test households who are fraudulent to gain back some budget	1
<b>Focus should be on schools, health and community services:</b> Your main duty of care is to the people of Barnet. Schools health community services. The popular diversity and woke issues at a time of financial difficulties is not of importance. Concentrate on the above for budget purposes	1
<b>Street scene performance is not good enough:</b> I totally disagree with the council's performance on street cleaning, autumn leaf clearance and pothole repairs. Any payment made on these issues probably went down the unrepaired potholes!	1
<b>There should be greater engagement opportunity for resident on the budget:</b> Allow better forward planning between the entire Council Budget personnel and the general public in general and or through Engage Barnet so there is time for f2f meetings to discuss a number of complicated issues.	1
<b>Comments about the survey design:</b> Options available are limited in this survey.	1
<b>Total number of different types of comments</b>	<b>46<sup>3</sup></b>

<sup>3</sup> Respondents gave more than one type of comment. A total of 24 different types of comments were received from the 40 respondents who answered this question.

## 3.6 Written response to consultation

Two responses were received via email: one from a Barnet resident referred to elderly social care and one from a Barnet business referring to business rates:

- *The council has an obligation to support all elderly in need. I am very disappointed to find out you will try to stop night nurses at Deborah lodge! Thanks to the night nurses my mother was seen by then 4 times last year and called the ambulance on her behalf. So how can you justify stopping this service when elderly people need this support in a gated community?*
- *Business rates should be reduced: Due to the cost of living crisis we are currently facing, we believe that the council tax rates should be reduced to give business owners the opportunity to effectively get the best outcome from conducting business.*