

Southampton City Council 2016-2017 budget phase one – Consultation report

Introduction

1. Southampton City Council's Cabinet published their phase one draft budget proposals for 2016/17 for public consultation on 19 November 2015. Over the last five years, the Council has made savings of £84.7 million, and in 2016/17 it was forecasted that further savings of £39.1 million would be required. The Council is again facing a significant decrease in funding from Central Government, at a time when demand and costs are increasing for many of our services.
2. The Council has difficult decisions to make, which will impact on the city's residents, and is committed to engage and consult as part of the decision making process. This Appendix provides details of the consultation undertaken on the draft budget proposals and the feedback received, including any impacts or alternatives that have arisen during the process.
3. In September 2015, the Council consulted residents about their priorities, so we could protect these areas wherever possible, and focus budget proposals in areas of lesser priority. The results highlighted three overarching priority outcomes which:
 - Children and young people get a good start in life
 - Strong and sustainable economic growth
 - A modern, vibrant city where everyone works together to keep it clean and attractive.The Leader, Cabinet Members and Council officers took into consideration these three priorities in developing the budget proposals.
4. In October 2015, the Cabinet agreed savings of £9.4 million, and the proposals published in November 2015 totalled £13 million. This was the first phase of consultation on the 2016/17 budget, with a second phase scheduled to commence in February 2016 on further proposals to close the remaining budget gap.
5. The first phase consultation ran from 19 November 2015 until 14 January 2016 and included proposals relating to the General and Housing Revenue Account budgets. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources led the consultation on the budget proposals supported by other Cabinet Members, the Council's Management Team (CMT), Heads of Service and staff in the Strategy, Skills and Communication Division.
6. A variety of methods were used to assist a wide range of people to give their views to inform the final budget proposals which will be considered by Full Council on 10 February 2016. This included residents, service users, employees, partners, businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations, and other stakeholders. This is in addition to the Council's decision making processes which include feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
7. This report provides a summary of the public consultation and outlines the feedback received through the public (written) consultation period. More detail can be found in a full report by the independent research company (ICM Unlimited) who conducted the consultation on behalf of Southampton City Council. This report is available as a Member's Room document. The ICM report contains the full detail of responses including quotes from consultees and detailed sub analysis of responses. Any feedback received on the proposals after the formal written consultation period will be provided verbally to Cabinet prior to any budget decisions being made.

Aims

8. It is vital that the Council has a transparent, comprehensive and coordinated approach to consultation on the proposed budget, so that stakeholders clearly understand what is being proposed, and the consultation is meaningful. Therefore the aim of this consultation was to:
 - a. Communicate clearly and make residents aware of the financial pressures the Council is facing
 - b. Ensure residents understand what is being proposed in the draft 2016/17 budget and what this could mean for them

- c. Enable any resident, service user, business, partner, voluntary sector or community organisation, or other stakeholder who wishes to comment on the proposals the opportunity to do so, allowing them to raise any impacts the proposals may have
- d. Ensure that the results are analysed in a meaningful, timely fashion, so that feedback is taken into account when final decisions are made
- e. Provide feedback on the results to the consultation and how these results have influenced the final decision.

Consultation principles

9. Southampton City Council is committed to consultations of the highest standard, which are meaningful, and comply with the following legal standards:
 - a. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage
 - b. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
 - c. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
 - d. The product of consultation must be carefully taken into account.
10. In addition to the above legal standards, the Council has developed a set of consultation principles. Despite having limited resources to undertake consultation, every effort was made to ensure the consultation was:
 - **Inclusive:** so that everyone in the city has the opportunity to express their views.
 - **Informative:** so that people have adequate information about the proposals, what different options mean, and a balanced and fair explanation of the potential impact, particularly the equality and safety impact.
 - **Understandable:** by ensuring that the language used to communicate is simple and clear and that efforts are made to reach all stakeholders, for example people who are non-English speakers or disabled people.
 - **Appropriate:** by targeting people who are more likely to be affected and using a more tailored approach to get their feedback, complemented by a general approach to all residents, staff, businesses and partners.
 - **Meaningful:** by ensuring decision makers have the full consultation feedback information so that they can make informed decisions.
 - **Reported:** by letting consultees know what was done with their feedback.
11. The city of Southampton also has a compact (or agreement) with the voluntary sector in which there is a commitment to undertake public consultations for a minimum of 12 weeks wherever possible. In this case, due to the timescales involved, and with the agreement of Southampton Connect, an eight week period of formal written consultation was implemented. In addition, there were opportunities for stakeholders to engage through the Forward Plan and decision making processes at meetings, and it was agreed that any feedback received outside of the written period of consultation would be given as a verbal update at Cabinet and Council meetings.

Methodology

12. The Council has made significant improvements in the way it conducts budget consultations over the last two years, and has received positive feedback from residents, other councils and the Local Government Association. These improvements have included the use of more pictorial and accessible explanations of the background to the budget situation, themed information sheets, frequently asked questions and consultation questionnaires that include highlights of the relevant information.
13. It is important that the Council takes into consideration any feedback on the consultation process from previous years, this feedback was used in developing subsequent consultations. The consultation on the proposed 2016/17 budget has built on the approach used in the two previous rounds of consultation. The Council also considered the feedback received last year, and as a result, condensed the information provided, and reduced duplication across documents.
14. Deciding on the best process for gathering feedback from stakeholders when conducting a consultation requires an understanding of the audience and the users of the service. It is also important to have more than one way

for stakeholders to feedback on the consultation, to enable engagement with the widest range of the population.

15. The agreed approach for this consultation was to use a combination of paper and online questionnaires. This approach enables an appropriate amount of explanatory and supporting information to be included in a structured questionnaire. This helps to ensure that residents are aware of the background and context to each of the proposals. It is therefore the most suitable methodology for consulting on a complex issue such as the whole draft Council budget.
16. All letters that were sent out as a part of the consultation, this includes letter to; partner organisations, service providers, contractors, voluntary sector group or service users. The letters directed all feedback on the consultation to either the main questionnaire or the central consultation address/ email address, this was to ensure all feedback was centrally received and managed.
17. In addition to the main questionnaire, a general response email and postal address was also advertised. This was to enable respondents who, did not wish or were unable to use the questionnaire. There was also a separate single issue consultation on the HASC8 proposal; for this, a questionnaire was sent out directly to service users, providers and voluntary and community organisations who could potentially have been affected by the proposal. The questionnaire was also available online, and a number of meetings managed by the service area were organised with stakeholders including voluntary and community organisations.

Appointment of contractor

18. A decision was taken to appoint an external contractor to undertake this consultation. This was in recognition of the fact that any proposed changes to Council services creates significant public interest and that consultations in Southampton usually have good levels of engagement. The other main benefit of using a third party for the management, analysis and reporting of consultation responses is they are, and are seen to be, impartial and completely independent from Southampton City Council. It was also recognised that the small in-house Research and Consultation team did not have the capacity to deliver this work.
19. As part of the procurement process, a specification was drawn up by the Southampton City Council Research and Consultation team. The scoring criteria within the specification allocated 50% of points for quality, broken down equally into: understanding the brief, being able to deliver in the correct time scales, and experience of similar projects. The remaining 50% was allocated according to the cost of the proposal. Once agreed, it was advertised through the UK SBS Market Research Purchasing Framework. This is a national government framework that enables a group of (80) research providers, who have met all the technical and organisational requirements for working with government bodies, to compete for projects under an agreed set of rules.
20. There was an opportunity for all the providers within Lot 2 'Quantitative and Qualitative' specialism (53 providers) to express an interest in seeing the full project research specification. In total, three submitted a tender for the project.
21. The tenders were carefully evaluated using scoring criteria laid out in the research specification. The Council appointed the highest scoring tender, ICM Unlimited. Once the appointment was made, a project inception meeting was held which began the process of jointly developing the consultation materials.

Promotion and communication

22. Throughout the consultation, every effort was made to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the proposed budget and had an opportunity to have their say. Particular effort was made to communicate the proposals in a clear and easy to understand way. This was achieved by providing background information on the website, themed information sheets, easy to read background information about the proposals at the start of the questionnaire, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document. The draft Equality and Safety Impact Assessments for each proposal, as well as a draft Cumulative Impact Assessment and links to support and advocacy organisations were also made available. All of these were available on a dedicated Council webpage.

23. Due to the Council's financial position and the level of savings required, a decision was made early on to limit the expense on external communications and to make the most of our 'free' communications channels including web and e-alerts. The consultation was promoted in the following ways:
- a. Posters about the consultation were on display at all of the libraries, Gateway and the Civic Centre reception throughout the consultation period, alongside consultation information, printed copies of the questionnaires and a drop box for completed copies of the questionnaire to be returned.
 - b. E-alerts containing links to the budget consultation were sent using the Council's email marketing service which has over 90,000 subscribers. Many of these contained advertising footers which linked through to the consultation pages. The following Stay Connected topics were used to carry the message:
 - o External: Your City, Your Say, Culture Vulture, Communities News and Events, Waste and Recycling Update, Council Housing Tenant News, Business News, Taxi and private hire News and Information, Fostering and Adoption News.
 - o Internal: Weekly Bulletin, Chief Executive's Bulletin, Transformation and Performance Division, Policy Watch.
 - o These bulletins were sent to 26,392 individual subscribers and internal contacts and led to 1,921 total clicks through to the budget pages with 1,510 unique clicks.
 - c. Information was issued to the local media through a media briefing, press release and direct contact with selected journalists.
 - d. There were 14 logged pieces of coverage including ITV Meridian, the Southern Daily Echo, Private Eye, Community Care magazine, Disability News, The Guardian and the TUSC website.

Consultation respondents

24. In total there were 544 responses to the consultation on the first phase of budget proposals for the 2016-17 financial year. These were received as: online or paper questionnaires, letters and emails. Any questionnaire submission that had at least one question completed was included in the analysis. All letters and emails were included coded with the relevant open ended questions to give a simple overview of the feedback. It was important to include all responses even if only a single question was answered as this was still feedback on the proposal. However, this does mean that the demographic information outlined may not cover all respondents, as some may not have completed this section. This summary report presents all figures as total responses to the consultation questionnaire (individual and organisational responses) whereas the ICM report presents these separately therefore the figures will not be the same.
25. The response rate for this budget consultation is lower than the previous two budget consultations which were around 900 two years ago and around 700 last year. This consultation was promoted just as widely as the previous budget consultations, it may be surmised that the lower response rate is due to residents having a full understanding of the constraints faced by the Council, and there is a feeling of ambivalence and that people respond better to specific interest issues that are seen to affect them directly. Single issue consultations such as the Libraries Transformation or Future of the Outdoor Sports Centre tend to have far greater levels of response, with 7,706 and 1,277 responses respectively.
26. This section shows the demographic makeup of respondents to the main questionnaire, which groups were represented. Any letters or emails received are included in the analysis but will not contain demographic information about the consultee therefore they are not included in this section. As consultations should be open for anyone to answer, they will not necessarily be representative of the whole population of Southampton. It is however important that as wide a range of people as possible were engaged and given the opportunity to share their views on the proposal.
27. Figure 1 shows the age breakdown of the consultation respondents. The least represented groups were under 16 and over 85, with 0% and 1% of responses respectively. The group represented the most was the 55-64 year olds, with 26% of the overall respondents belonging to these age categories. This is in line with expectations based on previous experience, as an example, in Southampton City Council's recent consultation on Public

Spaces Protection Orders the 55-64 age category was the highest represented. See Figure 1 for the full breakdown.

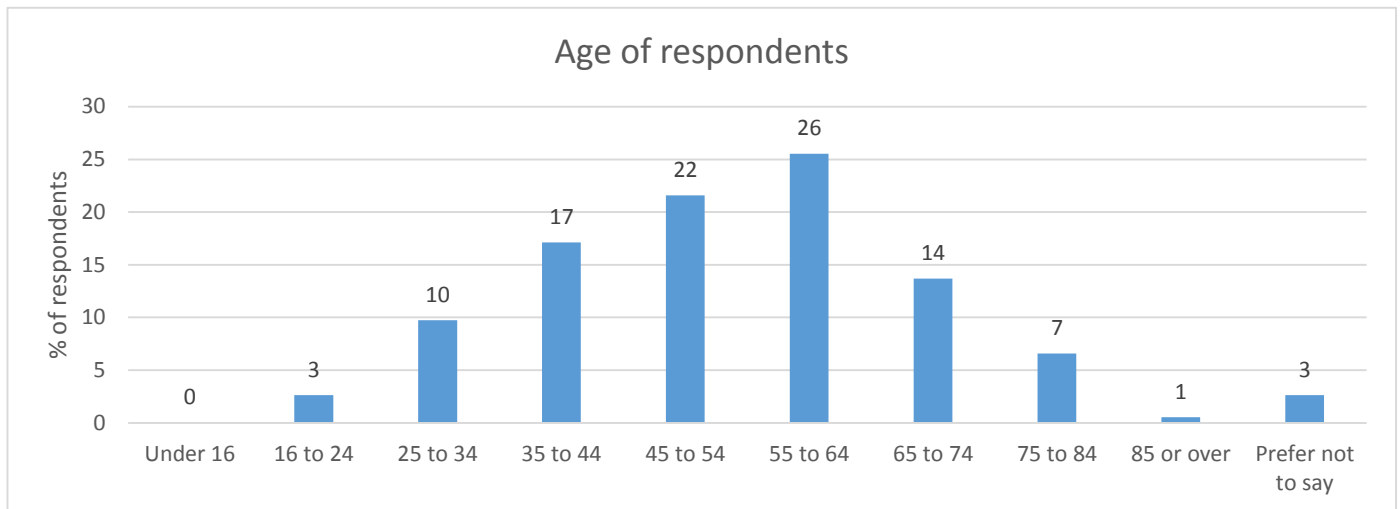


Figure 1

28. Respondents have been mapped to look at the geographic distribution of responses to the consultation. As seen in Figure 2 there is a good spread of respondents from across the city with a few responses from areas just outside the city.

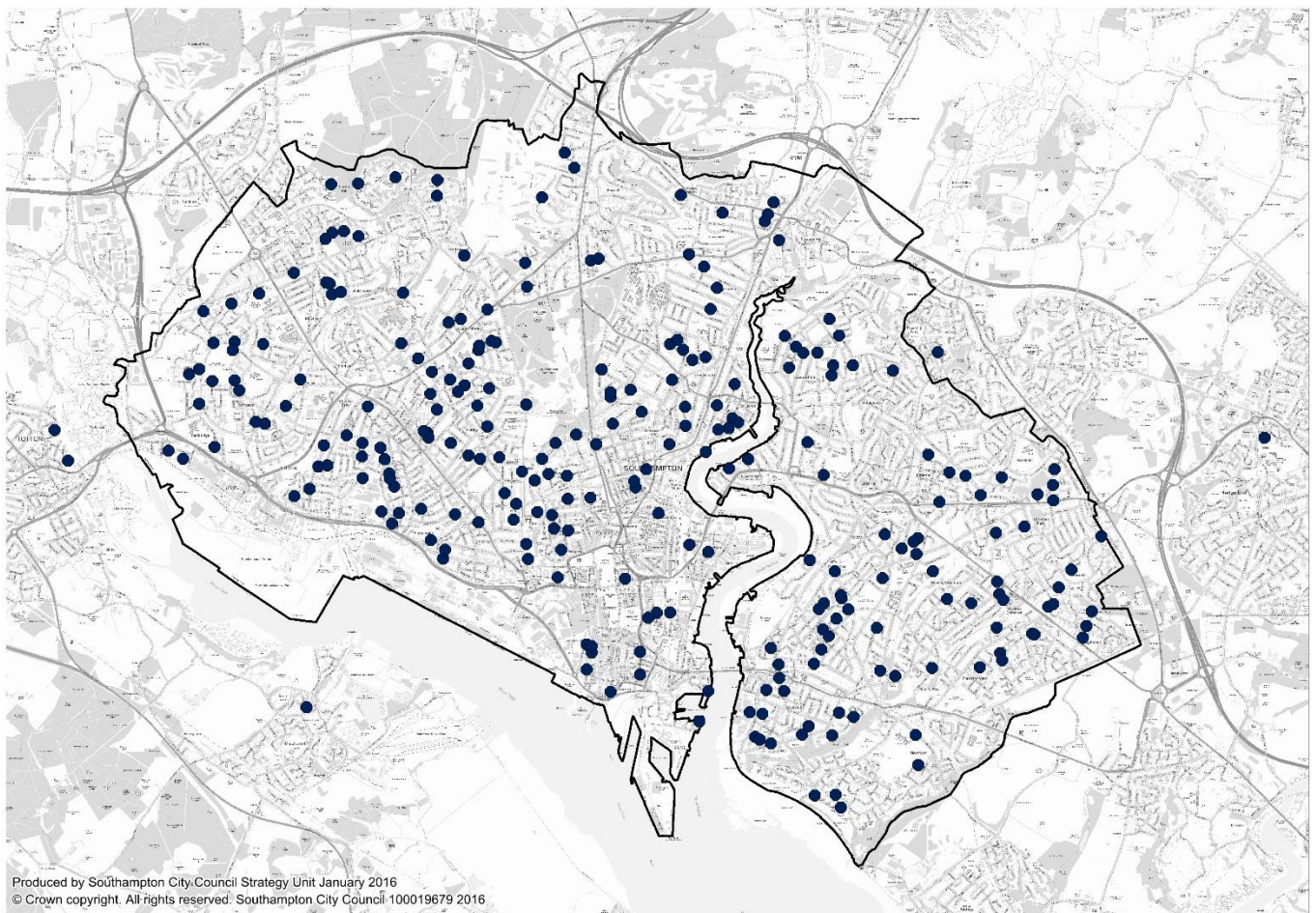


Figure 2

29. The gender breakdown of consultation respondents was 52% male and 44% female. This ratio is unusual as most consultations have greater responses from women, the recent libraries consultation for example had 63% of responses from women whereas the Southampton population is 49% women.

30. The ethnicity breakdown of consultation respondents was 89% White, 3% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups and 1% other ethnic group, Asian/Asian British and Black African, Caribbean or Black British . It is more usual to receive a greater response to consultation from people from a White ethnic background. For example the recent libraries consultation had a 92% response from the White ethnic group.
31. 14% of all questionnaire respondents considered themselves to have a disability and 30% were carers. This is higher than in previous budget consultations.
32. Of the consultees who completed a questionnaire only 12% were Southampton City Council staff, which is broadly in line with the level in last year's budget consultation (17%).
33. Out of all responses to the 2016/17 budget consultation 98% (533) were made by individuals and 2% (11) were made on behalf of an organisation.

Consultation results

34. Questionnaire respondents were asked for their views on a wide range of proposals which were grouped together under the following headings:
 - a. Internal efficiencies – savings from redesigning and restructuring services, and reducing other internal costs
 - b. Digital (using technology to improve services) – improvements to online services and mobile working
 - c. Adult social care – changes in the way Adult Social Care services are provided
 - d. Housing – changes in the way services are provided to Council tenants
 - e. Services for all – changes to services everybody uses, such as parking and bus transport
 - f. Income and charges – increases and changes to charges for some Council services
35. Each heading had an information sheet which explained the groups of proposals within their thematic context. At the beginning of the questionnaire respondents were given the opportunity to choose which (if any) of the grouped proposals they wished to provide feedback for. Respondents were encouraged to look at the information sheets so they could respond to the consultation with an understanding of the proposals and their context.
36. The following paragraphs outline the responses to the six themed groupings of proposals, these are presented in order of response level stating with the highest level of engagement and work through to the least.

Internal efficiencies

37. This group of proposals are about making changes to processes, structures, systems and contracts in order to deliver better value for money. The proposals grouped together under internal efficiencies included: redesigning and restructuring services, realigning budgets, reducing costs, making better use of technology and existing contracts. The proposals in this section totalled £8,645,000 of savings to the General Revenue Account. This was the group of proposals with the highest response rate with 62% of questionnaire respondents providing a view on internal efficiencies.
38. As shown in Figure 3 there was a combined agreement (strongly agree and agree) level of 59% against a combined disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) of 18%.

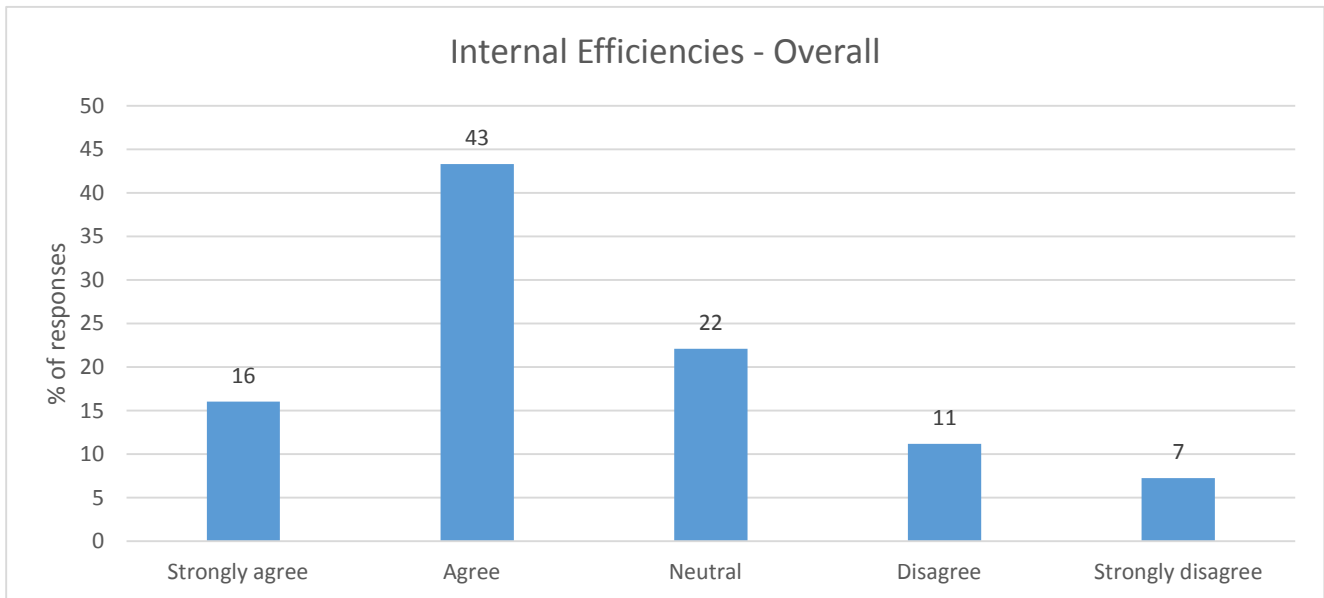


Figure 3

39. Respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the group of proposals were given the opportunity to outline the proposals they disagreed with, the five most common disagreed with proposals were;
- i. E&T 22 Transport, highways and parking – overall staffing restructure – 12%
 - ii. FIN 11 Cease insurance of the Fine Art collection
 - iii. E&T 26 Restructure of Parks, Open Spaces and Street Cleansing
 - iv. E&T 14 BBLP – Itchen Bridge further automation – extend help point call answering times by City Watch and reduce Itchen Bridge staffing costs
 - v. E&T 11 Concessionary fares – reduction in the provision for increased number of annual journeys.
40. The respondents who disagreed with the proposals were then asked to select the proposal they disagreed with most. The four proposals with the highest level of disagreement were:
- i. E&T 14 BBLP – Itchen Bridge further automation – extend help point call answering times by City Watch and reduce Itchen Bridge staffing costs
 - ii. Deletion of vacant posts
 - iii. E&T 22 Transport, highways and parking – overall staffing restructure – 12%
 - iv. E&T 11 Concessionary fares – reduction in the provision for increased number of annual journeys.

Services for all

41. The Council provides hundreds of services to the residents of Southampton. Some of these are targeted at people with a particular need, while others are used by everyone in the city – for example, transport, leisure services, and waste and recycling. The proposals in this section impact on the Riverside Pitch and Putt course, bus transport and parking enforcement. They total £605,000 of savings to the General Revenue Account. This was the group of proposals with the second highest response rate with 54% of questionnaire respondents providing a view on services for all.
42. As shown in Figure 4 there was a combined agreement (strongly agree and agree) level of 54% against a combined disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) of 30%.

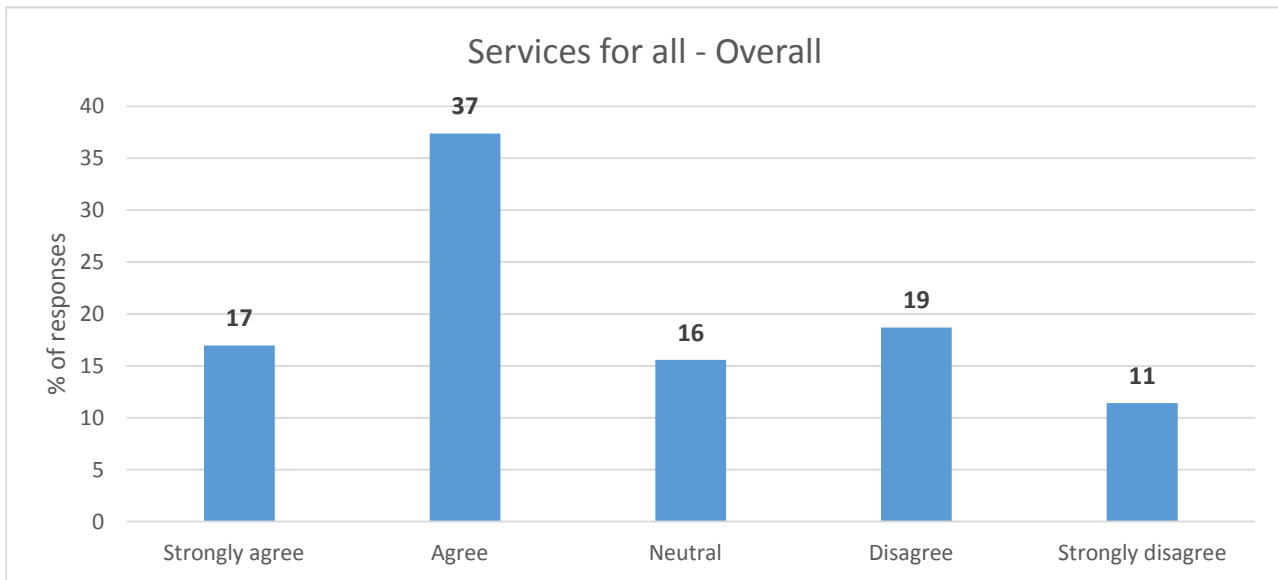


Figure 4

43. Respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the group of proposals were given the opportunity to outline the proposals they disagreed with, the two most common disagreed with proposals were;
- i. E&T 12 Reduce bus subsidy budget
 - ii. E&T 15 Bus lane, bus stop and school parking enforcement.
44. The respondents who disagreed with the proposals were then asked to select the proposal they disagreed with most. The proposal with the highest level of disagreement were:
- i. E&T 12 Reduce bus subsidy budget.

Digital

45. This group of proposals focus on improving the way the Council works, delivering more services online, making it easier for residents to access information and services in ways that are quick, efficient and convenient. For services right across the Council, this proposal will enable customers to report, apply or pay for services online. The way Council staff work will also be improved, with better online internal processes and the introduction of more mobile working. The proposals in this grouping total £1,800,000 of savings to the Council's main budget (General Revenue Account). This was the group of proposals with the third highest response rate with 52% of questionnaire respondents providing a view on the digital proposal.
46. As shown in Figure 5 there was a combined agreement (strongly agree and agree) level of 74% against a combined disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) of 17%. This is the highest agreement level of any of the proposal groupings.

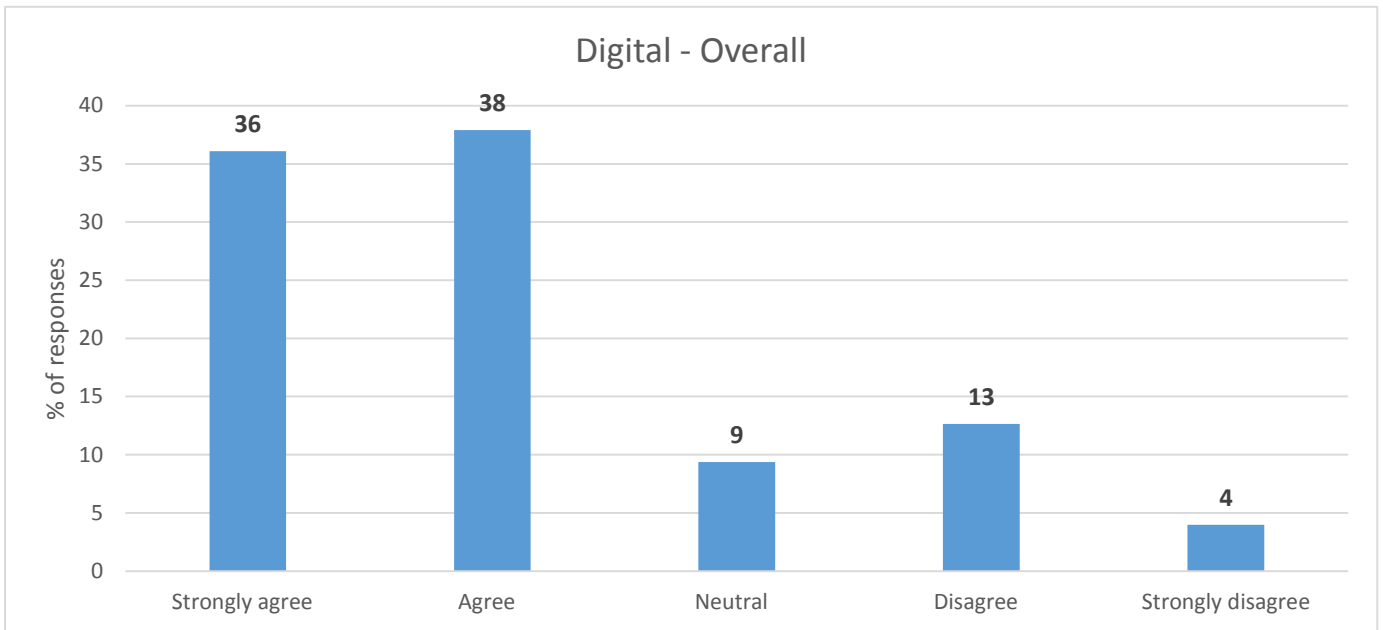


Figure 5

- 47. As the digital information sheet described one large proposal rather than a group of proposal, respondents who disagreed were asked to select the reason they disagreed. 65% of those who disagreed gave the reason 'Not everyone in society can access digital services'.
- 48. Within the section of the questionnaire on the digital proposal there was a question about with gradually reducing cash and cheque payments over time. 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that cash and cheque payments should be reduced over time, while only 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Adult Social Care

- 49. Adult Social Care services provide support for adults with long and short term health and care needs. Demand for these services is increasing significantly, and will continue to do so as, for example, the number of people over 65 living in the city is predicted to rise by 19% between 2014 and 2021. Therefore there is a need to make sure that resources are used as effectively as possible, so that residents who are eligible receive appropriate care and support, which meets their needs and provides value for money. The proposals grouped together in this section total £1,455,000 of savings to the General Revenue Account. This was the group of proposals with the fourth highest response rate with 51% of questionnaire respondents providing a view on the adult social care group of proposals.
- 50. Due to the complexity of the HASC8 proposal (Setting of personal budgets to meet unmet eligible adult social care needs) additional consultation was conducted with potentially affected service users and other stakeholders. When responses to this additional questionnaire are added to the total for the rest of the Adult Social Care responses it has the second highest response. It is important to be aware that the HASC8 proposal is not being taken forward as a decision was made to remove this proposal based on the feedback received through the consultation process.
- 51. As shown in Figure 6 there was a combined agreement (strongly agree and agree) level of 48% against a combined disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) of 32%. This is the lowest overall agreement level of any of the proposal groupings.

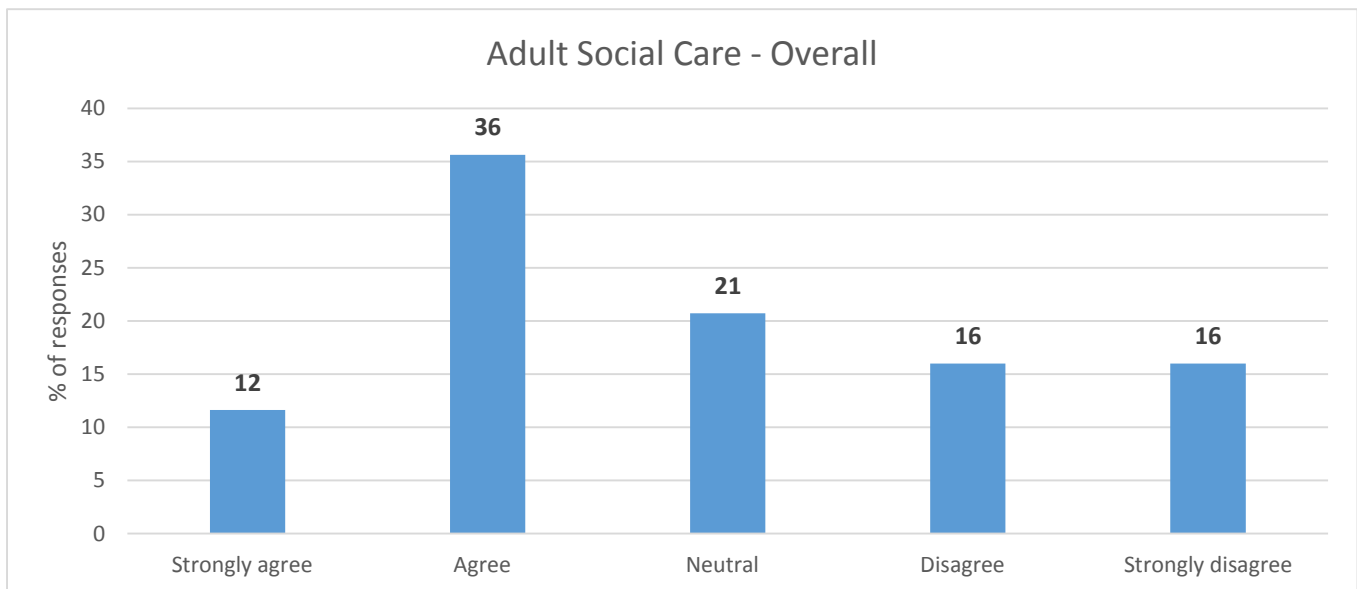


Figure 6

52. Respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the group of proposals were given the opportunity to outline the proposals they disagreed with, the three most common disagreed with proposals were;
- i. HASC 9 Introduce charge for self-funders and deferred payments
 - ii. HASC 8 Setting of personal budgets to meet unmet eligible adult social care needs
 - iii. HASC 6 Introduce wider roll out of Telecare to reduce the ongoing cost of existing packages and delay the need for clients to require long term support.
53. The respondents who disagreed with the proposals were then asked to select the proposal they disagreed with most. The two proposals with the highest level of disagreement were:
- i. HASC 8 Setting of personal budgets to meet unmet eligible adult social care needs
 - ii. HASC 9 Introduce charge for self-funders and deferred payments.
54. There was also additional consultation which was conducted directly with service users who could have been potentially affected by the 'HASC 8 Setting of personal budgets to meet unmet eligible adult social care needs' proposal. An additional opportunity for around 330 service users or carers was given through a separate questionnaire specifically about the personal budget proposal.
55. There were relatively few responses (19) to this additional consultation but out of those responses the majority (11) strongly disagreed with the proposal. The consultees who did strongly disagree raised serious issues with the proposal including: fairness, impact on families, impact on independence, impact on quality of care, how the £500 figure had been reached and service users rights.
56. It was in light of the feedback on this proposal that a decision was taken to withdraw the HASC8. As a result, consultees were informed of this decision by letter on 12 January 2016 before the consultation was due to end.

Income and charges

57. The proposals grouped together under income and charges relate to changes to charges for services. In some cases, this means increasing charges to cover the cost of providing the service, or to generate income. The proposals in this grouping would generate £532,000 of income for the General Revenue Account, and £279,000 of income for the Housing Revenue Account. This was the group of proposals with the second lowest response rate with 47% of questionnaire respondents providing a view on the income and charges group of proposals.
58. As shown in Figure 7 there was a combined agreement (strongly agree and agree) level of 57% against a combined disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) of 25%.

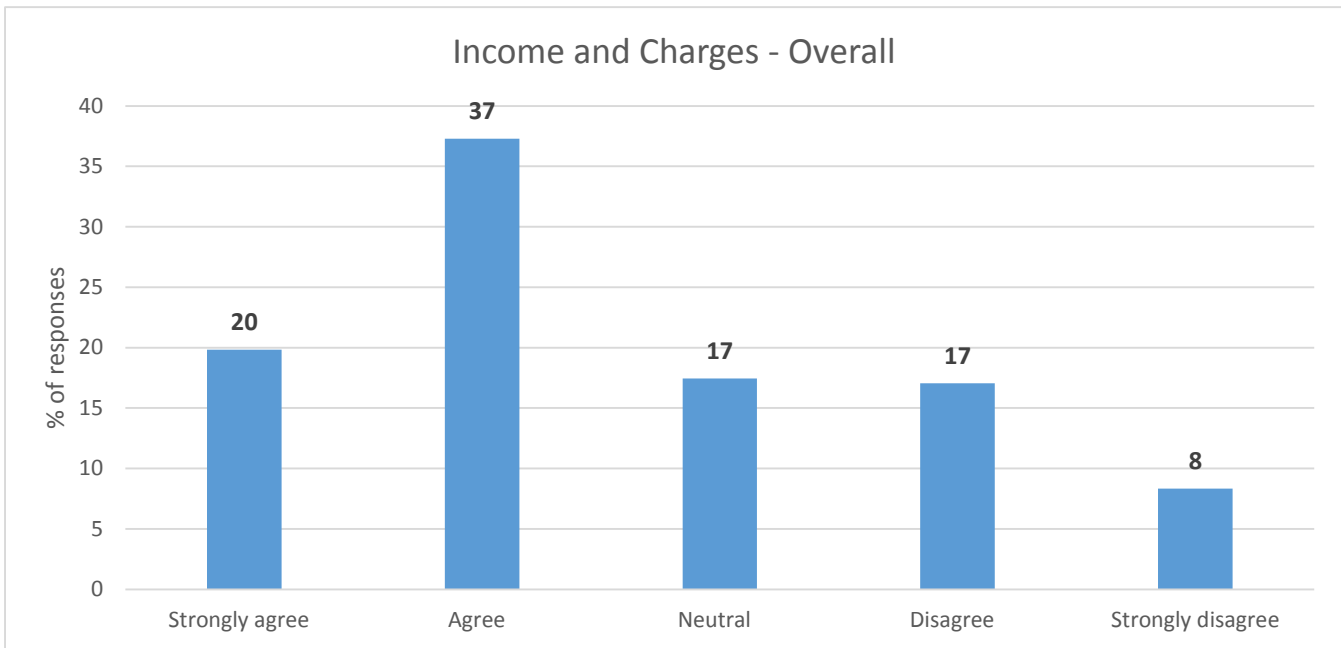


Figure 7

59. Respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the group of proposals were given the opportunity to outline the proposals they disagreed with, the four most common disagreed with proposals were;

- i. E&T 20 Revert underutilised disabled parking bays into pay and display
- ii. E&T 27 Introduce new rates for cemeteries and crematorium
- iii. HOU 20 Increase in charges to private CAREline alarms
- iv. HOU 21 Introduction of new charging model for Community Alarm Customers.

60. The respondents who disagreed with the proposals were then asked to select the proposal they disagreed with most. The two proposals with the highest level of disagreement were:

- i. E&T 27 Introduce new rates for cemeteries and crematorium
- ii. E&T 20 Revert underutilised disabled parking bays into pay and display.

61. A decision was made shortly after the close of the consultation to withdraw 'E&T 20 Revert underutilised disabled parking bays into pay and display', as a result of feedback through the consultation and other means.

Housing

62. The Council owns and manages 16,350 homes in the city, which are rented to Council tenants, and around 2,000 leasehold homes. A wide range of services are provided to support the delivery and management of Council-owned housing, as well as support services for tenants. The proposals in this area are intended to make sure that Housing Services are efficient and cost-effective, and that support services are targeted to those people who really need them. They total £4,031,400 of savings to the Housing Revenue Account. This was the group of proposals with the lowest response rate with 46% of questionnaire respondents providing a view on the income and charges group of proposals.

63. As shown in Figure 8 there was a combined agreement (strongly agree and agree) level of 66% against a combined disagreement (strongly disagree and disagree) of 18%.

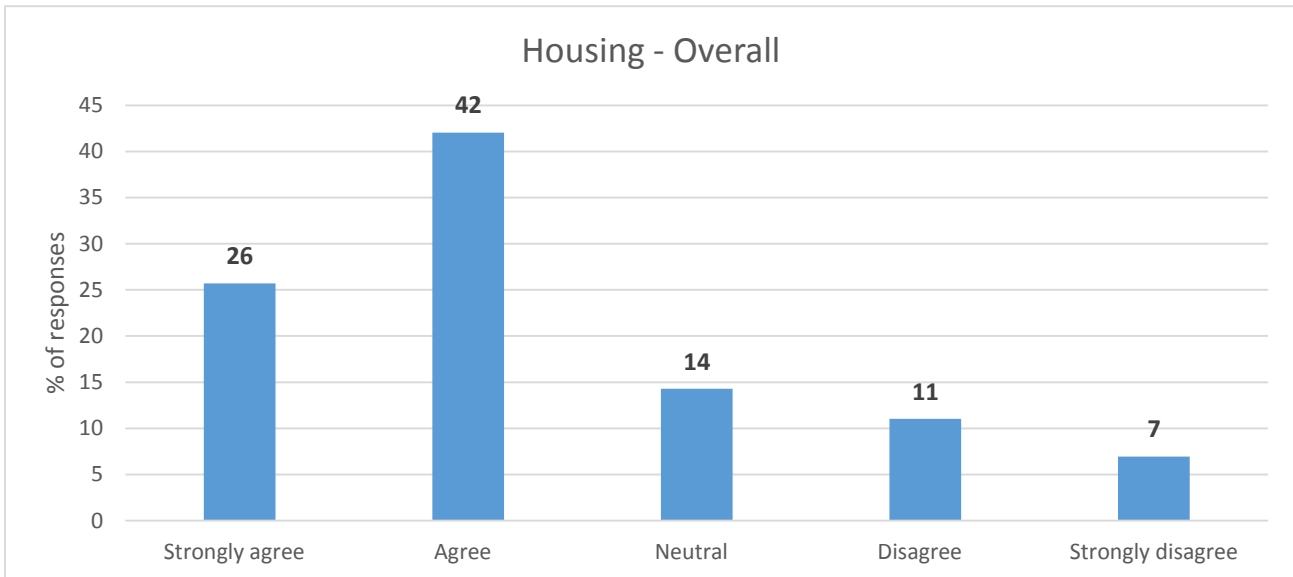


Figure 8

64. Respondents who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the group of proposals were given the opportunity to outline the proposals they disagreed with, the four most common disagreed with proposals were;

- i. HOU 24 Removal of cash collection facility at Woolston Office Local Housing Office
- ii. HOU 26 Removal of cash collection facility at Shirley Housing Office
- iii. Housing staffing restructures (HOU 2, 3, 7, 13-16, 22, 23, 27, 31, 32)
- iv. HOU 35 Homebid magazine.

65. The respondents who disagreed with the proposals were then asked to select the proposal they disagreed with most. The two proposals with the highest level of disagreement were:

- i. HOU 26 Removal of cash collection facility at Shirley Housing Office
- ii. Housing staffing restructures (HOU 2, 3, 7, 13-16, 22, 23, 27, 31, 32).

Overall views on the budget

66. All questionnaire respondents, regardless of which other questions they had responded to, were given the opportunity to give their overall view on the proposals being consulted on. This was done using a ten point scale (where 1 was very unfavourable and 10 very favourable) to give a wide range of options to pick up on more nuanced views. Figure 9 shows the range of responses, the average response was six which is on the more favourable side of neutral. The combined total for favourable responses (7-10) is 42%.

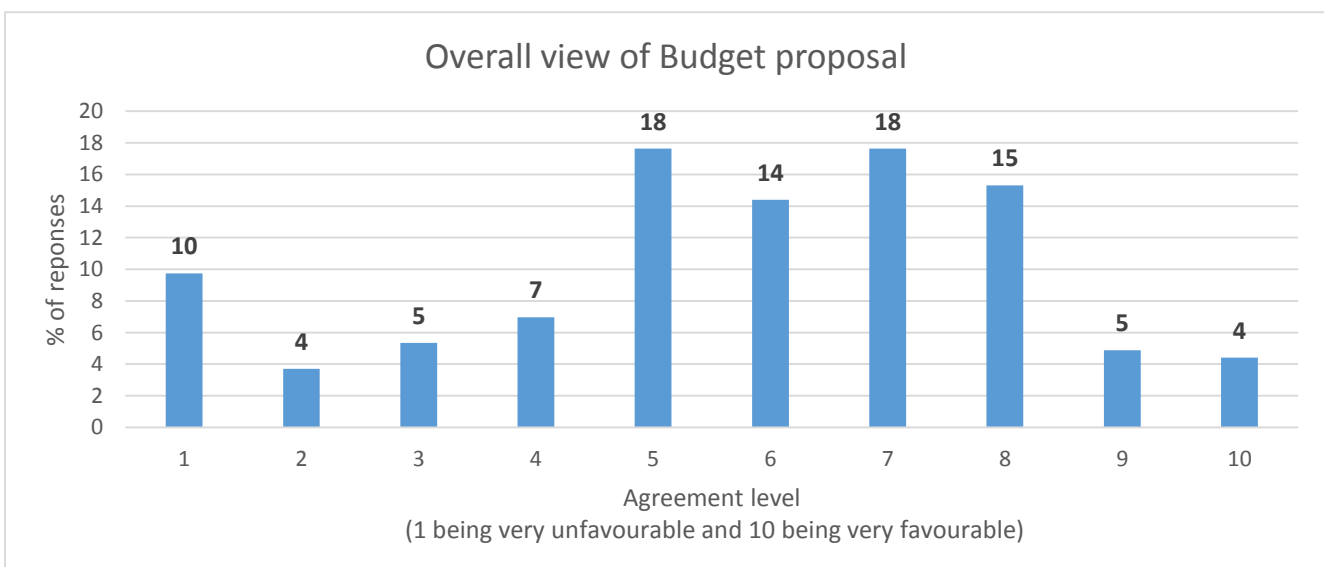


Figure 9

67. There was also opportunity to make an open ended comment about the budget proposals, in total 215 (42%) survey respondents made a comment. These responses were then grouped into 31 themes, some responses were relevant to multiple themes. All of the themes shown in Table 1 had at least 10 responses and cover the most common general responses.

Table 1

Coded comment	Count
Concern about potential impact on older and disabled groups	28
Savings package seems fair/ well thought out/ believe Council is doing its best	27
Council needs to support vulnerable people/ older people/ disabled people	24
Oppose cuts to bus subsidies and bus routes	21
Protect social care	20
Concern about staff cuts	18
Protect disabled parking/ disagree that blue badge parking is underutilised	18
Concern about accessibility of online services/ impact of reducing face to face and telephone contact with staff/ Southampton City Council online services not currently good enough	15
Reduce wages/ cut senior management/ cut number of councillors and councillors' pay	14
Council needs to be more efficient/ reduce use of agency staff	12
Other	55

Impacts

68. Assessing the potential impact any proposal may have on individuals or communities is one of the main purposes of public consultation. Each proposal which has the potential to have an impact will have a draft Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA). There is also a draft Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) which looks at the combined impact of all the proposals on specific groups of residents. These documents are updated with relevant findings from the consultation, the CIA can be found at Appendix 3 of this report.

69. One of the open ended questions in the 2016-17 draft budget consultation asked respondents to identify any personal impacts or equality issues which have been overlooked in the formation of the budget proposals.

70. In total 76 respondents answered the question on impacts this represents 14% of consultees. These 76 answers equated to 118 different comments which were drawn together into 12 themed groups which are outlined in Table 2. The most commonly identified impacts are around disabled and older people losing out as a result of the budget proposals.

Table 2

Coded comment	Count
Disabled people will lose out	21
Older people will lose out	16
Online services aren't universally accessible	10

Council needs to support vulnerable people	9
Removing bus subsidies/ withdrawal of bus route X12 will be detrimental	7
Poorer people will lose out	4
Proposals are against Human Rights Act/ equality legislation	5
Working people are unfairly penalised	2
Removing Blue Badge parking will be detrimental	2
Housing shortage/ Council needs to provide more housing	2
Do not increase Council tax	2
Everyone will lose out	4
Not applicable/ none	8
Unsure	3
Other	23

Alternatives

71. It is important to ensure alternatives to the proposals being consulted on are considered as a part of the decision making process. The information sheets outlined broad alternatives to taking the proposals forward, but it is useful to give consideration to alternatives suggested by residents and stakeholders. The consultation questionnaire sought suggestions for alternative or additional savings or sources of income for Southampton City Council.
72. In total, 161 respondents provided alternative suggestions, this represents 30% of consultees. These 161 answers equated to 243 different comments which were drawn together into 22 themed groups which are outlined in Table 3.
73. The most common suggestions were around Council efficiencies and reduction in Council staff pay and manager levels.

Table 3

Coded comment	Count
Greater Council efficiencies	36
Cut Council staff/ pay for Council staff/ review management roles	29
Introduce Park & Ride/ increase parking payment charges	14
Increase Council tax/ increase Council tax for students/ ensure full collection of Council tax	12
More development to attract money spending	11
Cut or charge for culture and leisure services/ Sell art collection	11
Increase fines for rule breaking	9
Less outsourcing	8
Reduce waste collections	7
Increase rents/ controls for Council tenants	6
Change street lighting/ reduce street lighting/ reduce traffic lights	6

More outsourcing/ privatisation	5
Introduce more checks on eligibility for benefits/ social housing	4
Introduce congestion charges	4
Need to protect vulnerable people	4
Disability rights	4
More prevention work to reduce number of children going into care/ change provision of care	3
Change bus services/ combine bus routes	3
Fundraising activities	3
Introduce port-related charges	3
Means test pensioner benefits	2
Oppose removal of disabled parking	2
Other	52
None	5

Staff consultation

74. The Council takes its obligations under section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 to provide our employees and their union representatives with information on budget proposals very seriously. In order for the Council to meet its obligations as a good employer and also in order to start the process of discharging its obligations under s.188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, a detailed staff and union consultation document launched the statutory consultation process for the budget proposals published 10th November 2014, for implementation in April 2015.
75. 21 individual consultation documents with an overarching s188 cover notice included a range of information relating to the budget proposals with implications for employees. It is important to the Council, that all employees and union representatives take the opportunity available in a minimum 45 days consultation period to discuss the proposals, including offering a wide range of alternative options to achieve the same budgetary reduction.
76. The Council also takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 very seriously and therefore employees were advised to speak to their manager, HR Pay or their trade union representative at the earliest opportunity if they consider themselves disabled under the Act and required any reasonable adjustments to the consultation and/or the selection process
77. Employees and union representatives were made aware that during the consultation period further information would be given or updated. This reflected the fact that, by the very nature of consultation, not all of the proposals will be fully formed at the point of consultation and it is important that every opportunity is given to contributing to shaping the final proposals.
78. Views and comments from affected employees and trade union representatives were invited throughout the consultation process through a series of team and individual meetings.
79. Meetings with unions have occurred at a Council-wide level with Trade Union representatives and at a directorate and service-level with affected staff during a 45 day consultation period.
80. Environment and Economy Consultation - The majority of consultations within the Place Directorate have been concluded according to schedule and without any issues outstanding. The consultation regarding the proposals to change the call out rota in Port Health was extended due to availability of parties to meet to discuss outstanding concerns.

81. There were no issues with staff consultations in the People Directorate.
82. Chief Executives Directorate Consultation - The majority of consultations within the Directorate have been concluded according to schedule and without any issues.
83. The Chief Executive conducted consultation on the organisational restructure Phase 1 of the new Operating model. The HR element of this restructure is still being finalised.

Overview and Management Scrutiny Committee

84. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered the General Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17 to 18/19 budget proposals at their meeting on 12th November 2015. The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Chief Financial Officer were in attendance. The following recommendations were made:
 - a. That the Chief Financial Officer provides the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee with an overview of the proposed savings put forward by officers that had not been included in the Cabinet report.
 - b. That, in the context of the financial sustainability of the Council, officers provide the Committee with a summary of the legal and constitutional role of elected members in relation to budget setting at Full Council in February 2016, and the requirements that need to be met to enable the Section 151 Officer to sign off the budget.
85. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered HASC 8 – Setting of Personal Budgets to meet unmet eligible adult social care needs, at their meeting on 26th November 2015. The Service Manager, Adult Social Care was in attendance. The following recommendation was made:
 - a. That feedback from the budget proposal consultation be circulated to the Panel.
86. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee also considered the HRA Revenue Budget 2016/17 to 18/19 budget proposals at their meeting on 12th November 2015. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainability and the Head of Housing Services was in attendance. The following recommendations were made:
 - a. That the Committee is provided with a breakdown of the number of Council owned homes that are estimated to be 'high value'.
 - b. That the Cabinet Member targets closing the HRA budget through efficiencies rather than by reductions to the capital programme.
 - c. That robust and effective procedures are developed to reduce the likelihood of an increase in rent arrears following the introduction of Universal Credit.

Feedback on the consultation process

87. The Council is committed to making the whole consultation process as transparent as possible. As a part of this, any feedback on the consultation process itself received during the course of the consultation is gathered together here.
88. Overall, out of the 544 people who took part in the consultation, 10 commented on the consultation process itself, representing less than 2% of total consultation responses.
89. The comments on the budget consultation process can be grouped into four categories which provided feedback on the information provided, the view that consultation does not change anything, the approach to forming priorities and the way the questionnaire was structured.
90. The comments about the information provided as a part of the consultation are shown in Table 4, in total four consultees expressed there was not sufficient information to respond the consultation.

Table 4

Can you please stop using the word "efficiencies", we're not stupid, we know that means cuts. Please be more honest...

Some of the proposals are given in so little detail that it is impossible to comment. For instance, the significant number of posts to be lost in Housing - it is unclear from the proposals how service efficiencies will allow this....
Some of the Information Sheets were not detailed enough to make a proper judgement for response - in particular the Adult Social Care Sheet information did not clearly match to the reference numbers for proposals. Is the proposal to "limit" a personal budget to a benchmark of £500 per week legal under the Care Act? Is this not likely to disproportionately impact on people with Learning Disabilities and therefore potentially be indirect discrimination under the Equality Act?
This consultation doesn't meet legal requirements. It is not accessible, understandable, informative in a way that is helpful, inclusive. This feedback document is badly worded, and makes it difficult to object in a sensible way. The information sheet is not available except for reference, and doesn't contain sufficient information to give an informed opinion. Yes I will send in a detailed response

91. Three consultees expressed that they feel that the decision has already been made and there is no real purpose to the exercise. The comments are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5

I wonder why you keep sending out these questionnaires and then when you get the replies you don't like you just ignore them. This is what happened when you asked us all about reducing the number of councillors and the length of term they serve and when the vast majority voted to reduce both you just carried on as normal and ignored what the majority voted for. Same thing happened with the Library review. It seems you decide what's going to happen and just send out the questionnaire as a PR exercise.
You failed to listen to the community's views about closing Bitterne Walk In so i do not believe any views provided here will be listened to or considered at all!!!
Unenthusiastic about completing budget proposal form as nothing ever seems to change. 'Your City, Your Say', doesn't seem to apply as the council usually I have made their decisions beforehand. For example when we completed a survey on the number of councillors and the libraries survey it was a waste of time because it was all already decided.

92. One consultee felt the way the priorities had been developed left certain groups of society at risk of being ignored. This comment is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Your approach of assessing priorities by popularity with residents as a whole seems inherently discriminatory against unpopular minority groups with protected characteristics such as frail older people.

93. Two consultees felt that there was not the option to disagree with a set of proposals and then give reasons such as there were not enough savings in that area. These comments are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7

There is no option to be able to disagree with something and to say why - for example I wanted to disagree with the Adult Services savings because I think they can make more savings - so I don't disagree with what is being proposed but I think their savings could be greater so that savings elsewhere could be less. What about Children's Services - I could not see any savings from their budget?
I have grave concerns about this survey. I have said that I do not agree with some of the proposals and I strongly suspect that you now think that I do not believe that there should be cuts in that area, whereas I actually believe that the cuts should be much greater.

Conclusion

94. Over 500 stakeholders have engaged with the consultation process and given their views on the proposals. The consultation has engaged with a range of individuals through a variety of methods to allow residents in Southampton to give their views on the budget for 2016/17. As this report has outlined, by looking at various demographic breakdowns of the respondents, there was engagement across a range of ages and locations across the city. The Leader and Cabinet have withdrawn two proposals (HASC8 and E&T 20) having considered consultation feedback.

95. This consultation has ensured compliance with local and government standards. This report, the Cabinet report and appendices outline the full picture of the consultation results and will be used to inform decision makers.
96. The group of proposals with the highest level of engagement was Internal Efficiencies, the group with the least engagement was Housing.
97. Overall agreement with the 2016-17 draft budget was 42% with 26% in disagreement.
98. In conclusion, this consultation allows Southampton City Council's Cabinet to understand the views of residents and stakeholders on phase one of the draft 2016-17 budget consultation. Therefore it provides a sound base on which to make a decision.