

Shaping our future together

Our medium-term plan update for 2020-21

Appendix 4 - Consultation report



let's talk
Newcastle

Newcastle
City Council



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1. Introduction

This report summarises the main messages from our consultation on the proposals set out in Shaping our future together: our medium-term plan update for 2020-21.

The consultation period ran from 13 December 2018 to 26 January 2020. We asked residents, organisations and other key stakeholders to provide us with feedback about proposals as set out in our integrated impact assessments (IIAs) and any comments they might have about our plans as a whole.

We promoted the consultation widely on social media, using animated and explainer videos, Facebook posts and tweets as well as stakeholder meetings and events and press releases.

This report presents only the views expressed by residents and key stakeholders during the consultation period. To understand the full implications of our proposals, the findings outlined here need to be read in conjunction with:

- Shaping our future together: our medium-term plan update for 2020-21, which explains our approach and provides an update on the three-year plan set out last year
- Appendix 1 – Revenue and capital plan 2020-21
- Appendix 2 – Summary of service proposals 2020-21
- Appendix 3 – Cumulative impact assessment 2020-21
- Updated IIAs for proposals following the consultation period

This report has three annexes. Annex 1 provides more detailed feedback on what people said about the individual IIAs. Annex 2 presents the main themes expressed in people's more general comments. Annex 3 provides more information about who took part.

We would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who took the time to give us their views and the volunteers and employees both within the council and in our partner organisations who provided their time to support this consultation.

2. Approach

2.1 How we engaged with residents, organisations and key stakeholders

Residents, partners and other stakeholders were able to have their say through various communication channels: stakeholder events, digital solutions such as Let's talk Newcastle Online, email and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. This means that in addition to the people and organisations who sent us their views, many more will have seen information about our proposed medium-term plan through these different channels. For example, our social media 'reach' (the number of people who have interacted with a particular piece of content on a social media platform) for this consultation is 278,598.

2.2 How many people took part

Around 150 individuals and organisations took part in the consultation. The proposal with the highest number of people and organisations commenting on it (38) was 'IIA4: Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept'.

Budget Proposals	No of people / organisations
IIA Council Tax and social care precept	38
IIA Adult social care – Reviewing the way we support people after a crisis	23
IIA Adult social care – Being well in Newcastle	19
IIA Adult social care – Financial management	15
General comments (comments not related to any specific IIA or other proposal)	101

Please note it is possible for an individual to take part in the consultation through several channels. For example, they might send an email and later complete a Let's talk Newcastle online survey. We would not be aware of this unless they chose to tell us. Similarly, one piece of feedback may represent the views of several people, such as the notes from a consultation event, so we are only able to estimate the number of individual people and organisations. Therefore, the numbers of individuals / organisations shown in the table above adds up to more than 150 individual responses, as many of those responding commented on more than one proposal.

3. Summary of feedback

3.1 Adult social care – reviewing the way we support people after a crisis

We received 23 comments on our proposal to adopt a recovery-focussed approach to working with people in urgent need or who are experiencing a crisis. Views were mixed over whether the proposal was clear; some respondents wanted more detail on how it would be implemented and what changes would be needed to the existing service. Exactly how the proposal would be implemented was an issue raised by several respondents. The majority said they thought the was fair and reasonable, but several qualified this by saying they wanted more practical information about how it would work.

Suggestions for minimising any potential negative impacts were to develop sheltered housing to enable people to remain in their communities, offer care users a named individual as contact and to trial the new approach to test how it might work before rolling it out. When asked about other ways to save money or generate income, respondents emphasised the need to take a ‘holistic’ view when working with people using care services and aim to prevent crises occurring. One respondent asked if peer support for people in crisis from those who have experienced it was an option. Organisations such as Healthwatch, Connected Voice and Newcastle Disability Forum asked if assets such as Your Homes Newcastle’s communal lounges, and the proposed ‘time to think’ facility, could be used to either save money or generate income.

3.2 Adult social care – financial management

We received 15 responses to our proposal to review our charging and financial assessment policy and our approach to auditing direct payments. Several respondents agreed the proposal was clear. Some were concerned at the possibility that this could lead to older people and disabled people contributing more to their care and result in financial difficulties for them.

When asking about ways to minimise impact, one respondent asked if it would be possible to offer support for people using these care services to develop their financial management skills. Organisations included Connected Voice, Healthwatch and the Disability Forum emphasised the need to mitigate any negative impacts on service users and asked whether the proposal was in line with national guidelines and other local authorities’ approaches to financial management.

3.3 Adult social care – Being well in Newcastle

We received 19 responses from residents, Connected Voice, SEARCH, St Anthony of Padua Community Association, Newcastle Disability Forum and Healthwatch to this proposal to: “develop a new home care offer for the city that builds upon our focus on improved service user outcomes, so we can continue to meet increased demand ...[including] moving away from the traditional time and task focus in home care, ...increasing cross-working with organisations, ...supporting the development of networks of support in people’s own communities, [and] remodelling home care services.”

Opinions were mixed as to whether the proposal was clear, with respondents including St Anthony of Padua Community Association saying that they would like more details about how services would be commissioned and delivered under the new care offer.

Reactions were mixed; some respondents thought there could be negative consequences if care users did not receive long enough visits from care workers, whilst others thought that moving to a model which was more focussed on meeting people's outcomes could be a positive change. One respondent asked if it would be possible to trial the new approach first. St Anthony of Padua Association commented on potential negative consequences for care workers in terms of pay structures, recruitment and retention.

Both Connected Voice and the Elders Council asked whether it would be feasible to implement the proposed policy of developing support networks in people's own communities at the same time as reducing funding for the Newcastle Fund. As for the 'crisis support' proposal, respondents commented on the need to look at promoting health and wellbeing to prevent or minimise people needing care services in the long-term and asked whether the council could generate income to spend on services through congestion charges or a 'tourist tax'. Other respondents asked if there were national guidelines for providing services in this way, or examples of how other local authorities have successfully implemented similar models.

3.4 Council Tax and adult social care precept

We received 38 responses to our proposal to "increase core Council Tax by 1.95% ...in addition, we propose to increase the government's Council Tax precept for adult social care to help fund the rising cost of providing adult social care services by 2% in 2020-21 ...[and] to increase the Empty Property Premium, in line with national legislation".

Most respondents, including Connected Voice, said that they thought the proposal was clear. Several people commented on the potential consequences, with the most common view being that it would be an extra burden on Council Tax payers (two people said this).

One person thought it would mean that people trusted the council less, and another commented that people might use Airbnb or a similar service to obtain temporary housing without paying Council Tax, which could have a negative impact on local neighbourhoods. However, one person thought that a positive consequence could be that homes would be more likely to be rented or sold rather than being left empty. Connected Voice supported the proposal, although acknowledging that the income generated from the proposal would not cover the full amount the council needs to save.

When asked about how to minimise any negative impact, we received several suggestions, such as reducing Council Tax bills for older people on low incomes, ensuring that the changes are properly communicated to landlords, ensuring that the premium is not imposed on empty properties which are being repaired or improved, having proper monitoring and checks on people claiming reductions to minimise fraud and implementing an increase in Council Tax which is lower than 1.95%.

Views on whether it was fair or unfair were mixed; some thought it was fair to do this, on the understanding that the income generated was ringfenced for providing social care services. Other thought it was unfair, one of whom cited the potential impact upon people working full-time who have low incomes and disabled people. We received several suggestions for saving money and generating income, including: generating income by implementing a charge for workplace parking, working with Northumbria Police to reduce the police precept, reducing spending on changes to the road network and lobbying central government to provide more financial support to the north of England.

The main themes in people's general comments about this were that some people wanted the council to spend less money on large infrastructure projects, or that it felt as though Council Tax is increasing but services are staying the same or getting worse. However, some people commented that Council Tax rises are only needed due to central government funding cuts.

Annex 1 - Detailed feedback on proposals set out in IIAs

We received feedback from many individuals and organisations; organisations who sent feedback included Connected Voice (formerly NCVS), St Anthony of Padua Community Association, SEARCH, Newcastle Disability Forum, the Elders Council, and Healthwatch. Many of these organisations' responses were highly detailed and consider both the cumulative impact of the cuts, and possible ways in which local service delivery might be transformed in future. This report has tried to do them justice, but we would advise reading them in full.

1. Adult social care – Reviewing the way we support people after a crisis

The proposal is: “We will adopt a recovery-focused approach to working with people in urgent need or experiencing a crisis. Learning from our mental health services, intermediate care services and the time to think capacity in our extra care services, we will ensure that once the crisis has passed and risks have returned to an acceptable level, we can safely return services to a more appropriate, sustainable level in the longer-term.

There are four areas of focus for this proposal:

- Services in response to risk;
- Services in response to a deterioration in physical or mental health;
- Additional support provided to people in a residential or nursing care; and
- Community Time to Think.”

We received 23 comments on this, including feedback from the Elders Council, Healthwatch, Connected Voice and Newcastle Disability Forum. Nine people took part via Let's talk Newcastle online, another ten took part in consultation events organised with the Disability Forum and Healthwatch, two via social media, and one via email.

Is the proposal clear?

Opinions on this were split, with five respondents saying that it was quite clear and four respondents said that it was not very clear. Respondents, including Connected Voice, said that they would like more detail on what would happen whilst an individual is experiencing a crisis, how “crisis” is defined, and on how this differs from proposals in earlier years and from how services are currently delivered. Another query was about how services would be delivered for people who are not able to remain in their own homes.

Two respondents commented that they wanted more detail about how service delivery would change in future, for example: “the proposal does not seem to include details of how assessments and support will shift towards a greater emphasis on independence within the home, following an episode of crisis”. Two respondents asked for clarification about how services would be delivered following a recent article in the Evening Chronicle, which we provided.

Consequences and impact

People had many different views about the possible consequences and impact of the proposal; one which was mentioned twice was that people agreed that this is a better model of care, but they were unclear about how it could be implemented. One person agreed that it was important to support adults to remain in their own home where possible. Another view mentioned twice was that respondents felt that they were not sure the proposed savings could be achieved, in particular given demographic pressures on services, such as an aging

population. Newcastle Disability Forum commented that they liked the idea of the 'time to think' bungalow.

Other concerns raised were that people were concerned at the time needed to review aspects of care users' care packages, that people might struggle to access services if they do not know where to go to find them, and that this might be difficult for people on the autistic spectrum.

Minimising any negative impact

The most common suggestions for minimising any potential negative impacts were to develop sheltered housing to enable people to remain in their communities, offer care users a named individual as contact and to trial the new approach to test how it might work before rolling it out. The Elders Council said they would like to see the proposals more explicitly acknowledge the role which housing plays in supporting independent living. Other suggestions were to ensure that support plans focussed on developing care users' support networks to avoid them experiencing a relapse, and that to make the new model work, all staff (including partner organisations' staff) would need to be appropriately trained in risk assessment and management. Another respondent suggested ensuring that care users' families were appropriately involved in developing support plans, and emphasised the importance of clear and readily available information.

Fair and reasonable?

The majority of those who responded about whether the proposal was fair and reasonable said that they thought it was fair or quite fair. Some qualified this view by saying that it was fair, but they were not entirely clear on how it would be implemented, or that it was fair and reasonable given the financial constraints on how the council can deliver this service.

Other ways to save money or generate income?

When asked about other ways to save money or generate income, we received several detailed suggestions. One respondent stressed the importance of taking a holistic view of people using care services, for example looking at both their mental and physical health, to promote their wellbeing and thus save costs in the long run by preventing (or minimising) their need for care services. Another suggestion was to try to minimise staffing costs by training people who have had their crisis resolved through these services to provide peer support to people in crisis.

Speaking more generally, one person suggested it would be good to encourage people reaching the end of their working lives to have a 'tapered' retirement in which they might work fewer hours, to enable them to develop support networks to prepare for retirement. Another suggestion was to ask if staff at Northumbria or Newcastle universities would be able to provide an analysis of where services could save money or generate income. Working with local people to 'co-create' local services and make the most of their skills and knowledge was put forward and a final suggestion was for the council to minimise spending on unnecessary expenses to free up money for service delivery.

Newcastle Disability Forum asked if Your Homes Newcastle's communal lounges could be better used and if there was the possibility of having a 'floating bank' of qualified care workers to work across the city where they are needed. Another suggestion was to look at whether the 'time to think' facility could be 'rented out' by an independent person for a few hours to generate some income for council, and so that the person could see what an

accessible kitchen is like to use, etc.?’ Healthwatch asked about how home equipment being used on a short-term basis was retrieved, and whether the council could minimise waste by setting up communal equipment amnesty bins.

Final comments

We received a wide range of general comments about this. Two respondents said that they would like more and possibly clearer information about the proposal. Connected Voice emphasised the importance of supporting unpaid carers and involving them and support organisations such as Newcastle Carers in how services are designed. One respondent commented that if savings are to be made, it is essential that crisis support is robust enough to prevent future crises.

Newcastle Disability Forum raised the issue of increasing rent and utilities charges causing problems for disabled people. They also suggested that the council should monitor residents’ perceptions of their health and wellbeing and link with NewcastleGateshead Clinical Commissioning Group to monitor whether the proposals are causing savings through a lower demand for nursing or residential care. Healthwatch asked how the proposals compare to other local authorities’ ways of delivering services, whether there are national criteria for this, and how service users could be involved in service design.

Another respondent commented that they thought prevention of crises should be prioritised. One person noted that providing adult social care is a large part of the council’s revenue spending. Finally, one respondent asked whether the proposal would deliver better outcomes, or whether the priority was to save money.

2. Adult social care – Financial management

The proposal is: “To review our charging and financial assessment policy and our approach to auditing direct payments. We will implement a range of changes to our policy and process over two years to ensure that we continue to require people to make a fair, reasonable, and affordable reasonable contribution to the cost of their support, based on policy and process that is in line with national expectations and statutory requirements.”

We received feedback on this from a total of 15 people and organisations, including Connected Voice, Healthwatch and the Disability Forum. People gave their views via Let’s talk Newcastle Online, email and at two consultation events with the Disability Forum and Healthwatch.

Is the proposal clear?

Opinions on this were mixed, with four respondents saying that it was quite clear, and one respondent saying that it was not very clear. One respondent said that they would like a clearer definition of what “care” is in this context.

Consequences and impact

One respondent feared that there would be more people unable to afford care support. Connected Voice commented: “It is positive to see that £500k of the £700k saving is to come from improved efficiency of audit and recovery; but there is still £200k impact to local residents. [In our view] older people and people with a disability are funding the gap as their contributions will increase.”

Minimising any negative impact

We received few comments on this. One respondent commented: “Put people before money”, and another suggested providing more help and support to enable people to develop financial management skills.

Fair and reasonable?

One person commented that they thought this was “extremely unfair”. Connected Voice commented that they acknowledge that this proposal is within statutory guidelines and that the council has tried to protect people from cuts to services; however, in their view, “we are meeting some of the funding gap using money from our most vulnerable residents.”

General comments

At the Disability Forum, one person asked about plans for Carers Support Allowance in future and described how some people they knew had lost their allowance which they had been using for informal care arrangements to avoid their having to go into residential or nursing care. This related to a previous budget proposal several years ago and we confirmed that there is currently no intention to revisit this proposal.

Healthwatch asked if there would be any costs associated with the proposed increased frequency of audits of bank accounts and we have confirmed that there would be a staffing cost. They also asked if this was in line with what other local authorities are doing, and we have confirmed that it is. Another question was whether there are national criteria for auditing bank accounts; we have replied that there are national guidelines but local criteria still need to be developed.

3. Adult social care – Being well in Newcastle

This proposal: “...will involve significant transformational change ...we will work closely across the next two years with the people we support, their families and informal carers, home care organisations, their staff and our health and social care partners to develop a new home care offer for the city that builds upon our focus on improved service user outcomes so we can continue to meet increased demand within our financial envelope.

Key areas for transformation include:

- Move away from the traditional time-and-task focus in home care to create flexible options for people that help them meet their outcomes and stay in their own homes and communities for as long as possible,
- Improved networks across the voluntary and community sector, increasing cross-working with organisations,
- Reduce or delay the number of people who receive statutory care by supporting the development of networks of support in people’s own communities,
- Remodelling home care services.”

We received 18 responses on this from residents and organisations including the Elders Council, SEARCH, St Anthony of Padua Community Association and Connected Voice. Five people took part via Let’s talk Newcastle online, another ten took part in consultation events organised with the Disability Forum and Healthwatch and three responded via email.

Is the proposal clear?

Opinions on this were mixed, with four respondents saying that it was quite clear, and two respondents saying that it was not at all clear. Two respondents felt that they did not know the details of what would change or how services would be delivered differently and that they would like to see examples of how the alternative commissioned services would be delivered. Another said that it was easier to understand the proposals after having them explained at a consultation event.

St Anthony of Padua Association said that they would like more detail on the proposals as follows: “Does the City Council plan to extend the existing contract [for externally-commissioned services] in advance of the new contract being in place? ...it is unclear how a 32% reduction is to be achieved from April 2020 within the terms of the existing contract without a significant reduction in the level or number of care packages being delivered in the city and without a significant loss of jobs ...does this level of reduction take account of the minimum hours guarantee in current homecare contracts?” They also commented that they would like more clarity about the difference between the current “task-and-time model” and the intention to move away from this to ensuring people receive “the right care, at the right time and in the right place”, given that many home care tasks are time-critical.

Consequences and impact

Two respondents felt that either the figures relating to home care provision implied that home care workers’ visits would not be long enough for adequate care to be provided, or that the service would be “chaotic” as they did not think there was enough detail about how the new model of service delivery would be implemented. However, another respondent thought that the proposals could have positive consequences, as people would receive care that was centered around their personal needs.

St Anthony of Padua Association commented on the consequences and impact of the proposal on care workers. They were concerned that one consequence could be the creation of a ‘two-tier’ system of staff for home care staff, as the council has committed to ensuring that all staff we employ will be paid the Living Wage (at minimum), but that: “the current level of homecare commission means that services sourced externally through the third sector cannot match the local authority’s commitment to their directly-paid employees”. They also commented that they were concerned that providers’ use of zero-hour contracts to enable them to meet changing levels of demands transferred “risk and uncertainty” to care workers and their families. They felt that the IIA did not: “adequately assess the impact of the proposed changes on home care providers and their staff and identifies no mitigations ...the third sector will be required to deliver any ‘remodelled’ home care service.”

SEARCH commented that they support the move to a “recovery focus” as they believe it is a better model of care that will meet needs in a more person-centred way. However, they express concerns about whether this will be achievable in the timescale specified, as did the Elders Council. Connected Voice comment that they feel there is a contradiction between the proposal’s emphasis on stronger links being needed to connect people to their local communities and the proposals elsewhere in the medium-term plan to reduce the Newcastle Fund (no. 28) and Adult Social Care Commissioned Services (no. 23.)

Minimising any negative impact

One respondent commented that they felt that the only way to minimise possible negative impact over the long-term was to adequately fund adult social care service to the extent that

clients do not feel “lonely or left at risk”, and staff are not “stressed and concerned”; their view was that not doing this would mean that residential care would be a better option for people’s well-being. Another respondent wanted to see this approach trialed and evaluated after 12 months to test if it works. They also emphasised the need for one-to-one conversations with social care users and their carers to explain changes to services.

Fair and reasonable?

We received very few comments about whether the proposal was fair and reasonable. One person felt it was “totally unreasonable.”

Other ways to save

One respondent replied that they thought this was the wrong question, and that the council should not be looking to save money, but rather spend it on children and adults’ social care services. They suggested that the council should implement a congestion charge for private vehicles and a “tourist tax” to generate income to help pay for services. Another comment was that given the higher cost of funding residential care, increasing funding for care at home would provide savings over the long-term due to a decrease in demand for residential care.

One person wanted the council to promote public health and wellbeing in general to decrease people’s need for care services in future. Services to prevent people needing long-term care services was suggested by another respondent, who made the following suggestions: “increase [the] community charge, have greater options for family home carer allowance, fund early discharge from hospital to residential care to prevent frail people becoming more so in hospital, [and] fund physiotherapy to keep people mobile.”

General comments

One respondent commented that they felt that there was a need for central government to adequately fund and monitor home care and that, until this occurs, they thought residential care was more cost-effective. They also wanted to see more stringent monitoring of staffing levels in residential care facilities. Another commented that they would like to see more of the funds currently being spent by Newcastle Hospitals Trust being used to promote long-term wellbeing.

Both a respondent and St Anthony of Padua Association commented that they thought there would be considerable level of risk inherent in having a transition period in how care is provided whilst at the same time cutting funding. St Anthony of Padua commented that they were concerned that the IIA did not explain how the proposals will address growing levels of need for these services within Newcastle, given the existing challenges of staff recruitment and retention.

SEARCH commented that it is important that proposals for future adult social care provision acknowledge that “some older people do not keep getting better, they often require additional support and increasing support for the rest of their lives.” They were also concerned at the possible cumulative effect of these proposals combined with the proposals to generate more income through the Communities Team, to reduce the size of the Newcastle Fund and to increase room charges at local libraries. In particular, they asked for the council to reconsider the reduction of the Newcastle Fund, as did the Elders Council.

Connected Voice have asked if there are any examples of this approach being effective over the long-term in other locations. Healthwatch comment that they are looking for ways to work differently within the community to get the best possible use for day care services and that they wanted to know more about proposals relating to speech and language service proposals.

2. Council Tax and social care precept

The proposal is: “to increase core Council Tax by 1.95%, which will increase income by £2.2 million. In addition, we propose to increase the government’s Council Tax precept for adult social care to help fund the rising cost of providing adult social care services by 2% in 2020-21, which will generate an additional £2.2 million of Council Tax income (projected income increases are based on an assumed 1% increase in the Council Tax base) to help fund the rising cost of providing adult social care services. ...The council is [also] proposing to increase the Empty Property Premium in line with national legislation.”

38 people and organisations commented on the possible consequences and impact of the proposal, including Connected Voice. 25 gave their views via social media, 12 via Let’s talk Newcastle online and one via email.

Is the proposal clear?

Four people said the proposal was quite clear, and one said that it was very clear. One commented: “[it is] fairly straightforward, if you are used to reading this type of information”. Another felt that the proposals did not have enough substance and they wanted more information about the potential impact of the proposed changes. One suggestion was to produce a one-page summary of the proposal. One person asked, “Can someone who has bought their own property benefit from the 'social precept' or extra tax, when they need help in old age, or is this only for people whom do not plan for old age?”.

Consequences and impact

Several people commented on this, with the most common view being that it would be an extra burden on Council Tax payers (two people said this). Another thought it would mean that people trusted the council less. However, one person thought that a positive consequence could be that homes would be more likely to be rented or sold rather than being left empty. Similarly, one person commented that people might use Airbnb or a similar service to obtain temporary housing without paying Council Tax, which could have a negative impact on local neighbourhoods. Connected Voice supported this proposal, although acknowledging that the income generated from the proposal would not cover the full amount the council needs to save.

Minimising any negative impact

We received several suggestions about this, including:

- Ensuring that the changes are properly communicated to landlords.
- Ensuring that the premium is not imposed on empty properties which are being upgraded or otherwise improved.
- Having proper monitoring and checks on people claiming reductions to minimise fraud.
- Implementing an increase in Council Tax which is lower than 1.95%.
- Reducing Council Tax bills for retired and older people on low incomes.

One person wanted to see a 50% reduction in Council Tax bills for single occupants, compared to the current 25% reduction.

Fair and reasonable?

Views on this were mixed. Three people thought this was fair, one of whom commented that it was fair on the understanding that the income generated was ringfenced for providing social care services. Another commented that it was acceptable to generate income by taxing unused buildings.

Two people thought it was unfair. One commented that the proposal aimed to mitigate the impact of changes upon people on benefits, but not upon people working full-time who have low incomes. They also questioned whether there would be a disproportionate impact on single female residents. Another thought it was unfair to introduce an increase of this size, whereas a lower increase would be fairer. Connected Voice expressed concern about the potential impact upon people on low incomes and disabled people.

One respondent thought it would be unfair if the premium was levied on properties that were being improved. Another thought that they would consider the proposal fair if it better demonstrated how this would lead to improvements for residents.

Other ways to save

We received the following suggestions for saving money and generating income:

- Cut back on spending on services, rather than increasing Council Tax.
- Generate income by implementing a charge for workplace parking provided by employers.
- Introduce fees for business properties.
- Introduce higher charges and shorter time limits for imposing fees on empty properties.
- Lobby central government to provide more financial support to the north of England.
- Reduce spending on changes to the road network.
- Restructure the council to provide efficiency savings.
- Work with Northumbria Police to reduce the police precept.

General comments about Council Tax proposal

27 people commented on this proposal as follows (some raised more than one issue, so the numbers in the table total more than 27):

Themes	No. of people who mentioned this
Council should not spend money on large infrastructure projects	5
Council Tax rises are only needed due to central government funding cuts	5
Feel that Council Tax rises, but services are getting worse	5
Senior staff should take pay cuts rather than increase taxes	5
Unhappy that students do not pay Council Tax	3
Council should not spend money on transport network changes	2
Year-on-year Council Tax rises cause hardship	2
Council should not spend money on fireworks	1
Council Tax is already too high	1
Council Tax rises are not justifiable	1
Councillors should not receive allowances	1

Themes	No. of people who mentioned this
Do not understand why the council keeps needing to save money	1
Feel that students cause higher costs for the council but do not pay for services	1
Generally unhappy with the proposal	1
Increasing Council Tax will cause hardship	1
Is it possible to be certain that increased taxes will be paid, and that the cost of recovering unpaid taxes will not equal the proposed increased revenue?	1
People cannot expect services without paying enough Council Tax	1
Uncertain how each service's budget is set	1

Annex 2 - General feedback

These are comments which do not relate to any specific IIA. 101 people and organisations made general comments without specifying whether they were responding to a particular question on the feedback form.

Are the proposals clear?

Four respondents said that the proposals were quite clear, one said they were very clear, and one said they were not very clear. One commented that they were not at all clear, another wanted to make it clear that they wanted to comment on proposed changes to Blakett Street and another said that they found the proposals accessible, having attended a discussion event.

Consequences and impact

One person commented on the proposals for Blakett Street by saying that they thought these proposals would have a negative impact, making it harder for people with mobility issues to access the city centre and decrease footfall for shops in the city centre. They were also concerned at changes to the road network possibly increasing congestion and pollution and wanted to see 'yellow boxes' on the road network properly enforced. Another respondent commented about the cumulative impact of Council Tax rises and other proposals, saying that they would cause people to go into debt and that it was important to increase taxes for people on higher incomes, not lower income.

Minimising any negative impact

Two people commented. One said that they wanted to see no changes to Blakett Street and Pilgrim Street and a bus lane introduced on the Tyne Bridge to encourage use of public transport. Another said they were unhappy with their ward councillor.

Fair and reasonable?

We did not receive any general comments specifically about whether the proposals were fair and reasonable.

Other ways to save

We received two comments about this. One was asking the council to spend less on the Civic Centre renovation. Another wanted to see local people being more involved in action to improve their wards and empowered to co-create services, for example, having residents decide where to plant trees and doing it themselves. The Elders Council asked if the recent introduction of parking charges for Blue Badge holders could be revisited, as they report that some of their members are feeling increasingly excluded from the city centre.

General comments

The most common issues raised are shown in the table below. The most common themes were: "Feel that central government cuts funding then lets councils take the blame" (15 people said this), "unhappy with central government" (11 people) and "generally unhappy with Newcastle City Council" (nine people).

Theme	Mentions	Sample quote
Feel that central government cuts funding then lets councils take the blame	15	"Unfortunately the government hasn't changed its mind to cut the central grant to Newcastle this year. It could change its mind and increase the grant in future years, but this year it amounts to £20 million less to spend on council services like social care and litter [cleaning]."
Unhappy with central government	11	"The Conservatives have cut the council's funding year on year."
Generally unhappy with Newcastle City Council	9	"Newcastle City Council don't care at all."
Austerity is over	6	"Austerity is finished, stop using it as an excuse."
Unhappy with changes to road network	6	"You just have to look at the way they are carrying out these so-called junction improvements incorporating bicycle lanes."
Austerity is ongoing	5	"Saying austerity is over doesn't actually mean it is over."
Council needs to cut expenses	5	"Cut expense accounts."
Feel that the council blames the government for cuts every year	5	"Newcastle City Council have been singing the same 'let's blame the government' song for decades, so please change the record."
Would like to see councillors' allowances cut	5	"Cut councillors' wages for a start."

A table showing all the themes raised in respondents' comments is available on request.

Annex 3 - How we engaged and who took part

Residents, partners and other stakeholders were able to have their say through various routes. This section summarises how many people used different channels and provides some information about the people who took part.

Digital engagement

Our main digital channels were our website, Let's talk Newcastle Online, Facebook and Twitter. We directly invited people who are registered on Let's talk Newcastle Online (over 2,500) to take part in the consultation. On Facebook and Twitter we published 10 posts and videos which pointed people to the consultation on individual budget documents on Let's talk Newcastle online. The results are shown below:

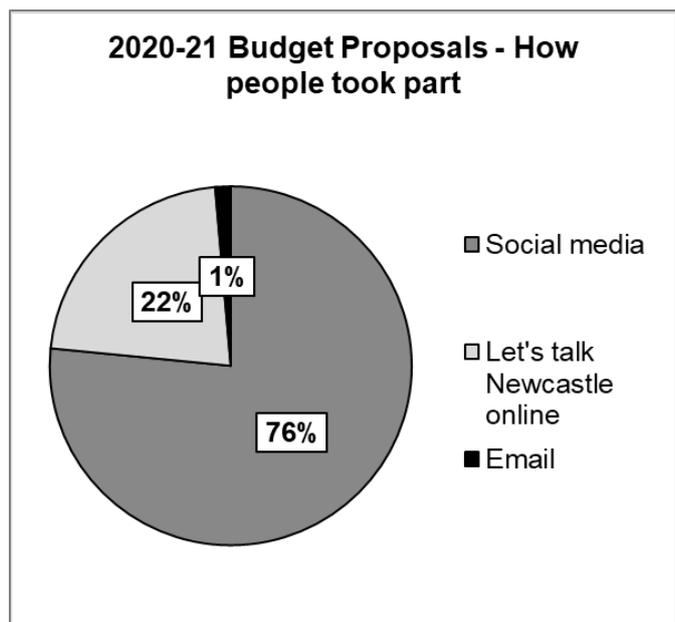
- Total impressions (number of people whom our posts were visible to): 49,765
- Total reach (number of times people interact with our content by sharing, liking, etc.): 278,598

Offline engagement

We used non-digital communication channels, such as meetings and discussions with stakeholder organisations and press releases to inform residents and other key stakeholders about our consultation. We worked with voluntary organisations such as Connected Voice, the Elders Council and Newcastle Disability Forum to gather views, usually by attending their meetings to explain the proposals and answer questions.

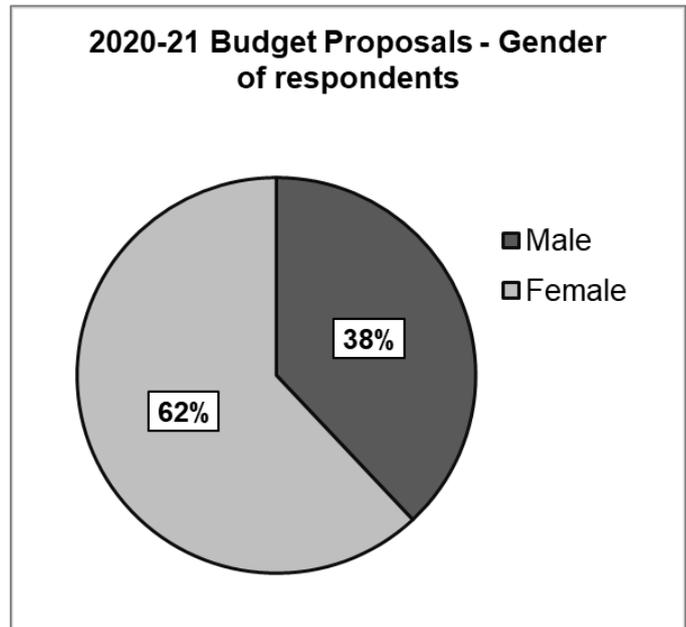
How people took part

Around 150 individuals and organisations sent in their responses via Let's talk Newcastle online, events, social media posts, and emails. We do not know the exact number of individual people who took part as we do not have a way of checking whether someone might have sent us several responses, for example, posting a comment on our Facebook post, then completing a survey on Let's talk Newcastle online.



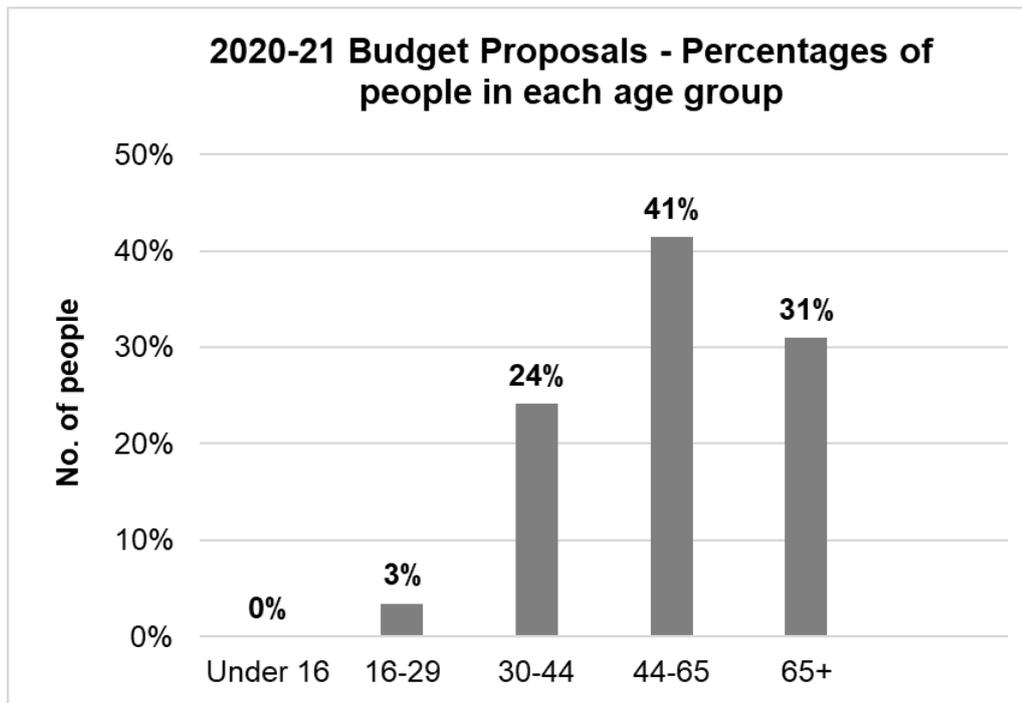
Gender

Around 142 of the 150 individuals and organisations who took part gave information about their gender, of whom nine replied 'does not apply' (for example, charities) and two preferred not to give this information. For 10 individuals, this information was unknown. The chart on the right shows the gender breakdown (we did not have any participants who described their gender as being other than 'male' or 'female').



Age

40 of the 150 individual responses we received had information about the age group of the respondent, including 11 respondents (such as charities) who chose 'does not apply'. The ages of those who supplied this information are shown in the chart below.



Ethnicity

Most respondents did not specify their ethnicity. Of those who did (35 people), most described themselves as 'White British'.

Sexual orientation

Most respondents did not specify their sexual orientation. Of those who did (25 people), most said they were 'heterosexual'; others described themselves as gay, bisexual, or replied 'prefer not to say'.

Disability

Most respondents did not specify whether they were disabled. Of those who did (27 people), there was a nearly even split between those who said they were not disabled and those who said they were.

Employment

Most respondents did not specify their employment. Of those who did (25 people), the largest proportions were either employed full-time or retired.

Wards

27 respondents provided information about where they live. As shown below, the majority of these individuals were from Walkergate and North Jesmond.

Ward	No. of respondents
Walkergate	4
North Jesmond	3
Heaton	2
Kenton	2
Manor Park	2
Byker	1
Castle	1
Elswick	1
Kingston Park South and Newbiggin Hall	1
Monument	1
<i>Out of the Newcastle upon Tyne area:</i>	
<i>North Tyneside</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Cramlington</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Gateshead</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>North Shields</i>	<i>1</i>