

**Let's talk Newcastle**  
Budget 2024 – 2025  
consultation report



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## 1. Introduction

This report summarises the main messages from our consultation on our budget proposals as set out in our medium-term financial plan for 2024-2025 to 2026-27. The public consultation period ran from 30 November 2023 to 17 January 2024. As in previous years, there were several different ways in which people and stakeholder organisations could take part. A stakeholder organisation is an organisation which has a particular interest in commenting on our proposals – for example, a group which supports carers has an interest in commenting on proposals about how we deliver social care services.

One way to take part was through the online People’s Budget. This is an interactive tool ([www.letstalkbudget.org.uk](http://www.letstalkbudget.org.uk)) that enables people to understand more about what services we provide, how we propose to spend our budget in future, and influence the Council’s decision by generating, submitting and sharing their own budget proposal.

Another way is to comment on our specific proposals for delivering services in future as set out in our IIAs (Integrated Impact Assessments). We asked residents, stakeholder organisations and businesses for any comments they might have about the different proposals, the cumulative impact of all of them taken together, their ideas for saving money and generating income, and any general comments they wanted to make.

Please note that this report presents the views of individuals and organisations gathered through the consultation. These have been used by staff to update Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs). Given that this report considers only the views expressed by residents and key stakeholders, to understand the full implications of our proposals the findings outlined here need to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Our medium-term financial plan for 2024-25 to 2026-27
- Appendix 1 - Summary of 2024-2025 savings proposals
- Appendix 6 - Summary of directorate budgets
- Appendix 10 – Consultation and communication plan

These, along with the full set of our budget papers, can be found online at [2024-25 budget and medium-term financial plan for 2024/25 – 2026/27 period](#)

This report has two appendices. Appendix 1 provides more detailed feedback on what people said about the service-specific proposals (IIAs). Appendix 2 provides more information about who took part and how.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to give us their views on our proposals.

## 2. How many people and organisations took part?

We received 77 People’s Budgets, 16 responses from people who tried to set a People’s Budget and gave up. Around 417 individuals and organisations have taken part, giving us a total of 510 responses (compared to 245 for the previous year’s consultation).

Please note that it is possible for an individual to take part in the consultation through several channels – for example, they might complete a People’s Budget, and later complete a Let’s talk Newcastle online survey. We would not be aware of this unless they chose to tell us, so we can only give our best estimate the number of individual people and

organisations who have taken part. (Similarly, one 'response' in the form of a feedback letter written following an online discussion might represent the views of several organisations who sent representatives.)

The table below shows how many people and organisations commented on each aspect of the consultation. The service-specific proposal with the highest number of people and organisations commenting on it (100) was IIA3: 'Local Services and Waste Management'.

<b>Budget Proposals</b>	<b>No of people or organisations</b>
The <b>People's Budget</b> - submitted	77
The <b>People's Budget</b> - gave up	16
Local Services and Waste Management	100
Homelessness Prevention Contract Change	70
Review of the provision of SEND transport support to post-16 learners	49
Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept	36
Supporting Independence Scheme	21
Transforming the Adult Social Front Door	14
Learning Disability and Autism Supported Living	8
Reviewing the Maximum Contribution to Adult Social Care Costs	8
Crisis Support Scheme	7
Review and deletion of the Intensive Family Intervention Team	3
Review of the policy for SEND personal transport budgets for eligible families	2
General comments – including feedback on proposals which do not have an Integrated Impact Assessment, such as funding for International Newcastle, Free School Meals, and Citylife	198

Please note that the number of responses and individuals or organisations shown in the table adds up to more than individual responses, as many of those responding commented on more than one proposal.

We promoted the consultation widely online, using videos and posts on social media and our website. We also used non-digital communication channels, such as our residents' magazine Citylife, email and providing a Freepost address for people to reply via letter if they chose to do this.

Where possible, we involved voluntary organisations representing communities of interest such as disabled people, older people and carers, such as the Elders Council, Newcastle Advisory Group, and Connected Voice and Healthwatch Newcastle. We also worked with organisations including schools, homelessness service providers and the North East Chamber of Commerce.

Organisations commenting specifically on our proposals relating to homelessness prevention included service providers at a consultation event, a charity representing refugees and asylum seekers, a joint response from Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter, individual responses from Crisis, Changing Lives, Tyne Housing, Shelter, the Labour Housing Group's North East Branch, Citizen's Advice Newcastle, Karbon Homes, the Collaborative Newcastle

Homelessness Workstream, Connected Voice, Carers Centre Newcastle, and members of the Elders Council and Healthwatch attending a consultation event.

More information on our social media reach and engagement, and on the demographics of participants, can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

### **3. The People's Budget**

On 30 November 2023 we relaunched our People's Budget simulator, which invites members of the public to consider how they would set the council's budget for the coming year. It can be viewed online at: [www.letstalkbudget.org.uk](http://www.letstalkbudget.org.uk).

We asked people to make savings of £22m from our existing budget by cutting spending on service areas, putting up council tax, increasing income generation from various sources or a combination of all of these. We provide context with pop-up notifications indicating the consequences of cutting spending in various service areas. For example, cutting the spending on Children's Social Care by up to £3 million provides the update: "There is a risk that demand for services may increase, with more children coming into care and there would be fewer places available to keep them safe." The People's Budget closed on 17 January 2024.

#### **The People's Budget simulator**

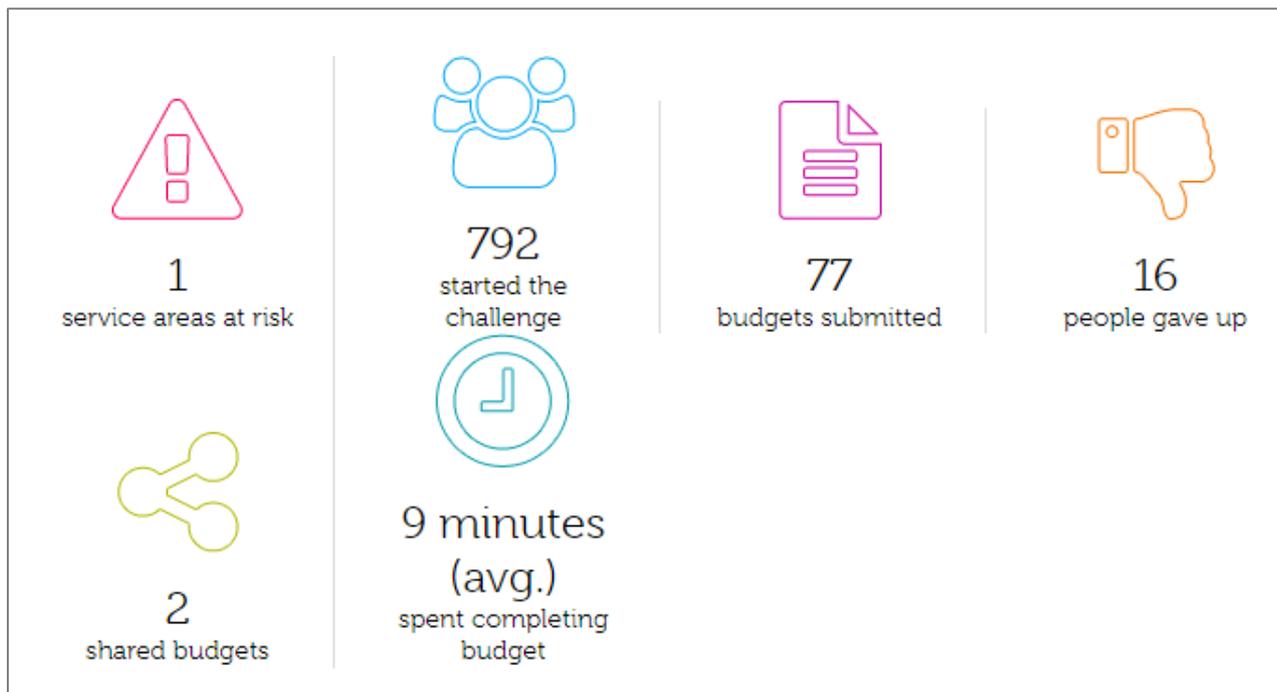
The People's Budget simulator tool aggregates responses into a single People's Budget, based on what everyone has told us. In total, 792 people started the People's Budget Challenge, with 77 submitting budgets (compared to 38 in 2022-23), and 16 clicking the official give up button (the remaining 699 simply gave up without clicking the give up button). People took around 9 minutes on average to complete their budget.

Responses to it indicate that people taking part preferred to raise funds through a combination of a 2.7% rise in Council Tax (£2.7 million) and generating a total of £3.0 million of income from parking (£1.0 million) and other fees and charges (£2.0 million), giving a total of £5.7million in income generated.

Looking at savings on services, people preferred to make smaller cuts to spending on adult social care, children's' social care and refuse, waste collection and disposal, and larger cuts to spending on business and economic development, enabling and business functions and planning and development. Total savings were £16.3million.

The most common themes in comments from people who took part were that all services should make some changes, and that children's services and similar services should be protected. When asked for bright ideas on how the council could save money or generate income, people wanted the council to make efficiency savings, reduce headcount, and that people were unhappy with spending on asylum seekers and migrants. The most common themes in comments left by people who gave up was that these were very difficult decisions, and that we should not cut services further but raise revenue and generate income instead.

## The People's Budget in numbers



The **2024 to 2025 People's Budget**, based on 77 budgets, is as follows:

- Total **savings**: £22 million
- **Council tax** increase: 2.7%, so £2.7 million
- **Income generation**: £3.0 million in total
- When combined, this meets the **savings target** of £23m as follows:
  - £16.3 million in cuts to service spending
  - £5.7 million from an increase in Council Tax and other sources
- **Total = £22.0 million.**
  
- When the actual spend amounts in service areas (following the cuts people have made in the People's Budget 2024-2025) are expressed as **percentages** of the initial spend, we can see that people prefer to make:
  - **Smaller** cuts to spending on Children's' Social Care, Adult Social Care, and Refuse, Waste Collection & Disposal.
  - **Larger** cuts to spending on Business and Economic Development, Enabling & Business Functions, and Planning & Development.
  
- The Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Early Years and Education, Culture, Leisure and Libraries, Maintaining Neighbourhoods, Planning & Development, and Business & Economic Development, Enforcement & Regulation, and Enabling & Business Functions service areas are at **low risk**.
- The Maintaining Highways and Parking service is at **medium risk**.
- The Refuse, Waste Collection and Disposal service is at **high risk**.

- Looking at **income generation** in the People's Budget, those who took part suggested that we should aim to generate £1.0 million from Parking<sup>1</sup>, and £2.0 million from other fees & charges (such as registrar's services, bereavement services, school meals, and others), giving a total of £3.0 million.

792 people started the challenge, 77 submitted a budget, and 16 clicked the official give up button (the 'missing' 699 people simply closed the People's Budget tool without completing a budget or clicking the 'give up' button). On average people took 9 minutes to complete a budget. Two people shared their budgets on social media.

## 4. Feedback on service specific proposals

We would note that many of the stakeholder organisations' responses were highly detailed and considered both the cumulative impact of the cuts, and possible ways in which local service delivery might be transformed in future. This report and Appendix 1, which covers this in detail has tried to do them justice, but we would advise reading them in full. The key findings from the consultation are as follows.

### IIA1 – Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept

The proposal is: "We propose to raise Council Tax by 2.99% (in line with government expectations) and apply a 2% increase in the government's adult social care precept". We received feedback on this from a total of 36 people and organisations, including two members of the public via letter, two responses from stakeholder organisations – Connected Voice and Citizens Advice Newcastle – 11 responses via Let's talk Newcastle, and 21 via social media comments.

When asked if the proposals were clear, nine people on Let's talk Newcastle said that the proposals were clear, and two said that they were not. The most common theme in people's comments about the consequences and impact of this proposal was that people in Newcastle would be worse off because of it. People asked if the impact could be minimised by reducing Council Tax to reduce poverty in the city.

When asked if the proposal is fair and reasonable, seven people commented that they did not think it was fair and reasonable, although one said they thought it was. Comments included views that the adult social care precept is unfair on people who are self-funding their social care, that the council should lobby central government for more funding, and concerns that the council is inefficient.

Considering other ways to save, suggestions for generating income included building more houses to increase the Council Tax base and looking at ways to generate income. Suggestions for savings included better procurement, learning from best practice elsewhere, making efficiency savings, and reducing senior staff pay and councillor expenses.

General comments were that some people felt that taxpayers do not get value for money, and a concern that the council does not listen. Connected Voice emphasised that investing

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<sup>1</sup> Note that we can only increase charges across car parks to address traffic flows through, and in, the Newcastle area. Income from car parking charges cannot be used for any purposes outside the objectives of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984), meaning that we cannot use these funds for services other than parking provision.

in the voluntary service has a positive impact on local communities. Citizens Advice Newcastle wanted more information on the impact of 're-focusing debt collection efficiency', although they generally supported proposals to bring bailiff enforcement action in-house. One person was concerned about the impact of increasing Council Tax on low-income households.

## **IIA2 – Crisis Support**

The proposal is: "We propose to discontinue this scheme, which provides financial help for our residents in the city who have experienced a crisis or disaster. We will continue to provide other financial support schemes such as the Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax support schemes, and signpost people to other payment schemes they may be able to apply for, and debt management and advice services."

Seven people and organisations gave us their feedback on this, including Connected Voice, Department of Work and Pensions on behalf of Newcastle Jobcentre, and Citizens Advice Newcastle. One person thought the proposals were clear and easy to understand. Four people and organisations commented that they were concerned that vulnerable people would suffer, and two commented that pressure on other services such as foodbanks would increase.

One person commented that the best way to minimise impacts was simply not to implement the proposal, and Citizens Advice Newcastle wanted to see eligibility criteria for the fund changed to increase uptake. There was concern that the proposals were not fair and reasonable as they would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable people in society, including people who have suffered domestic violence, seeking asylum, refugees, and people on low incomes. One comment was that the proposal is the consequence of years of cuts to central government funding. Citizens Advice Newcastle asked if the council would reverse a decision to cut the Crisis Support Fund and reduce the proposed cut to the Supporting Independence Scheme (Proposal IIA5) if the Household Support Fund is withdrawn in the next financial year.

## **IIA3 – Local Services and Waste Management**

The proposal is: "We propose to increase the charge for garden waste collection by £2 per year, to charge for replacement recycling bin glass caddies, and to increase the charge for replacing bins by £5, to £30."

100 individuals and organisations on this, including notes from a meeting of Healthwatch Newcastle and the Elders Council with 11 people present, six responses by email, 54 by Let's talk Newcastle<sup>2</sup>, and 29 via social media. 44 people replied 'yes' when asked if the proposals were clear, and three replied that they were not. Some people commented that they felt the language was too 'official', that the consultation needed to be more widely promoted, and that more information about the cost of glass caddies was needed.

The most common themes when asked about possible consequences and impacts of the proposal were that people think that glass caddies are mostly damaged by recycling collection crews, that increasing charges for replacement bins and caddies will lead to less recycling, and that people will fly-tip rather than pay for replacement bins and caddies.

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<sup>2</sup> The number of participants shown online on Let's talk Newcastle is slightly higher than this, but this is due to some people having started to complete a survey, but then closing it without leaving feedback.

When asked about how we could minimise the implications of the proposal, the most common responses were not to go ahead with the increases, that refuse collectors need to be more careful with bins and caddies, and that the council should use more robust glass caddies. Most people who commented on whether the proposal was fair and reasonable thought that it was not. When asked how we could save money, respondents suggested cutting senior staff pay and prioritising spending on essential services such as waste collection. General comments mostly focusing on concerns that glass caddies can be lost or damaged during collections.

## **IIA4 – Improving Consistency across Learning Disability and Autism Supported Living 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to ensure there is a more consistent funding approach towards people using our Independent Support Living scheme, who have comparable levels of care and support needs. We will do this by carrying out reviews with people to ensure that a reasonable and consistent amount of support is in place, and reducing funding where paid support is not used or needed.

We received three pieces on feedback on this proposal from Let’s talk Newcastle, social media, and six people who attended a discussion by Newcastle Advisory Group. The comment received via social media asked for more information about the costs of providing these services. The feedback received via Let’s talk Newcastle was that the respondent thought the change sounded positive in principle, but wanted to see it evaluated after twelve months to see if people using the service had become more engaged with local communities, or if they needed more support.

Newcastle Advisory Group commented that for this proposal to be effective, support provided needed to be “person-centred” and allow time for people with a learning disability and autistic people to learn new information, develop skills and be more independent. One concern expressed was that: “there is a worry about appropriate and creative support for the individual not being provided due to recruitment and retention issues, so the money isn’t being spent [because of this] and not because the person doesn’t need it.”

## **IIA5 – Supporting Independence Scheme 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to reduce funding for the Supporting Independence Scheme from £457,380 to £100,000 from April 2024. To ensure the remaining funding has maximum impact we will target support to households who are assessed as being in greatest need.”

21 people commented on this, including one person who responded by email, two people who commented via Let’s talk Newcastle, four comments received via social media, 11 representatives from the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle at a discussion meeting, the Labour Housing Group North East Branch, and Citizens’ Advice Newcastle. Much of the information provided, especially by stakeholder groups, is very detailed and we recommend reading this feedback in full. One person said it was clear, two said that it was not.

Feedback on consequences and impacts focused on what people and organisations saw as the likely negative impact of the proposal on efforts to tackle poverty in Newcastle, and that it would not be cost-effective in the long run. Suggestions for mitigating it including not

implementing the proposal, helping people in need find good quality second-hand goods, and cutting spending on staff salaries.

Some people wanted to see more lobbying of central government for funding, and Citizens Advice Newcastle commented on the potential negative impact of the cumulative impact of several proposals on vulnerable people. They also asked if the Council would reverse this decision if the Household Support Fund is withdrawn next year.

## **IIA6 – Homelessness Prevention Contract Change 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to fully review the homelessness prevention services we commission, and in doing so reduce the funding required. Current contracts are due to end on 30 September 2024. It is our intention to work with people with lived experience, providers, and Collaborative Newcastle partners to review how our whole system can best respond to homelessness within the available funding prior to the current contracts ending.”

70 people and organisations commented on this. Six people did so by email, two by social media, 19 via Let’s talk Newcastle, 12 service providers at a consultation event, a charity representing refugees and asylum seekers, a joint response from Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter, individual responses from Crisis, Changing Lives, Tyne Housing, Shelter, the Labour Housing Group’s North East Branch, Citizen’s Advice Newcastle, Karbon Homes, the Collaborative Newcastle Homelessness Workstream, Connected Voice, and 11 members of the Elders Council and Healthwatch attending a consultation event. Much of the information provided, especially by stakeholder groups, is very detailed and we recommend reading this feedback in full.

We also received feedback from members of staff, which will be analysed and incorporated into the post-consultation IIA.

10 people and organisations said the proposals were clear and easy to understand, and six said that they were not. 37 people and organisations commented on the likely consequences and impacts of the proposal. The most common themes in comments about the consequences and impact of this proposal was this will negatively affect the most vulnerable people in Newcastle, that there will be more people sleeping rough, and that bed & breakfast accommodation will increasingly be used. Thinking about minimising the impact of proposals, many simply did not feel that they should be implemented.

Organisations who responded said that they were willing to work with the council to develop new ways to develop services and wanted to see a housing-led approach.

All of those who commented on whether the proposals were fair and reasonable said that they thought that they were not. Many said they were concerned at the effects on especially vulnerable people such as young people, people fleeing domestic violence, asylum seekers and refugees, people with mental health issues, and LGBTQI+ people.

Suggestions for saving money and generating income included citywide contracts for service provision and prioritising spending on services for the most vulnerable. Some organisations asked about options for co-commissioning services and accessing public health and NHS funding. Many suggested lobbying central government for funding.

## **IIA7 – Maximum Contribution to Adult Social Care Costs 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to increase the adult social care maximum charge from £400 per week to £440 per week from 1 April 2024. We will continue to use our discretion to protect people from the full costs of care by maintaining a maximum charge of £440 per week.”

We received eight comments on this specific proposal from residents; three via Let’s talk Newcastle, email, and social media. Two said the proposal was clear, and one said it was not, asking if information had been made available in Easy Read format for the benefit of people with learning disabilities. (We provided an Easy Read introduction to the budget as a whole, which was made available via Let’s talk Newcastle and could also be emailed out on request and used during face-to-face discussions.)

When asked about consequences and impacts, there were concerns that it could lead to people going without care they need due to costs, and that it was too big an increase during the cost of living crisis. Others were concerned about the possible negative impact on carers if people could not afford all the social care they need. Another comment was that the system for financially assessing people’s ability to pay for care should be overhauled.

People commented that, to minimise the impact, the increase in the maximum charge should be kept as low as possible, that increases should be increased in stages to give people more time to manage their finances, and asked if it would be possible to widen criteria for eligibility so that there would be “more people paying less”. When asked about ways to save, one person suggested less spending on capital projects and housebuilding, and more generally, there were comments that central government cuts to council funding were responsible for rises in charges for services.

## **IIA8 – Transforming the Adult Social Care Front Door 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “The adult social care 'front door' is where someone first comes into contact with adult social care services in their local area. In Newcastle, this is usually our Social Care Direct service. We want to look at what services are offered to people when they first make contact with us, with the aim of providing rapid short-term support, information and advice, to try to prevent longer-term need for services and help people stay well for longer.”

14 people and organisations commented on this, including a formal response from the Elders’ Council, and comments made by 11 people attending a meeting of the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle. The Elders Council supported this proposal if it enabled people to better understand and navigate the process of accessing adult social care. There was some concern that the social care ‘front door’ would have an increased workload due to other changes in social care provision, and that people would have to wait even longer to be assessed for care. Another commented that people tend only to apply for social care when they are “at the end of their coping mechanisms and it is a last resort”, and the Elders Council and Healthwatch asked if there had been any assessment of the impact of the previous year’s proposals.

When asked about minimising the impact of proposals, one suggestion was to have a system where people with a long-term need for care receive their service from a long-term team and it is easier for them to know who to contact with queries about their care. The

same person said that they did not think the proposals were fair and reasonable. They asked if having a dedicated team for people with long-term care needs could save money.

## **IIA9 – Review and Deletion of Intensive Family Intervention Team 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to review and delete the Intensive Family Intervention Team in 2024-2025. This service works with families where a child or children are at risk of being admitted into local authority care; families who are in crisis and there is a risk of care, and children who are already in local authority care whose placement is at risk of breakdown and/or there is a plan for a child in care to be reunified to their family. Recently an audit of the service was completed and did not find any evidence of IFIT having a sustainable impact. This will result in savings of £447,890.”

We received three comments on this, one via email, one social media comment, and feedback from Connected Voice. Connected Voice said that it was not clear about how work would be distributed among the remaining members of staff and were concerned that people working in this field are already under a lot of pressure. There was also concern that there could be an adverse effect on safeguarding children and young people.

When asked about how to minimise any negative impacts of the proposal, some said that they simply did not think it should go ahead, and that the council should cut spending on other areas such as staff pay and spending on contractors. However, another response was that if a review had shown that the service was not having lasting benefits, it was reasonable to review the team and stop this service.

## **IIA10 – Review of the Provision of SEND Transport Support to post-16 learners 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We are proposing to consult on a small number of options to reduce the impact of this service on the council’s budget. The options being consulted on will be:

- Stop delivering this service completely from September 2024 for all post-16 students.
- Stop delivering this service from September 2024 for any eligible new post-16 students with SEND. Students currently in receipt of support will continue to receive this until their educational studies end.
- From September 2024, introduce a fixed sum of money for each eligible post-16 learner as a contribution to their educational travel costs.
- Make no changes to the current policy.

The consultation is likely to take place early in the spring term 2024, with a decision from Cabinet in late spring or early summer 2024.”

49 people and organisations commented on this, including two people who responded by email, 27 via Let’s talk Newcastle, 8 schools’ representatives, 11 representatives from the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle, and formal feedback from the Elders Council, Newcastle Advisory Group, and Connected Voice. When asked if the proposals were clear, four people said that they were not, and 21 said that they were.

30 people and organisations gave feedback on possible consequences and impacts, with the most common response being concern that post-16 learners will miss out on education. 25 people and organisations commented on options for mitigating the impact of the proposal, with the most common response being that people did not want to see it implemented (12 mentions) and the next most common being to have buses which travel only to a specific school. 23 people commented on whether it was fair and reasonable, with the majority thinking it was not. People suggested that cutting senior staff salaries would be another way to save money, and also emphasised the importance of transport to SEND children and young people's sense of independence and life opportunities.

## **IIA11 – Review of the Policy for SEND Personal Transport Budgets for Eligible Families in 2024-2025**

The proposal is: "Following discussions with families, we proposing to consult on a change to the current Personal Transport Budget policy; that it could be extended to pay for things such as:

- a childminder or family member to care for a sibling whilst a parent / carer takes the 'eligible child' (the child with a Special Educational Needs Declaration) to school.
- a breakfast or after-school club for a sibling in order to allow the parent the time to collect the eligible child from school.
- two hours of the relevant hourly rate of a personal assistant (who may already be involved in the child's care) to drive the eligible child to school (and back) in addition to the mileage costs of both journeys.

In addition, we propose to introduce a banding system to calculate the value of payments for transport, rather than a straightforward mileage reimbursement (a system for repaying eligible families their school transport costs). This method is in place in other local authorities and has been found to be highly successful."

We received feedback on this from two people via Let's talk Newcastle. When asked about the consequences and impacts, respondents provided a lot of detailed information. To summarise, one person felt that families of children and young people with SEND are often on lower incomes, and / or may be putting in many hours of unpaid care to look after them.

They were concerned that the proposals could get a greater burden on families, and also on mental health and social care services. Another was concerned about the difficulty of balancing the needs of disabled and non-disabled siblings, where a family has this, and that changes in routine can be difficult for disabled children and young people to adapt to.

One suggestion for mitigating the impact of the proposals was to cap costs at £1 per journey and ensure people using the service have advice and support as needed. Another felt that it was fair as long as families did not feel under any pressure to choose one option over another. One suggestion was that people over 16 who are claiming benefits in their own right to contribute to the costs of SEND transport. Finally, a general comment was that the council should lobby central government for more funding.

## **5. Individual proposals**

We also had several budget proposals which were not the subject of Integrated Impact Assessments, and which received feedback from participants, residents and stakeholders.

As stated earlier, we recommend reading feedback from stakeholder groups in full, as the level of detail they provided can only be summarised here and should be read in its original form when reviewing the proposals.

The four such proposals which attracted most comment were:

- Funding for International Newcastle
- Free school meals
- City Library opening hours
- Citylife becoming digital only.

Other proposals attracted small numbers of comments, these can be found in Appendix 1.

## **International Newcastle**

The proposal is to “withdraw funding from a range of membership organisations”.

International Newcastle is not named but would be affected by this proposal. We received 28 responses on this proposal, mostly from schools, but also from residents, International Newcastle, the Team co-ordinator of Newcastle City Council music service, two residents, the Honorary Vice Consul of Spain for Newcastle, NEAT Academy Trust, the North East Branch of the Association for Language Learning, and Music Partnership North Newcastle. International Newcastle themselves commented on their work to bring in funding and resources to the city, and their unique expertise in leveraging such funding, working in partnership, and international relations. They did not want to see this lost to the Newcastle area and asked us to reconsider the proposal.

All involved emphasised the importance of the work done in partnership by schools, the Schools Effectiveness Team, and International Newcastle to support teachers and schools to introduce international perspectives into the learning environment, concerns at recent falls in the numbers of students pursuing language qualifications, and the feeling that the proposal could lead to the cessation of this work, with a negative impact on schools and students. The impact upon students on low incomes who might not otherwise be able to benefit from such opportunities was mentioned by several respondents. They asked us to reconsider the proposal.

## **Free School Meals (ref 12)**

The proposal is “We will reduce the current subsidy for the school meals service, which is estimated to increase to £2.1m in 2024-25. This subsidy has been established over the last few years through increased costs of running the service, including significant increases in food costs. We will seek to recover this increase in costs through the price charged for school meals. We will increase the price per school meal by 50p for free school meals and universal infant free school meals charged to schools to move towards a full cost recovery model.” We received feedback on this from four residents and eight schools.

Residents commented on this by email and via Let’s talk Newcastle. All expressed concern at the need for this service to protect the wellbeing of children in low-income households, and ensure they are able to concentrate at school. One person asked us not to implement the proposal.

Schools providing feedback expressed concern that this could lead to children who need free school meals not getting them and asked if impact studies had been done. They agreed there was a need for the council and schools to work together to mitigate any impact of this proposal and ensure that schools are fully sighted on the proposals so that they can prepare for them. They were concerned about ensuring a consistent standard of school meals, and asked about ensuring that families receiving free school meals meet the eligibility criteria.

### **City Library opening hours (ref 42)**

The proposal is “We will review library opening hours to close the City Library at 5pm on Tuesdays instead of 7pm. In September the average number of visitors at this time was 121. This is lower than the number of visits on the other late opening day, which is Thursday.”

Three residents commented on this via email and Let’s talk Newcastle. They felt that the negative impact would outweigh any savings being made, for example, children finding it harder to do homework, full-time workers having less access to the library in the evening, and reading groups being unable to meet in the library on Tuesday evenings. One person did not want to see the proposal being implemented.

### **Citylife magazine being digital-only (Ref 35)**

The proposal is “We will no longer produce CityLife in its current format. We will reduce the scale of the publication and no longer distribute to households but will provide hard copies to be distributed to libraries. A monthly e-newsletter will be published to round up news and share information”.

We received feedback on this from three residents, Connected Voice, and 11 representatives from the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle. Respondents on Let’s talk Newcastle felt that this would lead to people being less well-informed, especially those who are digitally excluded. They asked if it would be possible to have a print distribution list for people to request a printed copy to be sent to their homes, or to print a smaller or monochrome edition.

Connected Voice, the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle commented that they thought this would contribute to digital exclusion, particularly among older residents. The Elders Council wanted to see a distribution list for print copies to be sent to people in their homes who cannot easily access digital version of hard copies in libraries.

### **Other proposals**

We received small amounts of feedback on several proposals including: Being Well Phase 3, the Home First Team, fees and charges, permit parking, appointee weekly support charges, deleting vacant posts, in-house service provision, public health funding, local equipment store, shared overnight response, supported employment service, Disabled Facilities grants, managing adult social care waiting lists, asset-based short-term projects, and occupational therapy. Details of these can be found in Appendix 1.

## 6. General feedback

As always, we received comments on other aspects of the Council's services, and the cumulative impact of the budget proposals. In total, we received around 198 comments from residents and stakeholder groups that gave feedback on this.

Four people said that they did not think the proposals were clear and easy to understand, and 21 said that they were. However, many of those in both groups commented that some of the language could be simplified to make it more accessible for all audiences. Newcastle Advisory Group emphasised the importance of accessible formats for communications, including BSL and Easy Read.

We received 14 comments specifically about what people thought the consequences and impact of the proposals would be, with the most common theme being a concern that there would be an increase in homelessness. People suggested a range of ideas to minimise impact, including higher taxes for people on higher incomes, and lobbying central government for more funding. Citizens Advice Newcastle wanted to see ongoing investment in the voluntary and community sector, and the Elders Council suggested taking action by encouraging people to plan ahead for old age.

14 people commented on whether the proposals were fair and reasonable; the most common theme in their comments was that they were not, although some people felt that they were. 39 people commented on possible other ways to make savings or generate income, with the most common theme in their comments being to cut senior staff salaries. Citizens Advice Newcastle asked if revenue spending allocated to highways and transport could be reviewed. The Elders Council asked if the council had looked at making efficiency savings by joint procurement of services with other local authorities. They asked, with Healthwatch Newcastle, if increasing parking charges was an option.

We received around 116 comments from residents via Let's talk Newcastle, social media, and email about public services in Newcastle in general. The most common themes in these comments were that respondents were unhappy with cycle lanes, and they wanted to see improvements to the repairs service.

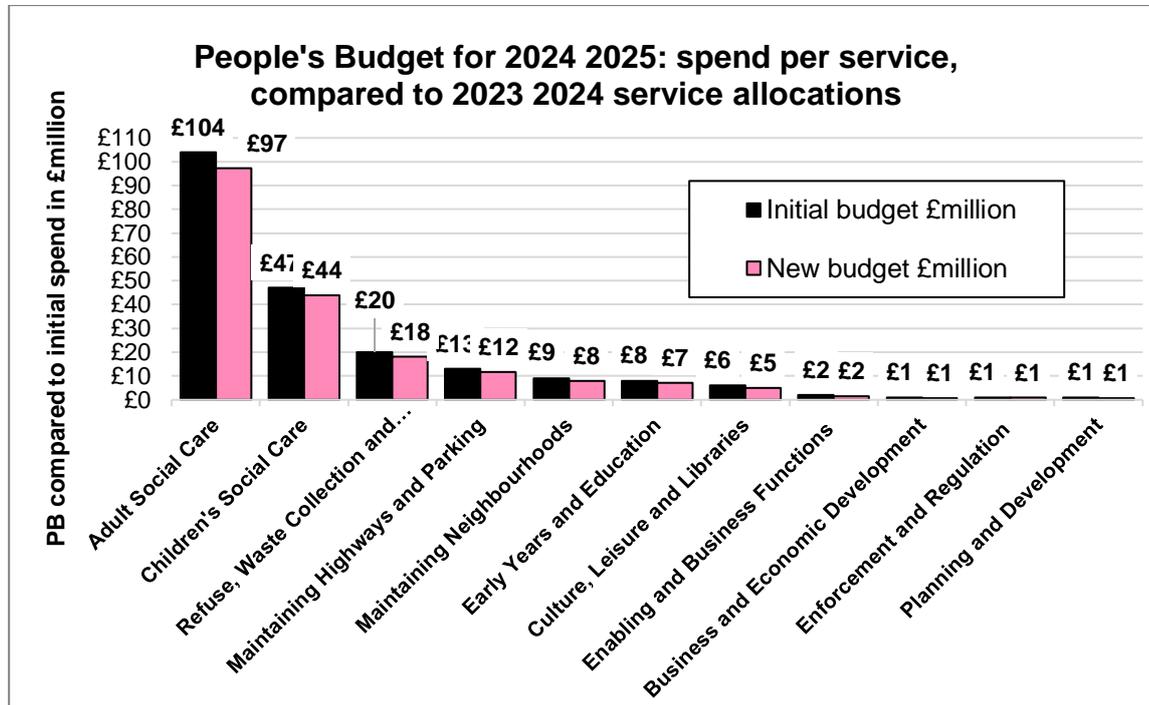
Citizens Advice Newcastle and Connected Voice emphasised the stress the voluntary and community sector is experiencing. The Elders Council, Healthwatch Newcastle and Newcastle Advisory Group wanted to see more consultation in person. North East Chamber of Commerce confirmed that they were broadly supportive of the council's proposals, and in particular the commitment to paying a Real Living Wage.

Tyne Housing Group commented that they wanted more information about what savings the council was considering making from its spend on enabling and business functions, and also asked about the possibility of efficiency savings through combined service procurement across the region. Carers Centre Newcastle wanted to have ongoing discussions with the council about partnership working and the adoption of the Three Conversations model.

# Appendix 1: Detailed feedback on the People’s Budget and IIAs

## The People’s Budget

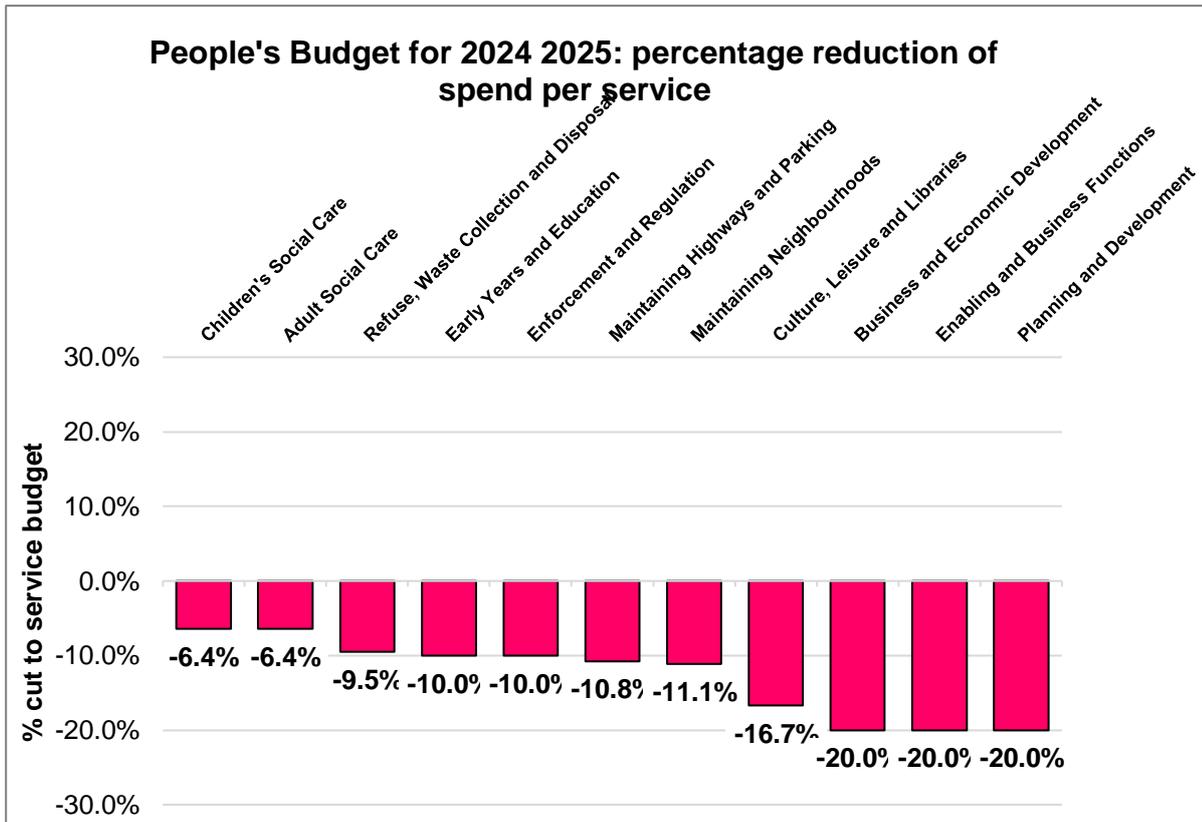
The chart below shows the spend per service area which people have selected in the People’s Budget for 2024-2025, compared to the actual spend for 2023-2024:



(Please note that the Public Health and Capital Spending budgets do not appear in the charts and tables in this report, because they cannot be changed.)

## Percentage spending on services

The chart below shows proposed cuts to spending on services from the People’s Budget 2024-2025 as a percentage of the initial allocated spend. People prefer to make smaller cuts to children’s social care, adult social care, and refuse, waste collection and disposal services. They preferred to make larger cuts to business and economic development, enabling and business functions, and planning and development. This is generally consistent with People’s Budget findings in 2016, 2018, 2022 and 2023.



### Risk levels incurred by services

The risk levels incurred by this People's Budget are shown in the table below. One service areas is at high risk: refuse, waste collection and disposal, and one is at medium risk: maintaining highways and parking.

Spending area	Initial budget spend £million	PB 'actual spend': £million at 18 January 2024	Percentage change: actual initial spend	Spending area risk
Refuse, Waste Collection and Disposal	£20.0	£18.1	--9.5%	<b>High</b>
Maintaining Highways and Parking	£13.0	£11.6	-10.8%	<b>Medium</b>
Adult Social Care	£104	£97.3	-6.4%	<b>Low</b>
Children's Social Care	£47.0	£44.0	-6.4%	<b>Low</b>
Enforcement and Regulation	£1.0	£0.9	-10.0%	<b>Low</b>
Early Years and Education	£8.0	£7.2	-10.0%	<b>Low</b>
Maintaining Neighbourhoods	£1.0	£0.8	-11.1%	<b>Low</b>
Culture, Leisure and Libraries	£6.0	£5.0	-16.7%	<b>Low</b>
Business and Economic Development	£1.0	£0.8	-20.0%	<b>Low</b>

Spending area	Initial budget spend £million	PB 'actual spend': £million at 18 January 2024	Percentage change: actual initial spend	Spending area risk
Planning and Development	£1.0	£0.8	-20.0%	Low
Enabling and Business Functions	£2.0	£1.6	-20.0%	Low
<b>Total</b>	<b>£187</b>	<b>£177</b>	-	-

## Income generation

Looking at income generation in the People's Budget, those who took part suggested that we should aim to generate £2.7million from Council Tax, £1.0 million from parking and £2.0 million from other fees and charges, which includes services such as registrars, local services, school meals, bereavement services, planning and building control and providing advice and support to other organisations such as financial, legal, HR and audit.

## What people told us about why they had set the budgets they set

We asked people to leave comments about why they had set their budget in the way that they did which received 44 comments. The most common themes in these comments are shown in this table, alongside some sample comments (please note that some comments have been shortened for reasons of space):

Reasons behind how the budget is set	Mentions	Sample quote
All services should make some changes	5	"All services should be able to make some changes in order to deliver savings."
Children's services and similar services should be protected	5	"Your job is a hard one, and I think the most important thing is that kids grow up with as bright a future as possible with access to culture and education."
Make efficiency savings	5	"Focus on efficiency and new ways of working."
Very difficult decisions to make	4	"A very difficult exercise and there is no easy way to balance the budget."
Council Tax is already high and should be reduced	3	"We should be looking to decrease the burden of council tax not increase it."
Care should be provided by families	2	"People need to live and work with family support more of a priority than recreation."
Do not want to cut social care	2	"I have tried to be proportionate and I have not cut social care."

A full table of all themes in comments is available on request.

## Bright ideas suggested by People’s Budget participants

We asked people to give us their bright ideas for saving money and generating income. We receive 44 responses. The most common themes in these comments are shown in this table, alongside some sample comments.

Bright Ideas	Mentions	Sample quote
Make efficiency savings	5	“Use a value framework approach to prioritise the expenditure within each area based on constrained budget.”
Reduce headcount	4	“Remove 10% of all management roles.”
Unhappy with spending on asylum seekers and migrants	4	“Perhaps reducing the amount spent on housing refugees would help.”
Enforce fines for dangerous driving	2	“Spend more money to catch people speeding and have more ‘red light’ cameras, to increase income.”
Enforce fines for littering	2	“There needs to be increasing enforcement of parking offences, littering, fly-tipping, misuse of bins, lack of recycling etc. These will have a social and environmental benefit in the short-term and revenue could be used to support other services.”
Increase parking charges	2	“Save more by raising parking fees higher and including night time parking and side streets.”
Libraries are under-used and spending on them can be cut	2	“Closing several libraries won't be a tragedy as, at the moment, very few people make use of them.”
Unhappy with central government	2	“Press for a national election as the austerity is destroying lives and communities.”
Use cheaper office accommodation	2	“Reduce central costs by moving to more cost effective sites.”

A full table of all themes in comments is available on request.

## What people told us about why they gave up trying to set a People’s Budget

We asked people who chose the give up option to leave comments about why they did this and received 16 comments. The most common themes in these comments are shown in this table, alongside some sample comments (please note that some comments have been edited for reasons of space and confidentiality):

Reasons for giving up	Mentions	Sample quote
More central government funding is needed	4	“The government has a lot to answer for, particularly in the North East. We should be able to fund all of these things and no one should have to decide between helping children or the homeless.”
Very difficult decisions	4	“This is impossible. It is a good exercise to demonstrate your issues.”
Dissatisfied that student only households do not pay Council Tax	2	“Start charging all the student accommodation in the city Council Tax.”

A full table of all themes in comments is available on request.

## **IIA1 – Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept**

The proposal is: “We propose to raise Council Tax by 2.99% (in line with government expectations) and apply a 2% increase in the government’s adult social care precept.” 36 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including two members of the public via letter, two responses from stakeholder organisations – Connected Voice and Citizens Advice Newcastle – 11 responses via Let’s talk Newcastle, and 21 via social media comments.

### **Are the proposals clear?**

Nine people on Let’s talk Newcastle said that the proposals were clear, and two said that they were not.

### **Consequences and impact**

The most common theme in people’s comments about the consequences and impact of this proposal was that people in Newcastle would be worse off because of it.

Consequences and impact of the proposal	Number of mentions	Example comment
People in Newcastle will be worse off	8	“People will be unable to pay this and thrown into increased financial hardship which affects far more than their bank account.”
Concern at impact of additional charges	2	“This will cause further pressure on households.”
Support increase in Council Tax	2	“We understand the need to increase council tax levels.”

## Minimising impact

In line with concerns about the impact of increasing Council Tax, the most common suggestion was to reduce Council Tax, rather than increasing it, with some people suggesting that services could be reduced to permit this.

## Fair and reasonable?

Seven people commented that they did not think this proposal was fair and reasonable, although one commented that they thought it was. Comments included views that the adult social care precept is unfair on people who are self-funding, that the council should lobby central government for more funding, and concerns that the council is inefficient.

## Other ways to save or generate income

Suggestions for generating income included building more houses to increase the Council Tax base and looking at ways to generate income. Suggestions for savings included better procurement, learning from best practice elsewhere, making efficiency savings, and reducing senior staff pay and councillor expenses.

## General comments

The most common themes in people's general comments about this are as shown below.

General comments	Number of mentions	Example comment
Feel taxpayers do not get value for money	5	"Paying more for less seems to be the standard over the last 20 years."
Do not think the Council listens	3	"Unfortunately I have come to realise that there is no real point in attempting to suggest alternatives as the spending continues regardless."
Feel Council wastes money on unnecessary projects	2	"Stop spending money on cycle lanes."
Make efficiency savings	2	"Just manage the money better without further increases to Council Tax."
Unhappy with CAZ (Clean Air Zone)	2	"Stop spending money on CAZ enforcement."
Unhappy with loan to Crown Plaza	2	"Start with calling in the £40 million plus loan to the Crowne Plaza hotel."
Want more information	2	"Where is the breakdown of council tax raised by ward?"

A full list of themes in comments is available on request.

Some residents were unhappy with spending on cycle lanes, roads, improvements in the city centre, and promoting the Net Zero agenda. Connected Voice emphasised that investing in the voluntary service has a positive impact on local communities. Citizens Advice Newcastle wanted more information on the “impact of ‘re-focusing debt collection efficiency’ ...we have been assured by that this proposal will be to bring external bailiff enforcement action in-house, which we support. This is caveated by us proposing a more supportive stance with less focus on bailiff action. This proposal states that it will increase revenue by £50,000.”

## **IIA2 – Crisis Support**

The proposal is: “We propose to discontinue this scheme, which provides financial help for our residents in the city who have experienced a crisis or disaster. We will continue to provide other financial support schemes such as the Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax support schemes, and signpost people to other payment schemes they may be able to apply for, and debt management and advice services.”

Seven people and organisations gave us their feedback on this, including Connected Voice, Department for Work and Pensions on behalf of Newcastle Jobcentre, and Citizens Advice Newcastle.

### **Clear and easy to understand?**

One person thought the proposals were clear and easy to understand.

### **Consequences and impact**

Four people and organisations commented that they were concerned that vulnerable people would suffer, and two commented that pressure on other services such as foodbanks would increase. Connected Voice commented that: “the proposal to end the discretionary crisis support scheme will be a blow to some of our most vulnerable residents to achieve a negligible saving to the Council” and that this would lead to an increased demand for services from the voluntary and community sector.

### **Minimising impacts**

One person said that they simply did not want to see the proposal implemented. Citizens Advice Newcastle commented that: “If there are problems with uptake [of the Crisis Support Scheme] due to eligibility, the solution is not removing the funds but changing the eligibility criteria.”

### **Fair and reasonable**

Citizens Advice Newcastle commented that the proposal would “disproportionately disadvantage those most vulnerable, including those fleeing from domestic violence, seeking asylum, refugees, and those on the lowest incomes”.

### **Other ways to save**

We did not receive any comments about this.

## General comments

One person commented that this proposal was the consequence of years of cuts to central government funding. Citizens Advice Newcastle asked if the council would reverse a decision to cut the Crisis Support Fund and reduce the proposed cut to the Supporting Independence Scheme (Proposal IIA5) if the Household Support Fund is withdrawn in the next financial year?

## IIA3 – Local Services and Waste Management

The proposal is: “We propose to increase the charge for garden waste collection by £2 per year, to charge for replacement recycling bin glass caddies, and to increase the charge for replacing bins by £5 to £30.”

100 individuals and organisations on this, including notes from a meeting of Healthwatch Newcastle and the Elders Council with 11 people present, six responses by email, 54 by Let’s talk Newcastle<sup>3</sup>, and 29 via social media. 44 people replied yes when asked if the proposals were clear, and three replied that they were not. Some people commented that they felt the language was too official, that the consultation needed to be more widely promoted, and that more information about the cost of glass caddies was needed.

### Consequences and impact

75 people and organisations commented specifically on this. The most common theme in their feedback was that people think that glass caddies mostly need replacing after they are damaged or go missing during recycling collections, as shown in the table below.

Consequences and impact	Mentions	Sample quote
Think that glass caddies are mostly damaged or go missing following recycling collections	28	“In my personal experience, caddy damage has only ever occurred during the collection process, frequently with another resident’s caddy being returned to me, and on one occasion my replacement caddy was returned damaged following the first collection using it.”
Increasing charges for replacement bins and caddies will lead to less recycling	13	“Charging for caddies will tip residents towards using their green bins for glass disposal which the Council is trying to avoid.”
People will fly-tip rather than pay for replacement bins and caddies	13	“If you charge people for bins and caddies people won't use them and will fly tip instead.”
Increasing the cost of the garden waste service will lead to fewer people using it	9	“If you increase the charge for garden waste people are less likely to use it and will put the garden waste in the green bin.”

<sup>3</sup> The number of participants shown online on Let’s talk Newcastle is slightly higher than this, but this is due to some people having started to complete a survey, but then closing it without leaving feedback.

<b>Consequences and impact</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
This will lead to increased theft of glass caddies and bins	9	"If you charge £30 for bin replacement, people will just steal someone else's if theirs goes missing."
The existing wait for replacement bins and caddies is too long	6	"I'm still waiting over 6 months for a replacement black caddy."
Increasing charges for replacement bins and caddies will lead to glass in the main bin	5	"If the glass caddy goes missing people will just put the glass in the main bin."
Less glass recycling	4	"People may be less inclined to recycle glass."
This will lead to garden waste going in the green bins	4	"Given that there is no penalty for placing garden waste into the general rubbish bin, what is the incentive to separate it and pay extra?"

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle were concerned that the proposals could lead to increased fly-tipping.

### **Minimising consequences and impact**

45 people commented specifically on this. The most common response to this was to ask the council to not go ahead with the proposed increases.

<b>Minimising consequences and impacts</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Do not go ahead with the proposed increases	11	"Do not increase the prices for brown bin collections and glass caddy replacement."
Refuse collectors need to be more careful with bins and caddies	4	"Ensure staff treat bins correctly."
Use more robust glass caddies	4	"Bin caddies' handles and rims should be rubber, the hard plastic is easily damaged."
Do not charge people when a bin has been damaged by staff	3	"Where a caddy has been damaged by council staff during bin collection, it could be replaced free of charge."
Do not charge people if bins are damaged by vandalism	2	"This wouldn't be fair if someone's bin was damaged by vandals."
Fine people for not taking bins in after collection	2	"Implement stronger measures to make residents bring their bins in. Too many bins are left in back lanes making a mess."
Reduce the price of services	2	"Reduce charges and make recycling easier, not more expensive and difficult."

<b>Minimising consequences and impacts</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Training for staff is needed	2	"Train your staff to take more care."

### **Fair and reasonable?**

45 people commented on this, with the most common response (24 people) being that the proposal is not fair and reasonable.

<b>Fair and reasonable</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Not fair and reasonable	24	"No, it is inappropriate."
Not fair to charge for replacing caddies if they are damaged by staff	11	"I don't think it is fair to charge for replacement glass caddies if replacement is required because they are broken."
Yes, fair and reasonable	6	"Yes, I believe it is fair to charge the prices suggested."
Not fair given the cost of living crisis	4	"Definitely not [fair], we are already struggling with the cost of living."
Reasonable to charge for replacing bins but not caddies	3	"[Fair and reasonable to charge] for bin replacement yes, not for the glass caddy."
Not fair given the proposed increase in Council Tax at the same time	2	"No, the council are already increasing council tax by 2.99%."
Will there be landfill costs if recycling rates drop?	2	"What will be the cost of sending more glass to landfill if people don't bother replacing [their glass caddies]?"

### **Other ways to save**

29 people commented on this. The most common suggestion was to cut senior staff pay.

<b>Other ways to save</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Cut senior staff pay	4	"Cut the costs of paying people at the top."
Prioritise spending on essential services such as waste collection	3	"Waste collection is essential and should be prioritised."
Train staff so that fewer bins and caddies are damaged	3	"Stop your bin men from damaging the caddies when they empty them."

Other ways to save	Mentions	Sample quote
Do not spend money on one-off displays such as New Year's Eve	2	"Cut back on unnecessary expenditures such as fireworks displays and laser shows. They are nice but they are 'added extras', not essential services."
Enforce fines for dog fouling, parking and speeding	2	"Hire someone to catch people speeding in cars, hire someone to catch people not collecting dog mess, fines will cover salary and required funding."
Invest any money from compost sales into the waste and recycling service	2	"Let's not forget you sell on compost made from garden waste collection. You should use this profit to partially fund garden waste collection."
No, would like more information about Council budget	2	"Produce a survey to show us more about your spending."
Reduce doorstep collections to every 3-4 weeks	2	"Perhaps have fewer collections e.g. 1 a month for garden waste"
Work with other agencies to tackle fly-tipping and fine offenders	2	"I hope the council will work with the police and other agencies to monitor and investigate fly-tipping."

## General comments

23 people and organisations commented on this, with their main concerns shown below. The most common theme was that people are unhappy that glass caddies have been damaged or lost during collections.

General comments	Mentions	Sample quote
Unhappy that glass caddies have been damaged or lost during collections	4	"The reason why recycling bin glass caddies are damaged and need replacing is mishandling by the collection company."
Enforce and collect parking fines	3	"Enforce traffic rules, also penalties for stopping cars in yellow boxes, parking on double yellow lines, charge for street parking near Metros."
If the proposals go ahead people will stop recycling	3	"Penalising people who are trying to help the environment with no implications for those who don't bother [to recycle] is not any incentive [to recycle]."

General comments	Mentions	Sample quote
Unhappy with state of streets after collection	3	“The main responsibility is to keep our streets cleaned.”
Tired of asking for replacement caddies when they are damaged	2	“We have had our recycling caddy replaced three times.”
Unhappy with increase in Council Tax	2	“This on top of the hike in Council Tax.”
Unhappy with spending on management	2	“Why don't you stop wasting money on managers?”
Worried that Newcastle will become run-down and unappealing	2	“I am concerned that reduction in refuse collection will lead to a further downward spiral of litter begetting litter begetting low-level crime.”

## IIA4 – Improving Consistency across Learning Disability and Autism Supported Living 2024-2025

The proposal is: “We propose to ensure there is a more consistent funding approach towards people using our Independent Support Living scheme, who have comparable levels of care and support needs. We will do this by carrying out reviews with people to ensure that a reasonable and consistent amount of support is in place, and reducing funding where paid support is not used or needed.

We received three pieces of feedback on this proposal from Let’s talk Newcastle, social media, and six people who attended a discussion by Newcastle Advisory Group. The comment received via social media asked for more information about the costs of providing these services. The feedback received via Let’s talk Newcastle was that the respondent thought the change sounded positive in principle, but wanted to see it evaluated after twelve months to see if people using the service had become more engaged with local communities, or if they needed more support.

Newcastle Advisory Group commented that for this proposal to be effective, support provided needed to be “person-centred” and allow time for people with a learning disability and autistic people to learn new information, develop skills and be more independent. One concern expressed was that: “there is a worry about appropriate and creative support for the individual not being provided due to recruitment and retention issues, so the money isn’t being spent [because of this] and not because the person doesn’t need it.”

## IIA5 – Supporting Independence Scheme 2024-2025

The proposal is: “We propose to reduce funding for the Supporting Independence Scheme [a scheme that can provide basic household items that help people to access or maintain independent accommodation, such as beds, cookers, fridges or emergency removal costs, upon referral from a support worker] from £457,380 to £100,000 from April 2024. To ensure the remaining funding has maximum impact we will target support to households who are assessed as being in greatest need.”

21 people commented on this, including one person who responded by email, two people who commented via Let's talk Newcastle, four comments received via social media, 11 representatives from the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle at a discussion meeting, the Labour Housing Group North East Branch, and Citizens' Advice Newcastle.

One person said it was clear, two said that it was not, one of whom emphasised the importance of providing information in Easy Read format to ensure that people with learning disabilities could easily take part in the consultation. Much of the information provided, especially by stakeholder groups, is very detailed and we recommend reading this feedback in full.

### **Consequences and impacts**

Six people and organisations commented on this. One person thought that this would have a negative impact on efforts to tackle poverty in Newcastle. Another thought that this proposal could be implemented, but that it would lead to greater pressure on charities supporting households in need, and another commented that there would be less support for people who need it. Another commented that there would likely be an increase in requests for Advances of Universal Credit / Budgeting Loans which have strict criteria, and that could be an increase in debt or reliance on high-cost loans or illegal lending within vulnerable communities.

Labour Housing Group North East Branch provided detailed feedback, emphasising their concerns that the proposal is not cost-effective, particularly when combined with other proposals on crisis support and homelessness prevention, and that there would be a heavy impact on vulnerable people. They also felt there would be an increase in demand for services from voluntary and community sector organisations, would damage the council's reputation for effectively tackling homelessness, and put the anti-poverty strategy at risk. Citizens Advice Newcastle also commented on the potential negative impact of the cumulative impact of proposals on vulnerable people. They asked if the Council would reverse this decision if the Household Support Fund is withdrawn next year.

### **Minimising impact**

One person commented that they did not want to see the proposals being implemented. Another asked if it would be possible to support people needing support to find good quality second hand goods within Newcastle, and access community delivery services.

### **Fair and reasonable**

One person said the proposals were fair and reasonable, two said that they were not.

### **Other ways to save and generate income**

One person suggested that the council should reduce spending on staff salaries.

### **General comments**

Two people commented that more funding from central government is needed. Another was concerned at the impact on vulnerable people, and one wanted more information about the proposals.

## IIA6 – Homelessness Prevention Contract Change 2024-2025

The proposal is: “We propose to fully review the homelessness prevention services we commission, and in doing so reduce the funding required. Current contracts are due to end on 30 September 2024. It is our intention to work with people with lived experience, providers, and Collaborative Newcastle partners to review how our whole system can best respond to homelessness within the available funding prior to the current contracts ending.”

70 people and organisations commented on this. Six people did so by email, two by social media, 19 via Let’s talk Newcastle, 12 service providers at a consultation event, a charity representing refugees and asylum seekers, a joint response from Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter, individual responses from Crisis, Changing Lives, Tyne Housing, Shelter, the Labour Housing Group’s North East Branch, Citizen’s Advice Newcastle, Karbon Homes, the Collaborative Newcastle Homelessness Workstream, Connected Voice, and 11 members of the Elders Council and Healthwatch attending a consultation event. Much of the information provided, especially by stakeholder groups, is very detailed and we recommend reading this feedback in full.

We also received feedback from members of staff, which will be analysed and incorporated into the post-consultation IIA.

### Clear and easy to understand?

10 people and organisations said the proposals were clear and easy to understand, and six said they were not. Several people commented that they did not feel they had enough information about how the Council had arrived at this proposal, or about how this would be done. The Collaborative Newcastle Workstream also wanted information about this, as did Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter.

### Consequence and impacts

37 people and organisations commented on this. The most common theme in people’s comments about the consequences and impact of this proposal was this will negatively affect the most vulnerable people in Newcastle.

<b>Consequences and impact of the proposal</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>	<b>Example comment</b>
Will negatively affect the most vulnerable people in the city	9	“Reducing the number of homeless beds is an attack on the most vulnerable people in our society.”
More people sleeping rough	7	“There will be a doubling of street sleepers.”
Bed and breakfast accommodation will increasingly be used	5	“I worry that people will have to be placed in bed and breakfasts if there is less temporary accommodation.”

<b>Consequences and impact of the proposal</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>	<b>Example comment</b>
There will be more homeless people in Newcastle	5	“There will be less support to people with complex needs who are inevitably going to slip back into homelessness.”
Increased deaths among homeless people	4	“There will inevitably be more deaths as a result of this.”
There will be more costs in the long run	4	“We should be protecting our upstream homelessness prevention services at all costs. Reducing these will just result in a cost pressure at a later date.”

Changing Lives commented that “We will not be able to deliver anything close to the same level of service on less money so the closure of accommodation options is inevitable” and also commented that this would likely lead to redundancy payments and a negative impact on their ability to provide services. They feel that this will lead to higher costs in the long run as it will lead to higher demand for more expensive hotel and B&B accommodation, also higher rates of rough sleeping, and a negative impact on the local economy. They also felt there would be a negative impact on crime rates, health, demand for social care, and people escaping domestic abuse.

The Collaborative Newcastle Homelessness Workstream also said that in their views these were likely consequences, as did the Labour Housing Group’s North East Branch, and Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter. The latter also felt there could be less support from the business community for initiatives to tackle homelessness if the proposal is implemented.

Citizens Advice Newcastle thought it unlikely that the service could become more efficient and that the timeframe was too short, leading to negative impacts on vulnerable people and increased pressure on voluntary and community sector organisations supporting them.

Crisis said that they did not see how the proposals could be implemented without severe negative impacts on vulnerable and homeless people in Newcastle, including an increase in rough sleeping, and that they thought they would be “likely to end up costing the public purse far more than the money ‘saved’ over the two-year spending cycle”, for example through additional costs for health and criminal justice services. They also commented on the likely negative effect on Newcastle’s reputation for effectively addressing homelessness, and were concerned that this would put people at risk of “exploitation by unscrupulous landlords”.

Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter commented on their concern for the welfare of homeless and vulnerable people if the proposal is implemented, the damage done to Newcastle’s reputation as a City of Sanctuary, and what they consider to be the likely long-term cost implications. They highlighted the potential risk of not meeting the Council’s statutory obligations to find homeless people suitable accommodation.

Karbon Homes echoed many of the points made above and said that this could have a negative impact in the form of delayed discharges from hospitals. Labour Housing Group North East Branch were concerned that this could put access to grants received from DLUHU at risks. Shelter emphasised their concern that this could lead to a higher rate of deaths among homeless and vulnerably-housed people and commented on the negative impacts of the likely job losses among service providers.

### **Minimising negative impact**

Ten people commented on this. Four simply did not want to see the proposals implemented due to the likely negative impacts on vulnerable people. Two people suggested that it would be better to keep funding services which support people's mental health. They also suggested that impact could be minimised by continuing to support services which help people in supported housing to move on to live in council properties, to support people to become more independent, and also to support community-based organisations who can help them integrate into their local communities. One wanted to see more engagement with residents and third sector organisations to develop new ideas. Two people thought that more affordable housing was needed. Finally, two more people thought that cutting spending on staff salaries was needed.

Changing Lives commented that in their view, "fundamentally support activities are not eligible activities for which housing benefit can be claimed" and that the proposals to increase the amount of housing benefit charge will not be effective. Crisis wanted to see the Council take a 'whole-systems' approach to the impact of cuts on homelessness services, work with partner agencies to produce impact assessments and consider introducing a housing-led approach.

Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter said that they felt that the best way to minimise this was not to implement the proposals, although they were willing to work with the Council to review Housing Benefit arrangements.

Karbon Homes said that they would encourage the council to "look into co-funding the homeless [prevention services] budget from mental health budgets, hospital discharge and other Integrated Care Provider (ICP) funding streams".

Labour Housing Group's North East Branch said that there was a need to bring council houses and flats back into use more quickly, work with Housing Associations and private landlords to reduce evictions and other reasons for people losing their accommodation, use savings made by bringing YHN back in-house to tackling void, and accelerate work to integrate local authority-led homelessness services with public health, NHS, education and criminal justice services. Tyne Housing wanted to see work done to ensure that "all commissioned support providers have their commissioned properties owned by a Registered Provider of social housing".

### **Fair and reasonable**

12 people commented directly on this, all of whom felt that the proposals were not fair and reasonable due to their likely impact on homeless and vulnerable people. Many thought it would lead to a need for increased spending in future on health, criminal justice and social care services.

Changing Lives commented that they considered that this was not fair and reasonable due to the likely impact on vulnerable people, as did Crisis. Crisis were especially concerned about the possible disproportionate impact on “young people, people with mental and physical health needs, women fleeing domestic abuse, people who are transgender and non-binary, people who identify as LGBTQ+, and refugees”.

Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter were also concerned at the risks to an already vulnerable population, who are at higher risk of poor physical and mental health. They were also concerned at the potential impact on refugees.

Karbon Homes and Labour Housing Group’s North East Branch also felt that this would have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable people in Newcastle. This was a theme in nearly all feedback received on this proposal. Tyne Housing commented that there was a risk that this could have an impact on people’s ability to meet needs based on religion, for example around having suitable kitchen and bathroom facilities. A charity which supports refugees and asylum seekers, commenting via Let’s talk Newcastle, also emphasised this latter point.

### **Other ways to save and generate income**

Nine people commented on this. One suggestion was to have citywide contracts for service provision, not contracts for specific areas of the city, another was to oppose the government’s proposed ban on Section 21 evictions. However, another person wanted to see this ban implemented as in their view it led to greater homelessness. A suggestion was to work with service providers to find new solutions, and review spending on ‘non-exempt’ accommodation. Three people suggested that the council should start by prioritising spending services that meet people’s needs, then only spend money on other services if there is some left after this, and perhaps not spending on festive events and displays. Another suggestion was to support services to enable people move on quickly from supported housing. One person wanted more information, another wanted to see spending on staff salaries cut, and another suggestion was to sell off under-used Council property.

Changing Lives wanted to see services for the most vulnerable people protected, and to look at options for co-commissioning housing services with public health services and the NHS. Karbon Homes also suggested looking at the latter option.

Citizens Advice Newcastle asked, given capital funding for spending on highways, some of the highways revenue budget could be re-allocated to support services for vulnerable people.

Crisis commented that they appreciated the difficult financial situation local authorities are in and wanted to continue to lobby central government for more funding. They also commented: “However, we also urge the Council to conduct a full-cost benefit analysis of its proposals, taking account of the potential costs outlined above before proceeding with any reductions in spending”.

Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent DePaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service and Shelter asked if funding for adult and children’s social care could be used to support these services, given that in the long-term, they can reduce demand for social care services.

They also asked about the possibility for using Public Health funding to support them. Tyne Housing suggested that “Consideration should be given to whether 16-17 year-olds should be excluded from this contract from October 2024, and a proportionate saving applied.” Again, we recommend reading their detailed feedback in full.

## **General comments**

Seven people commented on this, mostly re-emphasising the point that they were very concerned at the likely impact on vulnerable people. One wanted to see the council lobby central government for more funding.

Crisis emphasised that they would welcome the opportunity to “work more closely with the council to avoid any duplication and ensure we and others deliver maximum value with available resources”. The Elders Council and Healthwatch commented that they supported campaigns to encourage people not to give money to beggars, but instead to support charities working with people in this situation.

Karbon Homes commented that they are in the process of exploring if 'long-stayers' could be supported in ways which would be better for the service user and the ongoing capacity of the service, and will look to share findings with the council in due course. They are also keen to help the council build a 'best practice' approach to mental health, housing and social care. Tyne Housing asked if savings could be made to other council services, particularly 'back-office' functions.

## **IIA7 – Maximum Contribution to Adult Social Care Costs 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to increase the adult social care maximum charge from £400 per week to £440 per week from 1 April 2024. We will continue to use our discretion to protect people from the full costs of care by maintaining a maximum charge of £440 per week.”

We received eight comments on this specific proposal from residents; three via Let’s talk Newcastle, email, and social media. Two said the proposal was clear, and one said it was not, asking if information had been made available in Easy Read format for the benefit of people with learning disabilities.

When asked about consequences and impacts, three people were concerned that it could lead to people going without care they need due to costs, and another two felt it was too big an increase during the cost of living crisis. One person asked for information about why the maximum charge needed to be increased in addition to the adult social care precept. Two people said they felt it would have a negative impact on carers if people could not afford all the social care they need. Another comment was that the system for financially assessing people’s ability to pay for care should be overhauled.

People commented that, to minimise the impact, the increase in the maximum charge should be kept as low as possible, that increases should be increased in stages to give people more time to manage their finances, and asked if it would be possible to widen criteria for eligibility so that there would be “more people paying less”.

When asked about ways to save, one person suggested less spending on capital projects and housebuilding.

More generally, two people felt that central government cuts to council funding were responsible for rises in charges for services. Another commented that air and noise pollution are contributing to poor health and a greater need for health and care services.

## **IIA8 – Transforming the Adult Social Care Front Door 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “The adult social care 'front door' is where someone first comes into contact with adult social care services in their local area. In Newcastle, this is usually our Social Care Direct service. We want to look at what services are offered to people when they first make contact with us, with the aim of providing rapid short-term support, information and advice, to try to prevent longer-term need for services and help people stay well for longer.”

14 people and organisations commented on this, two people by email and Let’s talk Newcastle, a formal response from the Elders’ Council, and comments made by 11 people attending a meeting of the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle which was organised to discuss the budget proposals.

One person commented that they did not think the proposals were clear and easy to understand, and that information needed to be made available in Easy Read format to enable people with learning disabilities using care to take part in the consultation.

The Elders Council supported this proposal if it enabled people to better understand and navigate the process of accessing adult social care. One person was concerned that the ‘front door’ would have an increased workload due to other changes in social care provision and that people would have to wait even longer to be assessed for care. Another commented that people tend only to apply for social care when they are “at the end of their coping mechanisms and it is a last resort”, and therefore wondered if the proposals would have any impact. The Elders Council and Healthwatch asked if there had been any assessment of the impact of the previous year’s proposals.

When asked about minimising the impact of proposals, one person suggested having a system where people with a long-term need for care receive their service from a long-term team and it is easier for them to know who to contact with queries about their care. The same person said that they did not think the proposals were fair and reasonable. They asked if having a dedicated team for people with long-term care needs could save money, as in their view this group of people are missing out on care and their needs for it are increasing due to waiting times.

## **IIA9 – Review and deletion of Intensive Family Intervention Team 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We propose to review and delete the Intensive Family Intervention Team in 2024-2025. This service works with families where a child or children are at risk of being admitted into local authority care; families who are in crisis and there is a risk of care, and children who are already in local authority care whose placement is at risk of breakdown and/or there is a plan for a child in care to be reunified to their family. Recently an audit of the service was completed and did not find any evidence of IFIT having a sustainable impact. This will result in savings of £447,890.”

We received three comments on this, one via email, one social media comment, and feedback from Connected Voice. One person commented that they did not think the proposals were clear and easy to understand.

Connected Voice said that it was not clear about how work would be distributed among the remaining members of staff and were concerned that people working in this field are already under a lot of pressure. A resident was concerned that there could be an adverse effect on safeguarding children and young people.

When asked about how to minimise any negative impacts of the proposal, a resident said that they simply did not think it should go ahead. One person thought it was not fair and reasonable to implement this, and that the council should cut spending on other areas such as staff pay and spending on contractors. Another response was that if a review had shown that the service was not having lasting benefits, it was reasonable to review the team and stop this service.

## **IIA10 – Review of the Provision of SEND Transport Support to post-16 learners 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “We are proposing to consult on a small number of options to reduce the impact of this service on the council’s budget. The options being consulted on will be:

- Stop delivering this service completely from September 2024 for all post-16 students.
- Stop delivering this service from September 2024 for any eligible new post-16 students with SEND. Students currently in receipt of support will continue to receive this until their educational studies end.
- From September 2024, introduce a fixed sum of money for each eligible post-16 learner as a contribution to their educational travel costs.
- Make no changes to the current policy.

The consultation is likely to take place early in the spring term 2024, with a decision from Cabinet in late spring or early summer 2024.”

49 people and organisations commented on this, including two people who responded by email, 27 via Let’s talk Newcastle, 8 schools’ representatives, 11 representatives from the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle, and formal feedback from the Elders Council, Newcastle Advisory Group, and Connected Voice. When asked if the proposals were clear, four people said that they were not, and 21 said that they were, although two asked for more detail.

### **Consequences and impacts**

30 people and organisations commented on this, with the most common response being concern that post-16 learners will miss out on education. Other common responses are shown in the table below.

Consequences and impacts	Mentions	Sample quote
Concerned that post-16 learners will miss out on education	14	“It will stop many [young people] from attending school and create more mental health issues.”
Increased pressure on parents and caregivers	10	“[There will be] pressure on caregivers to find an alternative way to get the learner into education, affecting any work commitments or other children in the household.”
This will have a negative impact on some of the most vulnerable people in society	7	“[There could be a] negative impact on vulnerable teenagers that are unaware of dangers around them while travelling.”
Will have a negative impact on families with young people with SEND	4	“Families already in financial difficulty will be unable to support with transporting their young person.”
Need to protect the independence of young people with SEND	3	“Taking away their transport will stop many [young people with SEND] from attending educational settings where they are able to receive training on how to live independently and safely.”

School representatives agreed that in principle, young people being able to travel independently was a good goal. The Elders Council and Healthwatch wanted more detail on how this would be managed safely, as did Newcastle Advisory Group, who commented that SEND young people can suffer bullying on public transport. Connected Voice commented: “Proposal 25 anticipates a £448k saving on SEND travel. We support the idea of more independent travel training, but question if this saving is realistic within the timescale.”

### **Mitigating impact**

25 people and organisations commented on this, with the most common response being that people did not want to see the proposal implemented (12 mentions) and the next most common being to have buses which travel only to a specific school – one person commented: “[We could] get buses running on the road that are just for each school and we [parents] can bring them [young people with SEND] to the bus stops and pick them up from there.”

### **Fair and reasonable?**

23 people and organisations commented on this, with the most common response being that people did not think it was fair and reasonable (18 mentions) and the next most common being that it was not fair on vulnerable people, and that cuts should be made to other people (four people each said this).

Mitigating impacts	Mentions	Sample quote
Not fair	18	“No, it is not fair. 16-year-olds, especially with disabilities, are still vulnerable and need support for school transport.”
Not fair on vulnerable people	4	“The most important task of government is to take care of all its people and especially the ones who are vulnerable.”
Not fair, cuts should be made to other services	4	“No, there are other areas that could be cut back.”
Yes, it is fair	3	“Yes, it is fair.”

### Other ways to save

14 people and organisations commented on this.

Other ways to save	Mentions	Sample quote
Do not know	3	“I have no idea but you should be thinking about the impact this is going to have on families with kids who need this service.”
Cut senior staff salaries	2	“Look at management pay.”
Do not know enough about council spending to comment	2	“I don't know enough about your expenditure in other areas to comment.”
Get better value for money out of contractors	2	“Stop getting 'contractors' in and paying them for repairs.”
Spend less money on festive events	2	“Reduce spending on Christmas decorations.”

### General comments

Four people commented on this. One said that SEND children require free transport. Three said that they did not want to see the proposal happen, and that it was important to protect vulnerable members of society. Another said that they were concerned about the impact on their son's life, as he uses this service.

## **IIA11 – Review of the Policy for SEND Personal Transport Budgets for Eligible Families in 2024-2025**

The proposal is: “Following discussions with families, we proposing to consult on a change to the current Personal Transport Budget policy; that it could be extended to pay for things such as:

- a childminder or family member to care for a sibling whilst a parent / carer takes the 'eligible child' (the child with a Special Educational Needs Declaration) to school.
- a breakfast or after-school club for a sibling in order to allow the parent the time to collect the eligible child from school.
- two hours of the relevant hourly rate of a personal assistant (who may already be involved in the child's care) to drive the eligible child to school (and back) in addition to the mileage costs of both journeys.

In addition, we propose to introduce a banding system to calculate the value of payments for transport, rather than a straightforward mileage reimbursement (a system for repaying eligible families their school transport costs). This method is in place in other local authorities and has been found to be highly successful.”

We received feedback on this from two people via Let's talk Newcastle. One person commented that they understood the proposals but wondered if young people with learning disabilities would be able to understand them, saying that there is a general lack of knowledge about what is and is not covered by the SEND service. Another asked for more information about what exactly is included in the proposal.

When asked about the consequences and impacts, respondents provided a lot of detailed information. A summary of comments is that one person felt that families of children and young people with SEND are often on lower incomes and may be putting in many hours of unpaid care to look after them. They were concerned that the proposals could put a greater burden on families and on mental health and social care services. Another was concerned about the difficulty of balancing the needs of disabled and non-disabled siblings, and that changes in routine can be difficult for disabled children and young people to adapt to.

One suggestion for mitigating the impact of the proposals was to cap costs at £1 per journey and ensure people using the service have advice and support as needed. One response was that the proposal is not fair and reasonable, and that the budget size should reflect the scale of need, rather than adjusting the service to fit the budget. Another felt that it was fair as long as families did not feel under any pressure to choose one option over another.

One respondent did not feel that they knew enough about the Council's budget to propose alternative methods of saving or generating income; another suggested people over 16 who are claiming benefits in their own right to contribute to the costs of SEND transport. Finally, a general comment was that the respondent felt that instead of making savings on services, the council should lobby central government for more funding.

### **Other budget proposals: International Newcastle, Libraries, Free School Meals, Citylife and others**

We also had several budget proposals which were not the subject of Integrated Impact Assessments, and which received feedback from participants, residents and stakeholders. As stated earlier, we recommend reading feedback from stakeholder groups in full, as the level of detail they provided can only be summarised here and should be read in its original form when reviewing the proposals.

## International Newcastle

The proposal is contained in the budget documents Appendix 6, "Summary of directorate budgets"<sup>4</sup> under the Assistant Chief Executive's directorate budget heading and is worded as: "Organisational efficiency and effectiveness proposals relate to withdrawing funding from a range of membership organisations and to changes to Citylife". Whilst International Newcastle is not named in the proposal, it is one of the membership organisations referred to.

We received 28 responses on this proposal, mostly from schools including the Royal Grammar School, Lemington Riverside Primary School, Sacred Heart Primary School, Archibald First School, English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Central Walker School, Throckley Primary School, St Mark's Catholic Primary School, Gosforth Junior High School, West Denton Primary School, Sacred Heart High School, Hawthorn Primary School, St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, St Lawrence's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary Schools, Tyneview Primary School, Gosforth Central Middle School, Waverley Primary School, West Denton Primary School. Feedback was usually sent in by headteachers and modern language teachers.

We also received feedback from International Newcastle itself, a trustee of International Newcastle, the Team co-ordinator of Newcastle City Council Music Service, two residents, the Honorary Vice Consul of Spain for Newcastle, NEAT Academy Trust, the North East Branch of the Association for Language Learning, and Music Partnership North Newcastle. International Newcastle themselves commented on their work to promote the international perspective through the 'Empowering Newcastle's Youth for a Global Future' programme, including bringing in funding and resources to the city, and their unique expertise in leveraging such funding, working in partnership, and international relations. They did not want to see this lost to the Newcastle area and asked us to reconsider the proposal.

20 of the respondents, all schools, sent through feedback which made the following points: they valued the work done in partnership with the Schools Effectiveness Team and International Newcastle to support teachers and schools to introduce international perspectives into the learning environment, that they were concerned at recent falls in the numbers of students pursuing language qualifications, and they felt that the proposal could lead to the cessation of this work with a negative impact on schools and students. They asked us to reconsider the proposal.

A resident expressed similar concerns, as did a retired languages teacher, who emphasised the importance of offering these opportunities to students on lower incomes who might not otherwise be able to benefit from them. The North East Academy Trust and the North East Branch of the Association for Language Learning made the same point.

The Honorary Vice Consul of Spain for Newcastle emphasised the work done to build links between Newcastle and the Spanish Embassy Education Department and the value of International Newcastle in doing so.

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<sup>4</sup> This can be found online here:

<https://democracy.newcastle.gov.uk/documents/s196572/3g.%20Appendix%206%20-%20Summary%20of%20directorate%20budgets.pdf>

## **Free School Meals (ref 12)**

The proposal is “We will reduce the current subsidy for the school meals service, which is estimated to increase to £2.1m in 2024-25. This subsidy has been established over the last few years through increased costs of running the service, including significant increases in food costs. We will seek to recover this increase in costs through the price charged for school meals. We will increase the price per school meal by 50p for free school meals and universal infant free school meals charged to schools to move towards a full cost recovery model.”

We received feedback on this from four residents and eight schools. Residents commenting on this by email and via Let’s talk Newcastle. All expressed concern at the need for this service to protect the wellbeing of children in low-income households, and ensure they are able to concentrate at school. One person asked us not to implement the proposal.

Schools providing feedback expressed concern that this could lead to children who need free school meals not getting them and asked if impact studies had been done. They agreed there was a need for the council and schools to work together to mitigate any impact of this proposal and ensure that schools are fully sighted on the proposals so that they can prepare for them. They were concerned about ensuring a consistent standard of school meals, and also asked about ensuring that families receiving free school meals meet the eligibility criteria.

## **Library opening hours (ref 42)**

The proposal is “We will review library opening hours to close the City Library at 5pm on Tuesdays instead of 7pm. In September the average number of visitors at this time was 121. This is lower than the number of visits on the other late opening day, which is Thursday.”

Three residents commented on this via email and Let’s talk Newcastle. They felt that the negative impact would outweigh any savings being made, for example, children finding it harder to do homework, full-time workers having less access to the library in the evening, and reading groups being unable to meet in the library on Tuesday evenings. One person did not want to see the proposal being implemented.

## **Citylife magazine being digital-only (Ref 35)**

The proposal is “We will no longer produce CityLife in its current format. We will reduce the scale of the publication and no longer distribute to households but will provide hard copies to be distributed to libraries. A monthly e-newsletter will be published to round up news and share information”.

We received feedback on this from three residents, Connected Voice, and 11 representatives from the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle. Two residents on Let’s talk Newcastle felt that this would lead to people being less well-informed, especially those who are digitally excluded. They asked if it would be possible to have a print distribution list for people to request a printed copy to be sent to their homes, or to print a smaller or monochrome edition.

Connected Voice, the Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle commented that they thought this would contribute to digital exclusion, particularly among older residents. The Elders Council wanted to see a distribution list for print copies to be sent to people in their homes who cannot easily access digital version of hard copies in libraries.

Other proposals which received feedback were as follows.

### **Promoting independence and community resilience (Ref 2) – Being Well Phase 3**

The proposal is: “We will expand the existing Being Well Phase 3 proposal for people already receiving social care support. We will use this new approach in our statutory review process. This means we will review people's existing care packages and identifying and implementing alternative models of support.”

A carer responding by email expressed concern that staff shortages at present mean that people’s care packages are not always being reviewed annually.

At a meeting of council representatives with the Elders Council and HealthWatch Newcastle, these two organisations emphasised the need to provide clear information to older service users to avoid anxiety and concern, and asked if there was a risk of this increasing stress on community and voluntary sector organisations providing services.

Newcastle Advisory Group commented that: “the support needs to be well considered, matched well and person-centred ...there is a worry about appropriate and creative support for the individual not being provided due to recruitment and retention issues, so if the money is not being spent, this is not because the person does not need it.” They also emphasised the need to allow time for people with a learning disability and autistic people to learn new information and skills, and use appropriate language that does not cause anxiety.

### **Promoting independence and community resilience (Ref 3) – Home First Team**

The proposal is: “We will invest funding into a dedicated Home First team. The team will support people to stay in their communities longer after they return home from hospital. This will maximise independence and prevent the need for longer-term care and support.” The Elders Council and HealthWatch Newcastle asked for more information about how this would result in savings and how it would work in practice – would there be council-approved lists of service providers? They asked if this could be partially funded by the NHS.

### **Income (Ref 5) – Fees and Charges**

The proposal is: “We will increase fees and charges to make sure we recover the full costs of providing services. We will also increase income by winning new contracts and selling our services to third parties in the following areas [full list provided].”

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle asked if the council knows in advance which third parties it will be selling services to.

Newcastle Advisory Group commented that they were not certain which services were covered by the proposal, and wanted more information about how the quality of services provided would be monitored.

Schools providing feedback commented that they were concerned about the sustainability of services, given the financial challenges facing schools and whether the service would still provide them with value for money.

### **Income (Ref 9) – Permit parking**

The proposal is: “We will increase permit parking fees for annual city centre permits, multi-storey permits and on-street parking in the City Centre.”

The Elders Council said that this did not seem to be consistent with the council’s aspirations towards encouraging less use of cars, or with proposals to generate income through charges.

### **Income (Ref 14) – Appointee Weekly Support Charges**

The proposal is: “We have reviewed the appointee weekly support charges which have been unchanged since 2018. We will seek to apply an increase from £5 to £7.50 per week and £10 to £15 per week for these support charges. This represents the increased costs of providing this support.”

A carer responded that they did not think this was affordable for people using this service, and asked if providers could do this as part of someone’s care package. Newcastle Advisory Group commented that they thought this was a high increase, and asked if it could be lowered.

### **Income (Ref 20) – Deleting Vacant Posts**

The proposal is: “We will delete vacant posts without any service impact in the following areas [full list provided].”

A carer was concerned that this would lead to increased waiting times for services. Connected Voice did not feel it was realistic to expect this proposal to have no impact due to the current demand for services.

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle asked if this was a short-term or long-term proposal. Newcastle Advisory Group asked what impact assessment had been carried out, as they were concerned that the work done by staff in these posts was still needed.

### **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 24) – in-house service provision**

The proposal is: “We will expand our in-house provision (Augusta Close and West Denton) to provide better outcomes for the increasing number of children with complex needs coming into care. This will allow us to place children with highly complex needs with more cost-effective in-house provision and reduce spend on external placements. We will work with providers to make sure placing children in very high cost external residences is more cost-effective and only used where entirely necessary where no less expensive in-house provision exists.”

Schools providing feedback on proposals asked for more information about how this proposal had been costed, and whether there would be a net saving.

### **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 27) – public health funding**

The proposal is: “We will review opportunities to apply Public Health funding to appropriate activity within council services.”

Connected Voice commented that they were concerned that this would lead to services previously commissioned by Public Health from the voluntary and community sector being cut and asked for more information about this.

### **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 28) – local equipment store**

The proposal is: “We will undertake a full service and funding review of the loan equipment store to make sure it remains fit for purpose, provides value for money and that the most appropriate funding source(s) is used.”

The Elders Council commented that they agreed with this proposal and hoped this would lead to shorter waiting times and greater use of loan equipment.

### **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 29) – shared overnight response**

The proposal is: “We will develop a shared overnight response offer by working with people and providers to identify the best way to provide this support in geographical areas, reduce duplication of resources and promote independence.”

The Elders Council commented that they had concerns about how this could be achieved safely given the vulnerability of service users, and asked if smart technology could be used to ensure this.

### **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 30) – supported employment service**

The proposal is: “We will seek alternative funding for the supported employment service.” A carer commented that they felt that this was a minimal service to begin with.

### **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 31) – Disabled Facilities Grant**

The proposal is: “We will seek to better align funding from the Disabled Facilities Grant with spend incurred in adult social care budgets. This happens when there is a delay installing equipment or adaptation that means additional social care support is needed for people to be safe in their own homes. This will mitigate requests to use temporary residential care as a suitable safe alternative to staying at home.”

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle commented that this fitted well with work they had been doing to encourage people to think about where they would live in future and wanted to work with the council on this.

## **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 32) – Managing Adult Social Care Waiting Lists**

The proposal is: “In 2023 to 2024 we used additional funding received to create additional short-term task and finish capacity to review and manage our adult social care waiting lists. Given the financial pressures facing the council, we will not continue the programme at the same level.”

The Elders Council asked for more information and emphasised the importance of minimising waiting lists.

## **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 33) – asset-based short-term projects**

The proposal is: “In 2023-24 we used additional funding received to support development of asset-based short-term projects in our communities. This proposal means the additional funding will not be recurring in 2024-2025.”

Connected Voice commented that “These are exactly the type of projects which you state elsewhere will help reduce and delay the need for care” and asked if this proposal could be counter-productive.

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle wanted more information about this, particularly in terms of how the impact would be assessed – they noted it is especially difficult to measure the impact of services which aim at preventing need or harm.

## **Organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Ref 34) – Occupational Therapy**

The proposal is: “We are refocusing our Occupational Therapy offer to concentrate on specialist provision. We will delete posts to support us to reconfigure the work.”

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle commented on the importance of this service when people come out of hospital and wanted to work closely with the Council on this.

## **General**

As always, we received comments on other aspects of the Council’s services, and the cumulative impact of the budget proposals, from around 198 people and organisations.

### **Are the proposals clear and easy to understand?**

Four people said that they did not think the proposals were clear and easy to understand, and 21 said that they were. However, many of those in both groups commented that some of the language could be made easier to understand to make it more accessible for all audiences. Newcastle Advisory Group emphasised the importance of accessible formats for communications, including BSL and Easy Read.

## Consequences and impact

We received 14 comments specifically about this, with the most common theme being a concern that there would be an increase in homelessness.

Theme	Mentions	Sample quote
There will be an increase in homelessness	8	“This creates a serious risk of street homelessness.”
Proposals will have a negative impact on children and young people	7	“The number of children living in poverty in this city, especially in the west end, has risen sharply and more children than ever are in temporary accommodation.”
Support homeless people	5	“We need to find ways to support the homeless people, and all the people because the prices are getting higher.”
Need to continue service provision for learning disabled and autistic people	2	“Need to protect service provision for autistic and learning disabled people.”
There will be more demand for health services	2	“This creates more strain on the already crisis-point health services.”

## Minimising impact

15 people commented on this – the main themes in their comments are shown below.

Minimising impact	Mentions	Sample quote
Higher taxes for those on higher incomes	2	“Seriously increase taxation on wealthier residents and those that can afford it.”
Lobby central government for more funds	2	“Lobby the government for additional funding.”
Look at new ways to fund supported accommodation	2	“Money currently paid to supported accommodation could be better spent to provide individuals with better accommodation options.”
Look for opportunities for collaborative working	2	“Working in conjunction with the various charities and volunteer groups in the area has the potential to mitigate the negative impact of these proposals.”

<b>Minimising impact</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Think about long-term impact of plans	2	“A long-term solution has to be sought which enables people to support themselves.”

Citizens Advice Newcastle commented that they did not want to see “punitive measures for those in council tax arrears with no way to pay”. They also wanted to see ongoing investment in the voluntary and community sector, as this provides a lot of services used by vulnerable people and those on low incomes.

The Elders Council suggested taking action by encouraging people to plan ahead for old age, developing the adult social care Front Door approach to make it easier for people to navigate social care provision, strengthen the council's commitment to being an age-friendly city and provide better information to people about services available to them.

### **Fair and reasonable?**

14 people commented on this – the most common theme in their comments was that the proposals are not fair and reasonable.

<b>Fair and reasonable?</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
No, not fair and reasonable	5	“The poor and homeless seem to be those that will carry the burden of these proposals, and as such I feel that is intolerable.”
Yes, fair and reasonable	4	“Yes, we need some solutions to help people.”
No, because vulnerable people will suffer	3	“No, the poorest, children and disabled will suffer most.”
No, central government should provide more funding	2	“The government cannot implement another round of spending cuts.”
Very difficult situation	2	“It is a very difficult situation for the council.”

The Elders Council commented that they thought the proposals were generally fair and reasonable given the challenges faced by the Council.

### **Other ways to make savings or generate income**

39 people commented on this, with the most common theme in their comments being to cut senior staff salaries.

<b>Other ways to make savings or generate income</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Cut senior staff salaries	9	“Get rid of all the managers that are not needed.”

<b>Other ways to make savings or generate income</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Avoid cuts to services used by vulnerable people	3	“Vulnerable people should not be the ones bearing the brunt of cuts.”
Do not use contractors	3	“Stop paying contractors large amounts of money to do substandard work.”
Cut spending on arts and festive events	2	“You should use funds from unnecessary one-off expenses such as New Year's laser light shows, etc. in order to uphold essential services.”
Increase amount of social housing	2	“Right to buy and the lack of social housing leave us at the mercy of private landlords. Councils should regulate this housing more strictly.”

Citizens Advice Newcastle asked if revenue spending allocated to road highways and transport could be reviewed in the light of the amount available for capital spending on these services, although they wanted to see lower fares for young people protected.

The Elders Council asked if the council had looking at making efficiency savings by joint procurement of services with other local authorities, what budgetary savings could be achieved by greater use of home working, and whether AI could be used for some administrative tasks. The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle asked if increasing parking charges was an option.

### **General comments from residents**

We received around 116 comments from residents via Let's talk Newcastle, social media and email about the cumulative impact of the budget proposals, and public services in Newcastle. The most common themes in these comments were that respondents were unhappy with cycle lanes and they wanted to see improvements to the repairs service.

<b>General comments</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Unhappy with cycle lanes	17	“Don't waste money on cycle routes on roads.”
Improve repairs service	6	“When doing repairs do quality work, not just a ‘sticky plaster’ repair where you have to go back again and again.”
Generally unhappy with the council	5	“Take some responsibility and fix your own issues.”
Enforce regulations and collect fines	4	“The council should look at revenue raising from anti-social behaviour, particularly those forms which increase costs for the council – littering, pollution, etc.”
Unhappy with changes to road network	4	“Stop wasting money on road layouts.”

General comments	Mentions	Sample quote
Unhappy with low traffic neighbourhoods	4	“Spend less on ill-thought- out road closures against residents’ wishes.”

## General comments from stakeholder organisations

Citizens Advice Newcastle were concerned at the potential long-term cumulative impact of the proposals, and that “the most vulnerable, including the digitally excluded; those on low incomes; those with disabilities, and those from racially minoritised backgrounds will be disproportionately impacted by these cuts”. They commented that advice services are “running out of options for those at financial breaking point”.

Connected Voice commented that the voluntary and community sector is being increasingly relied on to produce services, at a time when many organisations are struggling due to the increased cost of providing services, a lack of funding, and difficulties being paid on time for service provision. They were generally happy with the People’s Budget and other budget information provided and support the Council’s commitment to paying the Real Living Wage.

The Elders Council and Healthwatch Newcastle wanted to be more in-person consultation on budget proposals. They also wanted information about the impact and effectiveness of previous years’ budget proposals. Finally, they were concerned both that we are approaching a situation where councils will only be able to provide the statutory minimum services, and (like Connected Voice) that this will place an increasingly heavy burden on under-resourced and over-stretched voluntary and community sector organisations.

Newcastle Advisory Group provided feedback on the accessibility of the consultation materials, which will be used to improve the consultation further when we consult on our budget proposals for the 2025-2026 financial year. They also commented that they are concerned that there is a focus on community-based approaches to increase independence and reduce reliance on statutory services for adults with a learning disability and autistic people at a time when many community groups are closing due to lack of staff or funding. They wanted to see more information in appropriate formats, and ongoing consultation with people using services, parents and carers, and community groups. Generally, they are concerned about the impact of the cost of living crisis on people’s lives.

The North East Chamber of Commerce confirmed that they were broadly supportive of the Council’s proposals, and in particular the commitment to paying a Real Living Wage. They were keen to work with us to advocate for the reform of local government finance.

Tyne Housing Group commented that they wanted more information about what savings the council was considering making from its spend on enabling and business functions, and also asked about the possibility of efficiency savings through combined service procurement across the region, given the creation of the new North East Combined Authority. They emphasised the vital role of local authorities in protecting the most vulnerable people in society.

Carers Centre Newcastle asked about the potential for growth opportunities and asked about having further discussions with the council around adopting the Three Conversations model.

## **Appendix 2: How we engaged**

### **Who took part**

Residents, partners and other stakeholders have been able to have their say through various routes as described below. We have used many of the consultation tools that have been used in previous years, including offline consultation channels as letters and in person discussions with people affected by proposal. This section summarises how many people used these channels and provides some information about the people who took part, such as their gender, age, and if they are disabled.

### **What we have done**

In this year, we have done the following to improve the accessibility of our budget information:

- Our budget documents have been produced in Plain English.
- They have been produced in accordance with our accessibility guidelines, so that people with visual impairments using screen readers will not encounter problems accessing the information in them.
- We used feedback on videos from previous years to make our videos this year more accessible.
- We commissioned a BSL video.
- We commissioned Easy Read information.

### **How did we publicise the consultation?**

We promoted the consultation widely online, using videos, slideshows, social media, email, and our website. We also used non-digital communication channels, such as our residents' magazine, Citylife, and set up a FREEPOST address so that people could post responses to us if they preferred this.

### **Digital engagement**

Our main digital channels were Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter, to push the message out and both get people engaged with the People's Budget simulator tool and get their comments on our service-specific proposals. We put out 18 Facebook posts and videos which introduced the consultation, signposted people to the People's Budget simulator and the Let's talk Newcastle consultation on service-specific proposals.

This included 'explainer' videos and videos featuring elected members introducing the budget. We also had 16 X (Twitter) posts, two posts on LinkedIn, and one on Instagram. These posts had a total of 79,877 impressions (an impression is when social media content is seen by a user). We received 905 click-throughs (people clicking on links in the posts), 134 shares and 114 reactions (for example, people 'liking' the posts).

Looking at how many people viewed our consultation-related websites, we received:

- 5,334 pageviews for the Let's talk Newcastle Online budget consultation.
- 1,439 pageviews for the People's Budget webpages.

Local organisations such as Connected Voice promoted the consultation through their own communications channels, including social media and email bulletins.

## **Offline engagement and communities of interest**

We also used non-digital communication channels. These included letters and our residents' magazine, Citylife, which is sent to households across the local authority area. Where possible, we involved voluntary organisations representing communities of interest such as people with learning disabilities, older people, such as:

- Elders Council – a local group of people who are interested in having a say about how to make Newcastle a great city in which to grow old.
- Newcastle Advisory Group – a group of people in Newcastle with a learning disability, autism, and their family carers who work with Newcastle City Council to improve services and opportunities available to adults in the local area.
- Healthwatch Newcastle – an independent, not-for-profit organisation who help people of all ages and from all backgrounds have their say about social care and health services in Newcastle upon Tyne.
- Collaborative Newcastle Homelessness Workstream – Collaborative Newcastle is a new partnership between hospitals, council, GPs, care homes, universities and the mental health trust which aims to transform the health, wealth and wellbeing of everyone in Newcastle.

We also had discussions with homelessness service providers and 20 schools. We received feedback from headteachers and teachers, schools, the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC), Connected Voice, Karbon Homes, a charity representing Refugees and Asylum Seekers, the North-East Branch of the Association for Language Learning, Carers Centre Newcastle, Changing Lives, Citizens Advice Bureau Newcastle, Crisis, Home Group, Tyne Housing, St Vincent Depaul, Haven, North East Refugee Service, Shelter, the Honorary Vice Consul of Spain for Newcastle, International Newcastle, Labour Housing Group's North East Branch, Music Partnership North Newcastle, NEAT Academy Trust.

A full list of engagement events is available at the end of this appendix.

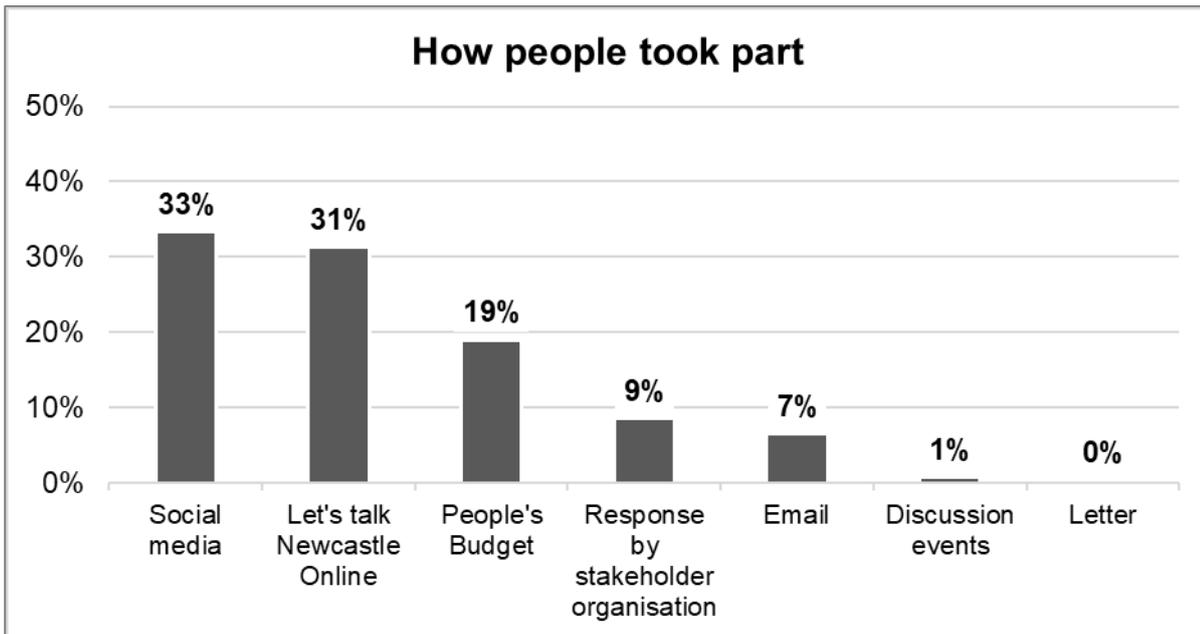
## **About the respondents**

### **How people took part**

Around 490 individuals and organisations sent in their responses via the People's Budget, Let's talk Newcastle Online, discussion events, social media posts, letters and formal responses from stakeholder organisations, and emails. (We do not know the *exact* number of individual people who took part as we do not have any way of checking whether someone might have sent us several responses – for example, posting a comment on Facebook, then completing a survey on Let's talk Newcastle Online.)

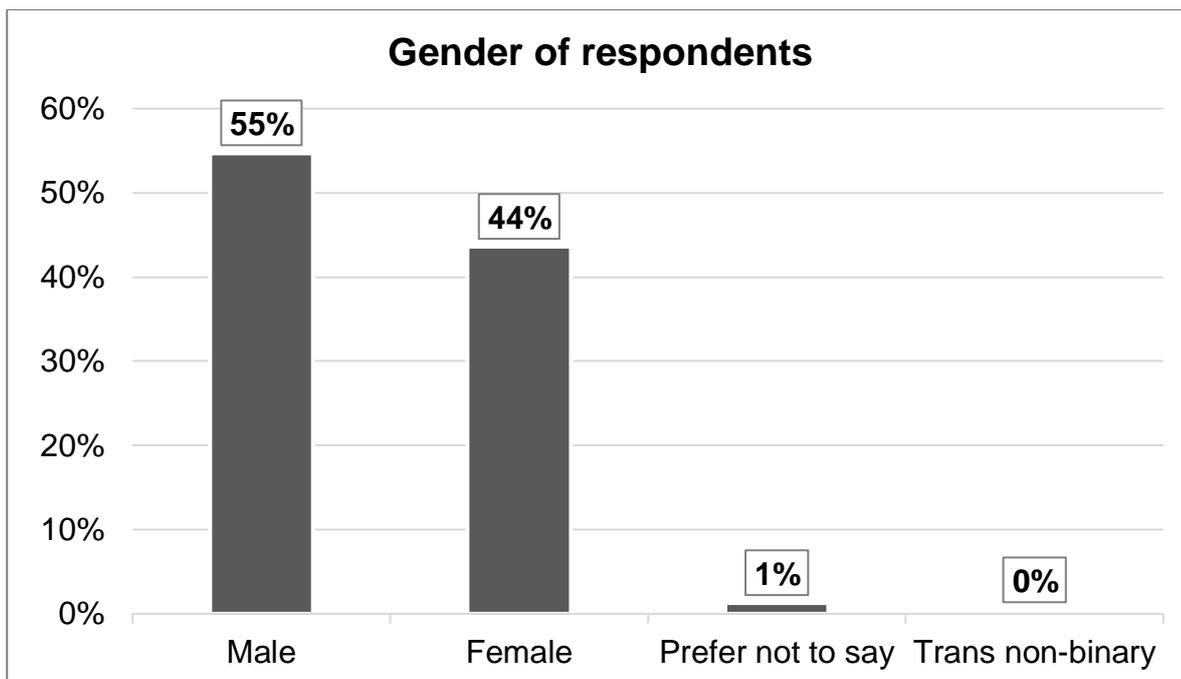
The chart below shows the best information we have about what proportion of individuals took part using different methods. Whilst social media comments form a large proportion of the number of individual responses, much of the detailed feedback we have received has been received via Let's talk Newcastle Online (for individuals) and stakeholder organisations (for organisations such as service providers and community groups).

Please note that because many responses came via social media, People’s Budget, or from stakeholder organisations, we do not have information about many respondents personal characteristics. The charts on the next pages present the information we do have.

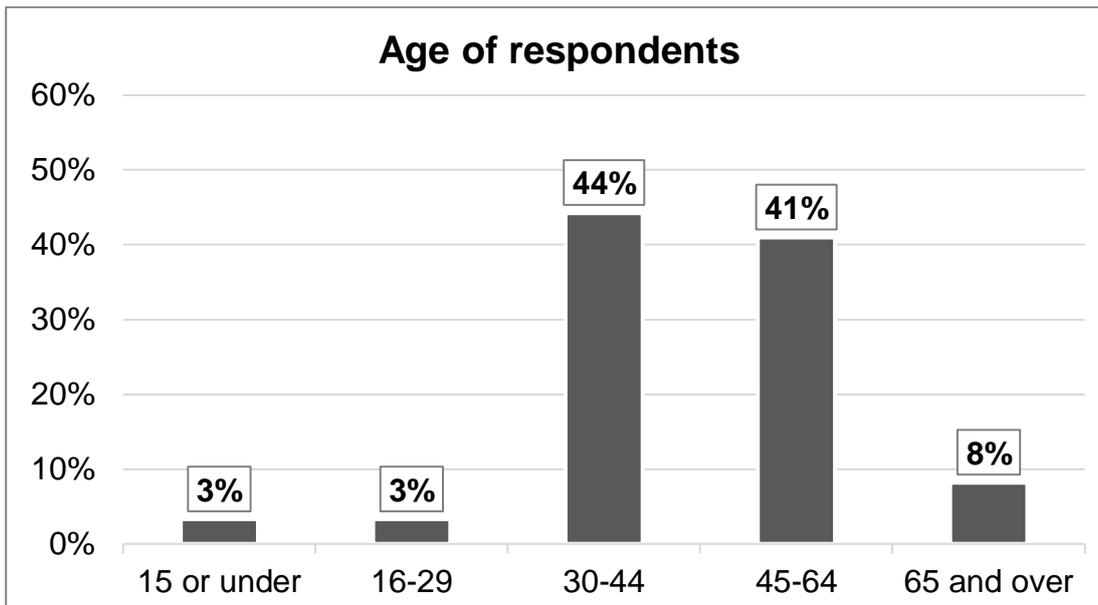


## Gender

Of those for whom we have this information (234 people), just over half of respondents gave their gender as 'male'.



## Age



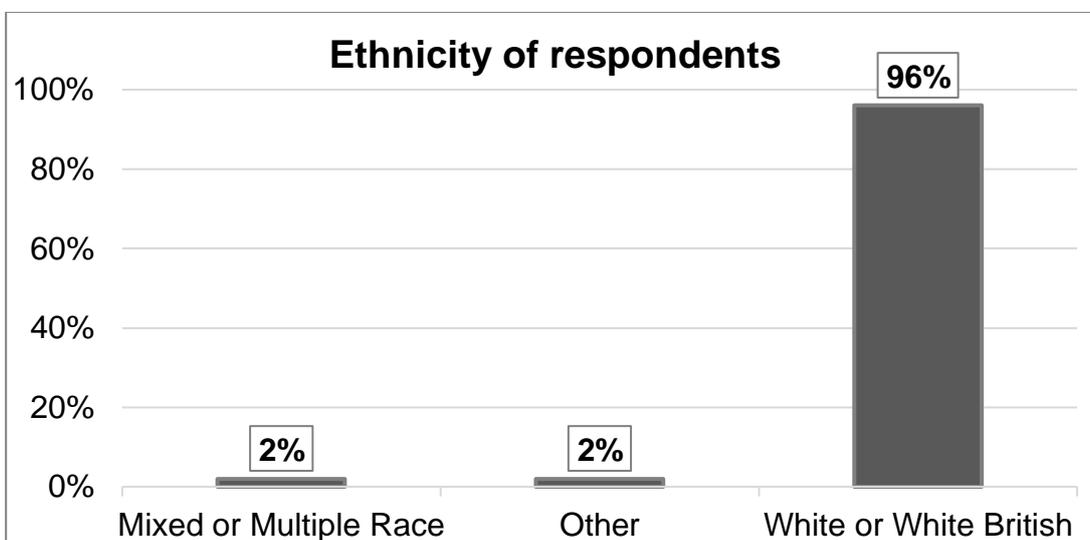
For those for whom we have this information (61 people who responded via Let's talk Newcastle online), the largest single group of respondents gave their age group as 30-44.

## Employment

We do not have reliable information for respondents' employment status. Four people said they were employed full-time, three people said they were carers, one said they were employed part-time and another said they were retired.

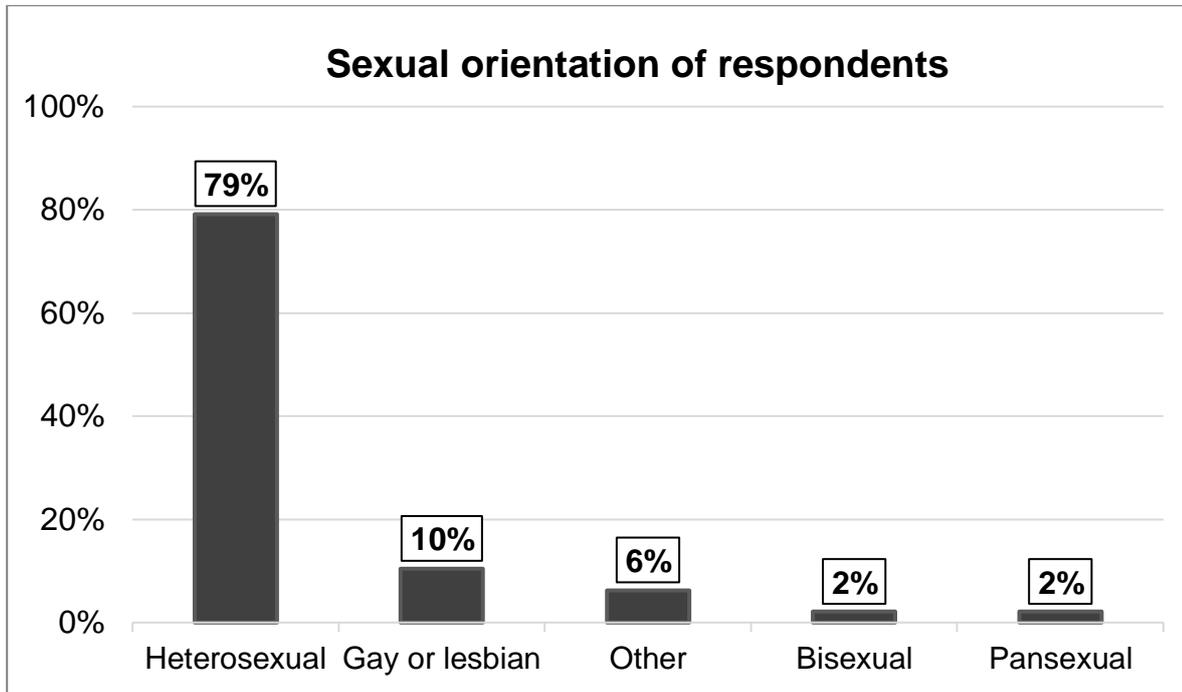
## Ethnicity

Of the 50 people who provided this, nearly all (48 people) described themselves as White or White British.



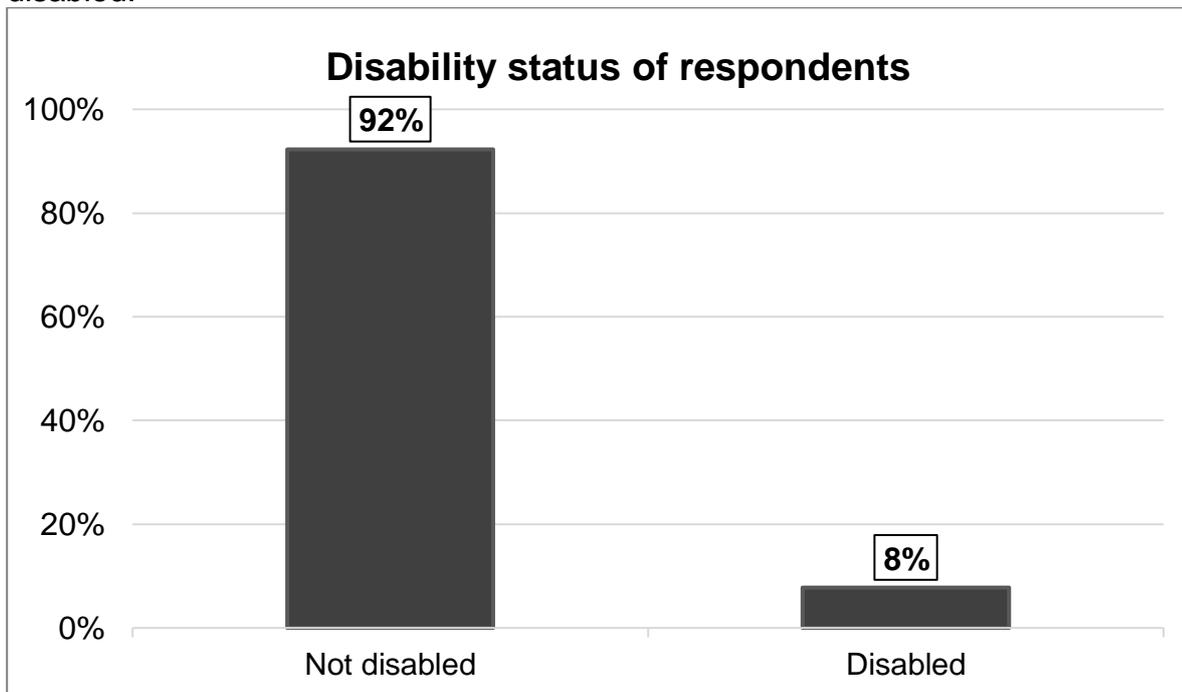
## Sexual orientation

Of the 48 people who provided this information, the majority (38 people) described themselves as heterosexual.



## Disability

Of the 142 people who provided this information, 92% (131 people) said they were not disabled.



## Ward

Of the 101 people who provided this, the largest single number lived in Wingrove.

Ward	Number of people
Wingrove	12
Dene and South Gosforth	9
Manor Park	7
Monument	7
Byker	5
Fawdon and West Gosforth	5
Callerton and Throckley	4
Castle	3
Denton and Westerhope	3
Gosforth	3
Heaton	3
Walker	3
West Fenham	3
North Jesmond	2
Parklands	2
Walkergate	2
Arthur's Hill	1
Benwell and Scotswood	1
Kenton	1
South Jesmond	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>
Unknown	24
North Tyneside	1
Gateshead	1

The table starting on the next page shows the different ways we engaged with the public and communities of interest throughout the consultation period.

## Delivering for our communities: Our medium-term planning for 2022-23 to 2024-25 – how we engaged

This is our full record of communications, engagement and consultation activity related to our medium-term planning for 2023-24 to 2025-26.

<b>Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)</b>	<b>When (what date this took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication and engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)</b>	<b>How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)</b>
General public	30 November	Launched the People’s Budget enabling people to have a go at setting their own budget for the council	Raise awareness of complexity and get views on how people would allocate resources	Press release, social media, People’s Budget tool going live, explainer video
Press and general public	30 November	Publicising that we have published our draft proposals, summarise what they are, encourage people to have their say, provide details of how to take part	Engage local media	Press release, explainer video on social media
General public	30 November	Launched the Let’s talk Newcastle Online online surveys	Gather feedback on both individual proposals, and the cumulative impact of the budget as a whole	Press release, social media posts, Let’s talk Newcastle online surveys going live
Connected Voice Bulletin to members	30 November, 14 December 2023	Article in Connected Voice member e-newsletter	Encourage local VCS organisations to give feedback on proposal.	Newsletter article
Providers of homelessness support	1 December 2023	Presentation to the organisations who currently provide commissioned homelessness support to explain the budget proposal and consultation process	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	In person event with presentation
Lets talk Newcastle Online members	5 December 2023	Invitation to give views via the Let’s talk Newcastle Online online surveys	Gather feedback on individual proposals, and on	Email sent out via the LTN portal

<b>Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)</b>	<b>When (what date this took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication and engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)</b>	<b>How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)</b>
invitation to take part			the cumulative impact of the budget as a whole	
General public	5 December 2023	Introduction to the budget challenges we face as a council by Cllr Paul Frew	Raise awareness of the consultation and encourage people to take part	Social media - 'Put yourself in the hot seat and balance the city's budget' video
Chamber of Commerce	7 December 2023	Budget proposals 2024-2025 discussion	To allow for the Chamber to provide formal feedback on the proposals	Meeting via Teams
InformationNOW and InfoNOW News	10 December 2023	Communicating budget consultation and engagement work to people who live and work in Newcastle, including the voluntary and community sector	Encourage people and VCS organisations to give feedback on the proposal	Article included in weekly e-newsletter Information on website
Focus group with Newcastle Carers	11 December 2023	Advising that we had published our draft proposals, encourage them to have their say and provide details of how	To raise awareness and encourage people to have their say	Face-to-face session with Newcastle Carers Centre
Active Inclusion Weekly Bulletin	11 December 2023	Short bulletin with detail of budget consultation and specific reference to homelessness contract, Supporting Independence Scheme and Crisis Support scheme included within the Active Inclusion Weekly Bulletin.	Encourage people to give feedback on the proposal	Article included in weekly e-newsletter
Labour Housing Group	11 December 2023	Explanation of the budget proposals for the homelessness services and	Following a request from the Labour Housing Group	Online meeting with presentation and questions

Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)	When (what date this took place)	What (what the communication and engagement covered)	Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)	How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)
		the Supporting Independence Scheme		
Connected Voice	12 December 2023	Discussion	Encourage VCS organisations to give feedback on proposal.	Presentation / meeting.
General public	14 December 2023	Animated introduction to the People's Budget tool	Encourage people to take part in the People's Budget	Social media – Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
Key stakeholders	14 December 2023	Advising that we had published our draft proposals, encourage them to have their say and provide details of how	To raise awareness and encourage people to have their say	Email to contacts list from the Let's Talk account:
NECC	17 December 2023 (approx.)	Discussion	Encourage businesses to give feedback on proposal.	Presentation / meeting?
Newcastle City Council Staff	18 December 2023, 3 and 10 January 2024	Article in the Council's Corporate Communications newsletter, also information sent to the Contact Centre	Inform staff about the budget consultation so that they can answer queries about it from members of the public / service users	Newsletter article
Newcastle Advice Compact	20 December 2023	SIS / Crisis Support	Encourage Advice Compact group members to give feedback on proposal	Brief Presentation / Meeting
Building Bridges Network	20 December 2023	Information on budget proposals included within an update to the Building Bridges network (a network of stakeholders from across the homelessness system).	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Email to contacts list for Building Bridges

<b>Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)</b>	<b>When (what date this took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication and engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)</b>	<b>How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)</b>
Newcastle City Council Staff	21 December 2023	Article in the Council's Corporate Communications newsletter, also information sent to the Contact Centre	Inform staff about the budget consultation so that they can answer queries about it from members of the public / service users	Newsletter article
General public including BSL users / D/deaf people	22 December 2023	BSL VERSION Publicising that we have published our draft proposals, summarise what they are, encourage people to have their say, provide details of how to take part	Encourage people to give feedback on proposals and support BSL users / D/deaf people to take part	Explainer video on social media with BSL interpretation Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	3 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA1 – Council Tax and ASC precept.	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	4 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA2 – Crisis Support	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	4 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA3 – Local Services and Waste Management	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
Newcastle City Council Staff	3 January 2024	Article in the Council's Corporate Communications newsletter, also information sent to the Contact Centre	Inform staff about the budget consultation so that they can answer queries about it from members of the public / service users	Newsletter article
Healthwatch	5 January 2024	Discussion with Healthwatch	Gather views on savings proposals	Teams meeting

<b>Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)</b>	<b>When (what date this took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication and engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)</b>	<b>How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)</b>
General public	5 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA4 ASC Supported Living	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	6 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA5 ASC Supporting Independence Scheme	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	7 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA6 Video – ASC&IS Homelessness Prevention Contract	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	8 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA7 Video – ASC&IS Maximum Contribution to Adult Social Care Costs 2024-2025	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
Schools	9 January 2024	Conversation with headteachers. Covered an overview of proposals with focus on those relating to Children, Education and Skills	Encourage schools to give feedback on proposal.	Schools
General public	9 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA8 Video – ASC&IS Transforming the Adult Social Care Front door	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	10 January 2024	Video about Jesmond Park Academy – People’s Budget Challenge	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a> Instagram: <a href="#">Link</a>

<b>Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)</b>	<b>When (what date this took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication and engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)</b>	<b>How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)</b>
Newcastle Advisory Group	10 January 2024	Discussion with Newcastle Advisory Group	Gather views on savings proposals and identify any specific impact or considerations for people who have a learning disability, autism or both.	Face-to-face meeting at Skills for People
Newcastle City Council Staff	10 January 2024	Article in the Council's Corporate Communications newsletter, also information sent to the Contact Centre	Inform staff about the budget consultation so that they can answer queries about it from members of the public / service users	Newsletter article
General public	10 January 2024	Animated introduction to People's Budget	Encourage people to take part in the People's Budget	Social media: Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	11 January 2024	Post about People's Budget	Encourage people to take part in the People's Budget	Social media: Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
Elders Council and Healthwatch	12 January 2024	Discussion	Encourage older people to give feedback on proposal.	Meeting at Civic Centre
Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership	12 January 2024	Conversation with chair – overview of proposals with focus on those relating to Children's Social Care.	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Meeting
Collaborative Newcastle Homelessness Workstream	15 January 2024	Homelessness budget proposal and consultation process	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Brief Presentation / Meeting
General public	16 January 2024	'Last chance to have your say'	Encourage people to take part in the budget consultation	Social media – Facebook and Twitter

<b>Who (who was communicated to or engaged?)</b>	<b>When (what date this took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication and engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication and engagement)</b>	<b>How (method(s) used – provide a link where applicable)</b>
General public	16 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA9 CES Review and deletion of Intensive Family Intervention Team (IFIT)	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	16 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA10 CES SEND Transport Post-16	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	17 January 2024	Explainer video about IIA11 CES SEND Transport Budget	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>
General public	17 January 2024	Last call for the People’s Budget!	Encourage people to take part in the People’s Budget.	Social media: Facebook: <a href="#">Link</a> Twitter: <a href="#">Link</a>