

Report of the Interim Deputy Chief Executive

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2018/191. Purpose of report

To report the results of the budget 2018/19 consultation exercise that took place during October and November 2017.

2. Background

For 2014/15 and 2015/16 the Council consulted on the budget through the online system known as 'YouChoose'. This produced a limited number of responses but allowed for an analysis of local views about spending priorities at service level. For 2016/17, the new five year Corporate Plan presented an opportunity to join up public engagement on policy and financial matters and seek views on specific matters to inform the budget for 2016/17 and beyond.

For both 2017/18 and this year's exercise, a web-based survey, publicised through social media, has been used. This included no reference to any specific policy options but sought views on all Council services and indications of satisfaction, or otherwise, with both those services and with the local area generally. Local people were also asked whether they felt that additional income should be derived from council tax or fees and charges, or costs reduced by reductions in services. Finally respondents were asked about what method(s) they used to access Council services, how satisfied they were with them, and also whether they would consider accessing these services by other means.

Respondents were also asked to provide demographic data, including which area of the borough they live in so that any correlation between location and satisfaction levels could be analysed.

A total of 579 responses were received. This is a significantly larger response than last year (with the comparable web-based survey) with 396 responses. This represents an increase of 183 or 46%. The results are summarised in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 summarises the demographic data for the respondents. Appendix 3 summarises suggestions made through the consultation or direct to the Council through free text.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Respondents

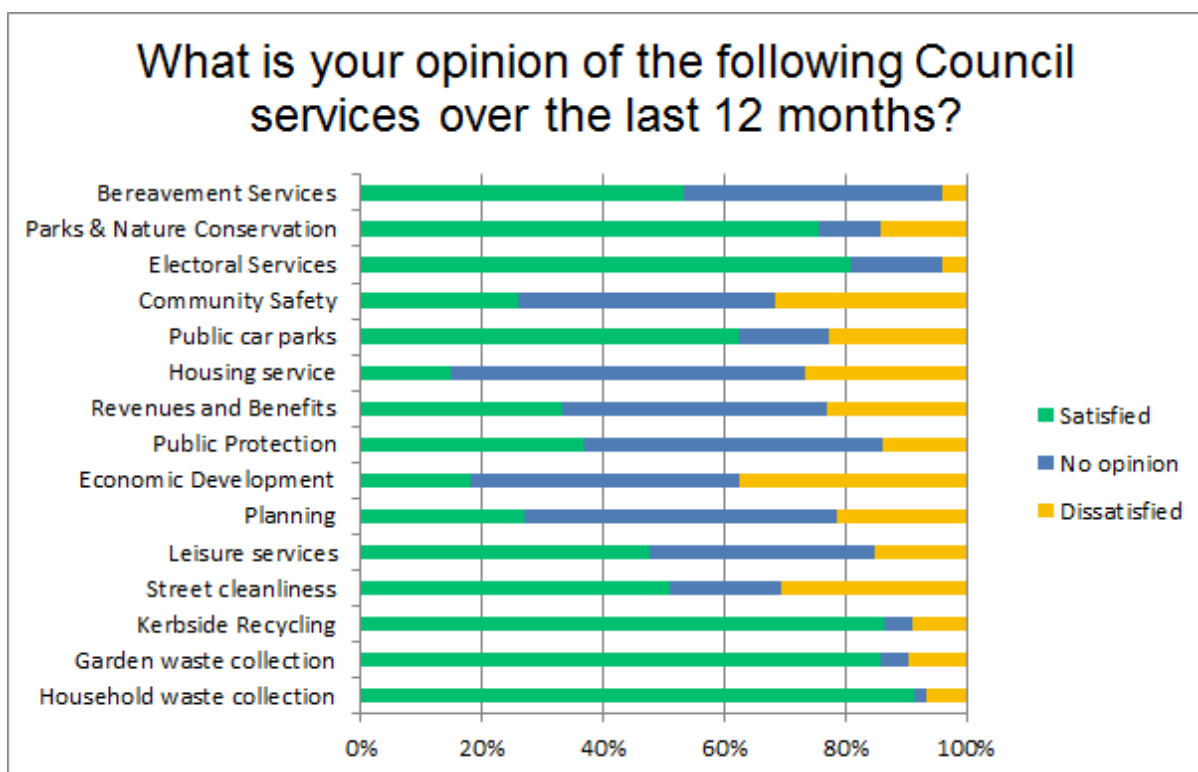
1. The sample of respondents is representative of the local communities in Broxtowe, although the analysis of ethnicity indicates a bias towards White British respondents. 92% of respondents indicated they considered themselves to be White British, 6% White Irish and 19% White/Other. The remaining 3% were split between Asian, Black or Mixed race categories. This represents an increase of White respondents compared to last year which was 86%.
2. In terms of gender 53% of the respondents were male and 47% female.
3. The number of younger respondents was lower than in previous years with 23% of under 45s responding compared to 26% in 2017/18. However these were both considerably higher than in 2016/17 when it was 12%.
4. In terms of geographical location, Beeston residents responded the most (26%) followed by Chilwell (15%) and Stapleford (11%). There were fewer respondents in less urban areas; however, unlike last year there was at least one respondent from every area. Other than that factor the split of geographical location was very similar to last year.
5. The Broxtowe Disability Forum was consulted; their response is included within Appendix 3.
6. A full breakdown of gender, age ranges, ethnicity, disability and location is included in Appendix 2. As a proportion of the total population of Broxtowe, the number of respondents means that the results cannot be taken as statistically significant, albeit the number of responses is considerably higher than in previous years. It is advisable therefore to only consider the results as indications of local views rather than attempt to draw strategic conclusions from the detailed responses.

Satisfaction with Services

7. In overall terms, local people are satisfied with the borough of Broxtowe and the Council's management of it. 74% of people are either 'satisfied' or very 'satisfied' with the area in which they live, while 64% are either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the way that the Council delivers services. However these numbers are a reduction on last year; the figures were 84% and 73% respectively. Just 2% of people are 'very dissatisfied' in both categories.
8. 15% of those who used services and expressed a view were 'dissatisfied' with the services they use, with 46% overall expressing satisfaction and 22% not expressing an opinion. This represents an overall decline compared to last year where 12% were 'dissatisfied' and 58% were 'satisfied'. The number of respondents not expressing an opinion has dropped to 18%, from 30% last year. Figure 1 shows the breakdown by service.

9. The services with the highest satisfied responses were Household Waste Collection (black lidded bin; 91%), Kerbside Recycling (green lidded bin, glass bag or red lidded glass bin, textiles; 82%) and Electoral Services (79%). The services with the highest dissatisfied responses were Street Cleanliness (30%), Economic Development (29%) and Community Safety (26%).

Figure 1



10. There were a number of comments about specific services which can be broken down broadly into headings. Table 1 below shows the number of responses in each broad category.

Table 1: Text commentary on satisfaction with services

Area of interest	No. of comments
Improve rubbish collection/recycling	33
Invest in business/communities	22
Increase car parking/reduce cost	15
Improve urban environment and street scene	11
More housing/better regulation of private sector	10
Improve community safety	10
Improve leisure facilities/events	10
Improve parks and open spaces	7
Reduce council tax	5
Address fly tipping	3
Improve planning policy and processes	2

11. Positive comments were also made which are shown below

- Beautiful parks and gardens
- Broxtowe seem to be doing a good job
- Generally happy with the job you've done in the last year!
- Generally happy and enjoy living in Broxtowe
- Generally I am satisfied with Broxtowe Borough Council
- I think the Council does a good job overall in difficult times; thank you!
- Very satisfied
- We use few of your general services so do not have the knowledge to give an educated opinion. Certainly satisfied with the waste/recycling bins - excellent service
- Don't sell the Town Hall!

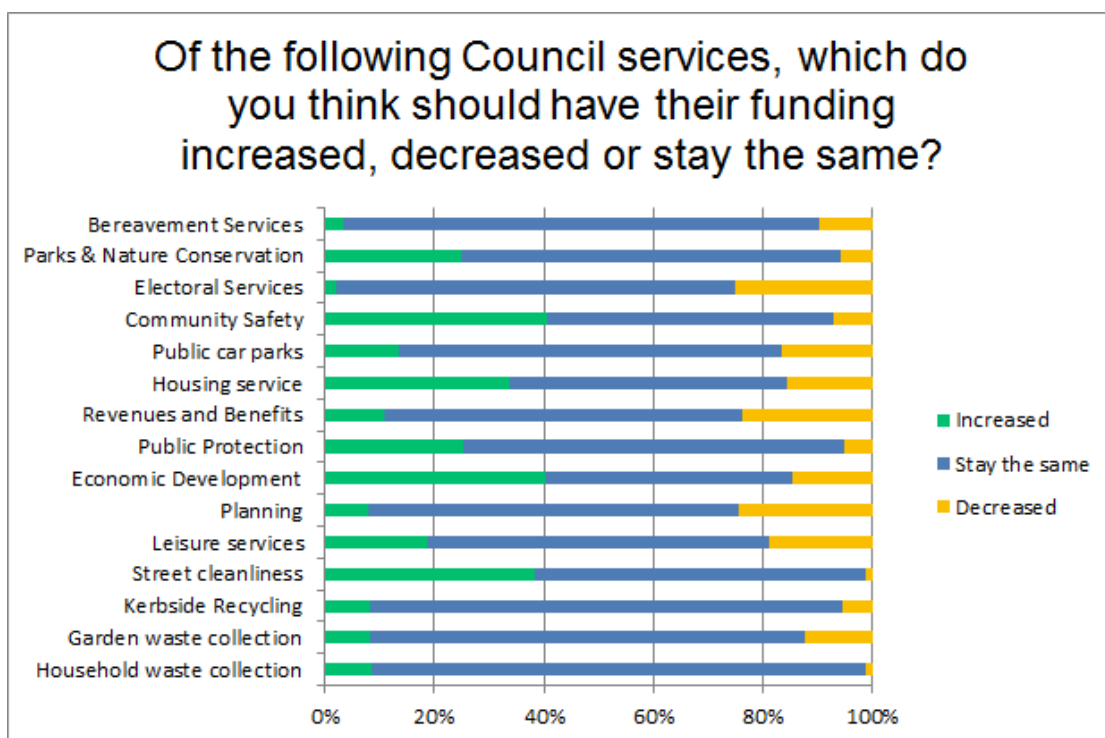
12. Out of the 579 responses, 293 provided some form of comment to this question which can be interpreted that local people care about their local community and want to see improvements. As can be seen in the table above most of the comments relate to improving the rubbish collection/recycling service and more investment in local communities and town centres.

Spending on services

13. When asked about whether spending on services should be increased, decreased or stay the same, the responses showed consistency with satisfaction levels. Of those services which were ranked as the highest for satisfaction one (Electoral Services) was flagged as one of the highest for decreased funding. Similarly of those services which were ranked as the highest for dissatisfaction most were flagged as the highest for increased funding (namely Community Safety, Economic Development and Street Cleanliness).

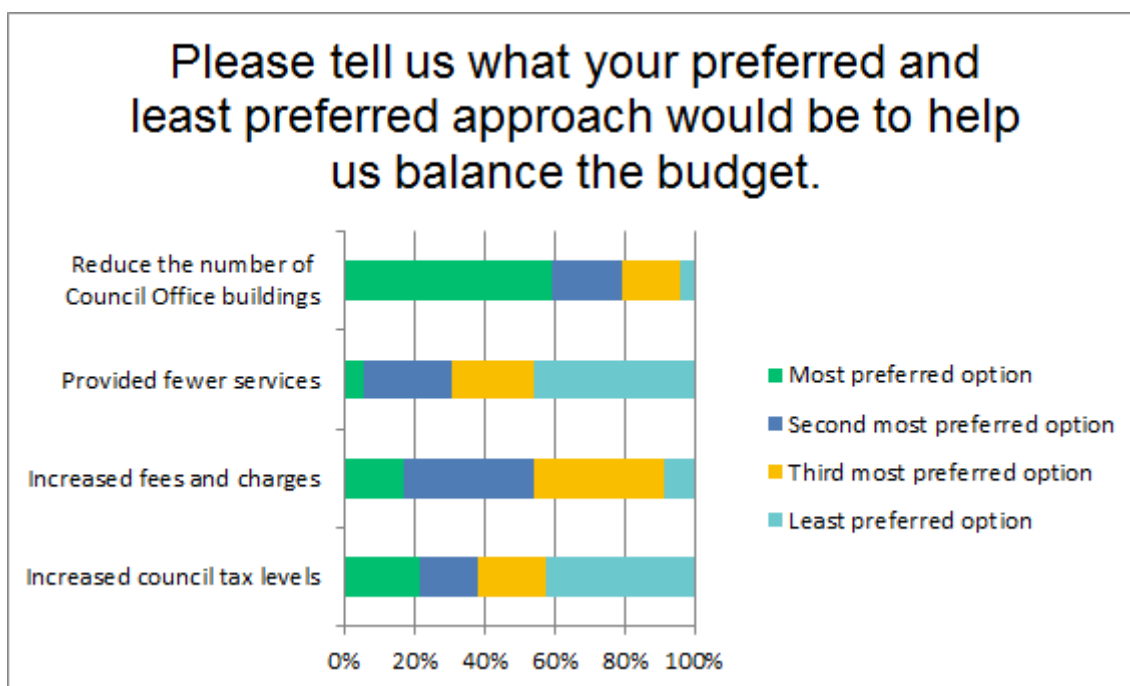
14. Community Safety (40%), Economic Development (40%) and Street Cleanliness (38%) were the services with the highest responses for increased funding. Services that are viewed as more discretionary, such as Electoral Services (25%), Planning (24%) and Revenues and Benefits (24%) were the services with the highest responses for decreased funding.

Figure 2



15. Overall the balance was in favour of increasing spending (19%) rather than decreasing spending (12%). However the majority view was to keep spending the same (69%).
16. When asked how services should be funded in future in respect of most and least preferred approaches an additional question was included this year. Respondents were asked in respect of “reducing the number of Council Office buildings”. This option was considered the first preference for 59% of respondents whilst the second preference was increasing council tax levels (21%). Providing fewer services was the least preferred option of the four at 6%.

Figure 3

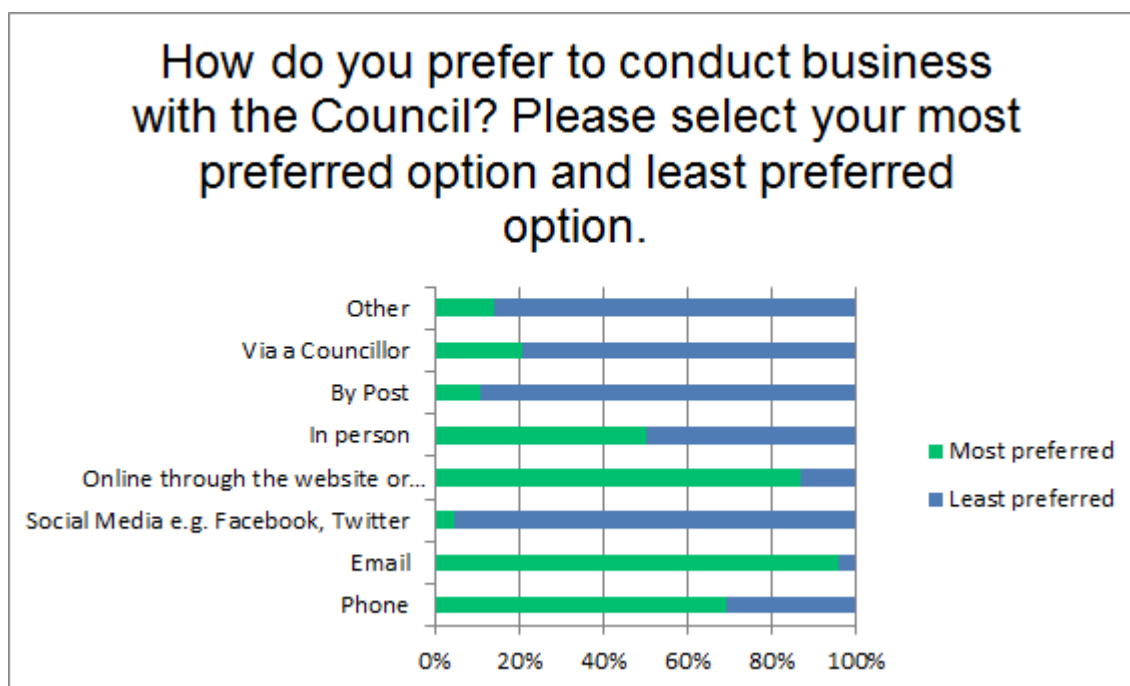


17. Respondents were also invited to make suggestions about how the Council could increase income, reduce costs or make savings to support the budget.

Communicating with the Council

18. This year respondents were asked a yes/no question as to whether they feel the Council listens to them. The results showed that 54% answered no with 46% answering yes.
19. To obtain further information on how to shape services in future, local people were asked about how satisfied they are with the ways they can access Council services, and how they prefer to contact the Council to do business. 68% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the way they can access Council services. Only 6% were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied. However, 27% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (i.e. neutral).
20. In terms of what methods of communication local people prefer to use there was clearly a preference for online or email contact but it must be remembered that all respondents were already able to access services online by virtue of them completing this survey. Social media was by far the least preferred method of communication with post the second least.

Figure 4



21. In terms of accessing services by alternative means the highest responses were by means of email and online which were both the highest responses for most preferred means of communications.
22. An important part of the Council's economic development plans is the Beeston town centre regeneration (Phase 2) project. The planned development aims to provide additional housing and leisure services, and stimulate the evening economy.
23. As part of this year's budget proposals, the Council is planning to invest £250,000 in 2018/19 and £250,000 in 2019/20, to further enhance and improve play areas and parks/open spaces across Broxtowe Borough Council.

APPENDIX 2

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

	Number	% of total
Gender		
Male	298	53%
Female	263	47%
Transgender	3	1%
Age		
Under 18	1	0%
18-24	8	1%
25-29	15	3%
30-44	108	19%
45-59	162	29%
60-64	76	13%
65+	196	35%
Ethnic Origin		
White - British	512	92%
White - Irish	6	1%
White - other background	19	3%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	1%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0%
Asian or Asian British - other background	2	0%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2	0%
Black or Black British - African	0	0%
Black or Black British - other background	0	0%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1	0%
Mixed - White and Black African	0	0%
Mixed - White and Asian	0	0%
Mixed - other background	0	0%
Chinese	2	0%
Any other ethnic group	8	1%
Disabled or with long term health needs		
Yes	91	16%
No	474	84%
Area		
Attenborough	9	2%
Awsorth	3	1%
Beeston	144	26%
Bramcote	59	10%
Brinsley	11	2%
Chilwell	82	15%
Cossall	2	0%
Eastwood	55	10%
Greasley	28	5%
Kimberley	34	6%
Nuthall	34	6%
Stapleford	61	11%
Toton	30	5%
Trowell	12	2%

APPENDIX 3

Other suggestions received**Response by Broxtowe Disability Forum 24 October 2017**

Note of a discussion attended by members of the Broxtowe Disability Forum regarding the Council's budget consultation 2018/19.

"Generally satisfied with refuse collection (black bins). Think there should be more frequent collections at some times of year (for example Christmas and height of summer).

Satisfied with green bin collection service although say it can be a bit noisy at times. Street cleaning is good.

Very satisfied with Planning – one person asked for a large print local plan part 2 and it was on the doormat the next day.

The crematorium is excellent.

Don't use leisure centres or brown bin service and didn't feel able to pass an opinion on other services mentioned in terms of satisfaction.

On consideration of the budget choices all unanimously preferred increasing council tax levels. Providing fewer services was the least favoured option. On reducing the number of council buildings they thought it depended which building and under what circumstances.

They thought funding should be increased for refuse collection (black bin) and affordable housing but stay the same for all other services mentioned.

Overall they were satisfied with Council services.

They felt they were listened to.

They accessed the Council generally a few times a year mostly in person. They did this because they prefer personal contact.

There were very positive comments about officers in the contact centre "they know their business" and were "very efficient".

The forum made a suggestion that more use be made of parks and open spaces for adults. They felt there were a lot of activities for children on parks but not so much for adults."