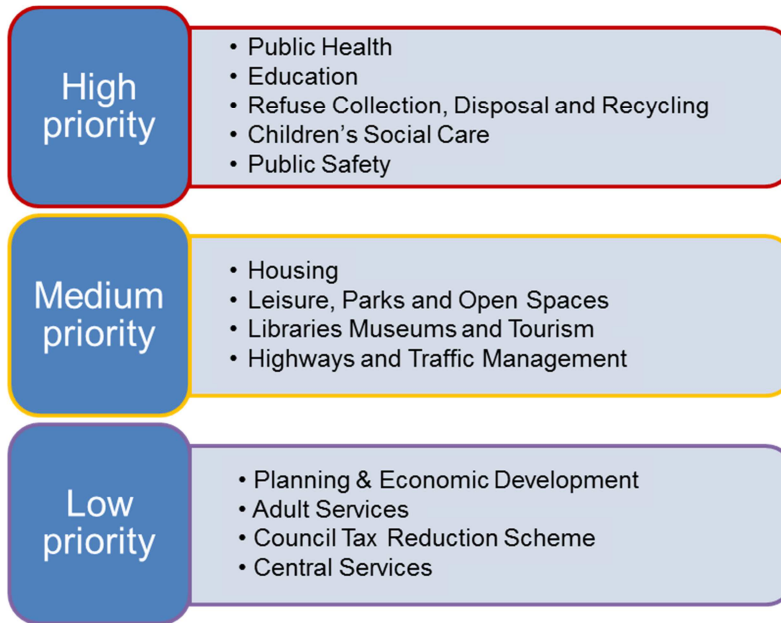# Brighton & Hove City Council

Budget Consultation and Engagement: Summary Report

January 2015

Budget Consultation and Engagement: Summary Report

<u>Findings: at a glance</u>

- Public Health is residents' highest priority for themselves and second highest priority for the city, just below Education; a third would increase spend on it. Central Services is residents' lowest priority.
- Whilst the majority want funding to be, at least, maintained for all service areas, around two-fifths would reduce funding for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Central Services and Highways and Traffic Management.
- Two fifths think Council Tax should never rise; half think it could under certain circumstances.
- Residents are very much in favour of the exploitation of fines for anti-social behaviour as a way to increase income, and of differential charging for attractions for residents and visitors.
- Residents would **STOP** delivering non-essential services and stop spend on road/traffic/cycle/parking developments.
- Residents would **START** to focus on delivering (only) essential services, start introducing or increasing charges/rates/taxes/fines and start improving road/traffic/cycle/ parking arrangements.
- Residents would **CHANGE** (by streamlining/cutting) council services / staffing / pay / councillors / benefits and change road / traffic / cycle / parking arrangements.

<u>About this report: at a glance</u>

- Results of the random sample survey of 502 residents are the most statistically robust: the summary above draws on these alone.
- Other findings reported draw on: 383 self-selecting survey responses, 22 self-selecting stakeholder survey responses, 12 young people's views, 294 web based budget tool users' views.
- Detailed information on approach, methods and response rates is at end of this report**.**

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About the consultation approach

The budget consultation approach taken in 2013/14 was felt to efficiently deliver robust results, as well as enabling residents to have their say about the council's budget, should they wish to. The approach was therefore mirrored this year, with some improvements to consultation questions.

Specifically:

- a postal survey was issued to a random sample of 3,000 households in early October 2014, with an aim of obtaining a robust sample;
- the same survey questions were made available online via the Consultation Portal from 26 September 2014 to 12 January 2015, and the link to this survey was widely promoted via social media, and in emails to strategic partners, the community and voluntary sector, the business sector and other stakeholders;
- the same survey was made available in hard copy in libraries and public buildings and to targeted groups such as residents of sheltered housing and the Youth Council; and
- an online budget literacy and prioritisation tool was hosted on the Brighton & Hove City Council website budget pages from 26 September 2014.

About this report

This report presents the results from the range of consultation activities outlined above but with a focus on the results to the survey issued to a random sample of households as this is the most robust, representative feedback. As there were 502 responses we can be sure that the results are representative to within +/- 4% of the views of all households.

This report is organised in the following sections:

A) Results from random sample (502 responses): Paper and online survey.
B) Results from self-selecting sample (405 responses): Paper and online survey.
C) Results from self-selecting sample of City Partners, stakeholders and community and voluntary group representatives (22 responses): Online survey.
D) Results from discussion of survey questions by young people (12 participants).
E) Results from online budget literacy and prioritisation tool (294 responses).
F) Methods and response rates.

There is a range of other consultation and engagement activity taking place with stakeholders, staff and representative groups that also has relevance to budget deliberations.

A) <u>Results from random sample (502 responses): Paper and online survey</u>

Residents were first invited to rate as high, medium or low, the priority they would give to different service areas for themselves and their family, then to do the same prioritisation exercise for the city.

Not everyone who completed the survey rated every service area so the number of people rating each service area is given in brackets on charts. For example only 427 respondents rated Central Services, whereas 470 rated Public Health.

A small number of respondents only rated services for themselves and their family and did not go on to rate them for the city as well.

Results show that respondents tended to rate service areas as a higher priority for the city than for themselves and their families. There was also, unsurprisingly, more polarisation when rating service areas for themselves compared to the city; if a respondent (and their family) uses or benefits from a particular service they may be more inclined to rate it a higher priority, whereas a respondent not using or benefitting from a service may be more inclined to rate it low.

Compared to last year's results, the proportions rating services as high priorities are lower, and proportions rating services as low priorities are higher, suggesting the scale of the budget challenge may be better understood this year.

The charts overleaf show the service areas ranked from highest priority to lowest for respondents and their families, then for the city.

Priority rating of each service area: For you & your family
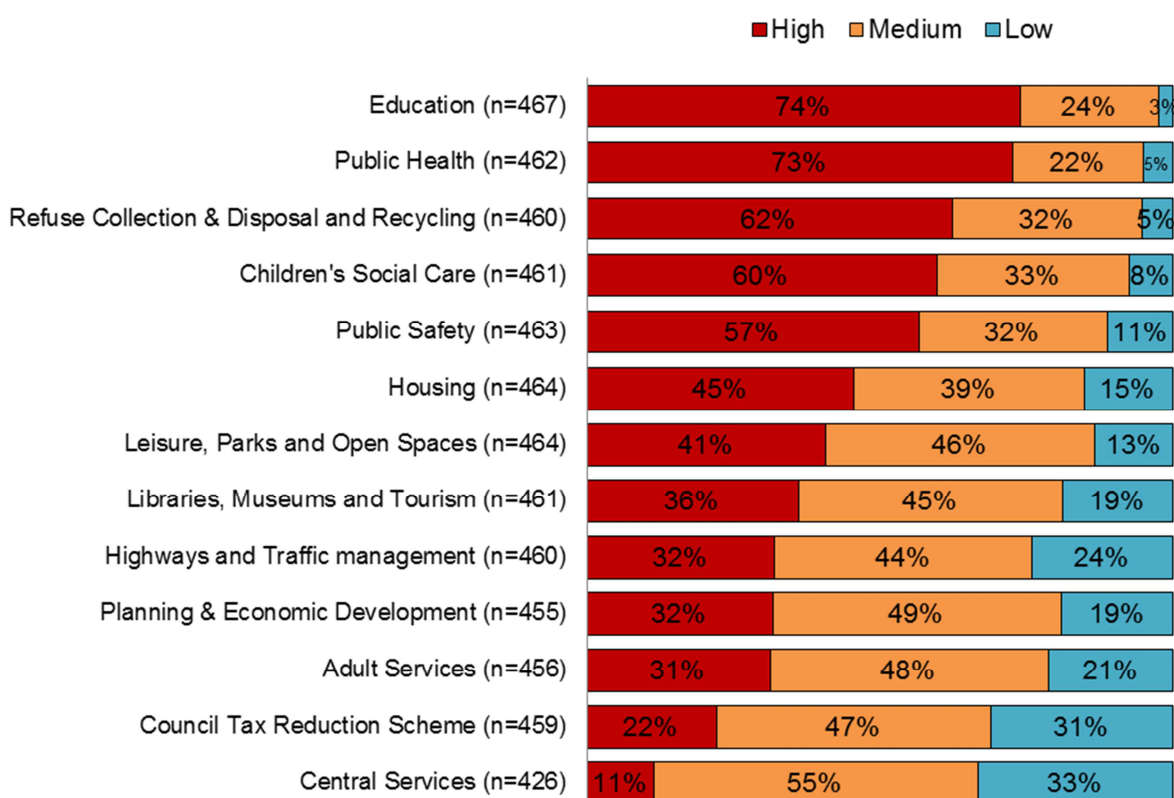
Legend: ■ High ■ Medium ■ Low

Service Area	High	Medium	Low
Public Health (n=470)	65%	25%	10%
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Recycling (n=476)	63%	32%	6%
Public Safety (n=465)	55%	30%	14%
Education (n=469)	50%	18%	32%
Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (n=468)	41%	44%	15%
Children's Social Care (n=464)	30%	24%	46%
Libraries, Museums and Tourism (n=464)	28%	42%	30%
Highways and Traffic Management (n=470)	26%	46%	28%
Housing (n=476)	24%	23%	53%
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (n=469)	23%	28%	49%
Adult Services (n=463)	23%	35%	42%
Planning & Economic Development (n=456)	16%	51%	33%
Central Services (n=427)	9%	50%	41%

Priority rating of each service area: For the city

Legend: ■ High ■ Medium ■ Low

Service Area	High	Medium	Low
Education (n=467)	74%	24%	3%
Public Health (n=462)	73%	22%	5%
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Recycling (n=460)	62%	32%	5%
Children's Social Care (n=461)	60%	33%	8%
Public Safety (n=463)	57%	32%	11%
Housing (n=464)	45%	39%	15%
Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (n=464)	41%	46%	13%
Libraries, Museums and Tourism (n=461)	36%	45%	19%
Highways and Traffic management (n=460)	32%	44%	24%
Planning & Economic Development (n=455)	32%	49%	19%
Adult Services (n=456)	31%	48%	21%
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (n=459)	22%	47%	31%
Central Services (n=426)	11%	55%	33%

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Higher priority areas

Top five (largest proportion rating high priority for the city)

- Education (74% high)
- Public Health (73% high)
- Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling (62% high)
- Children's Social Care (60% high)
- Public Safety (57% high)

- With the exception of Public Health, which wasn't asked about in last year's survey, all service areas have lower priority ratings this year.
- Education was rated the highest priority for the city by 74% of respondents, with just 3% rating it a low priority. For respondents and their families, Education received a lower rating (50% high) but was nonetheless the fourth highest ranked service.
- Public Health had the highest priority rating for respondents and their families (65% high) and was rated even higher for the city as a whole (73% high), although 1% below the top priority of Education.
- Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling received high and very similar priority ratings, regardless of whether respondents were rating it for themselves or the city (63% and 62% respectively).
- Children's Social Care had a high priority rating, especially when rated for the city, with 60% rating it high. Although only 30% rated it high for themselves and their families, it ranked 6th out of the 13 service areas asked about.
- Public Safety, like Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling, was rated very similarly for respondents themselves (55% high) and the city (57% high).

Lower priority areas

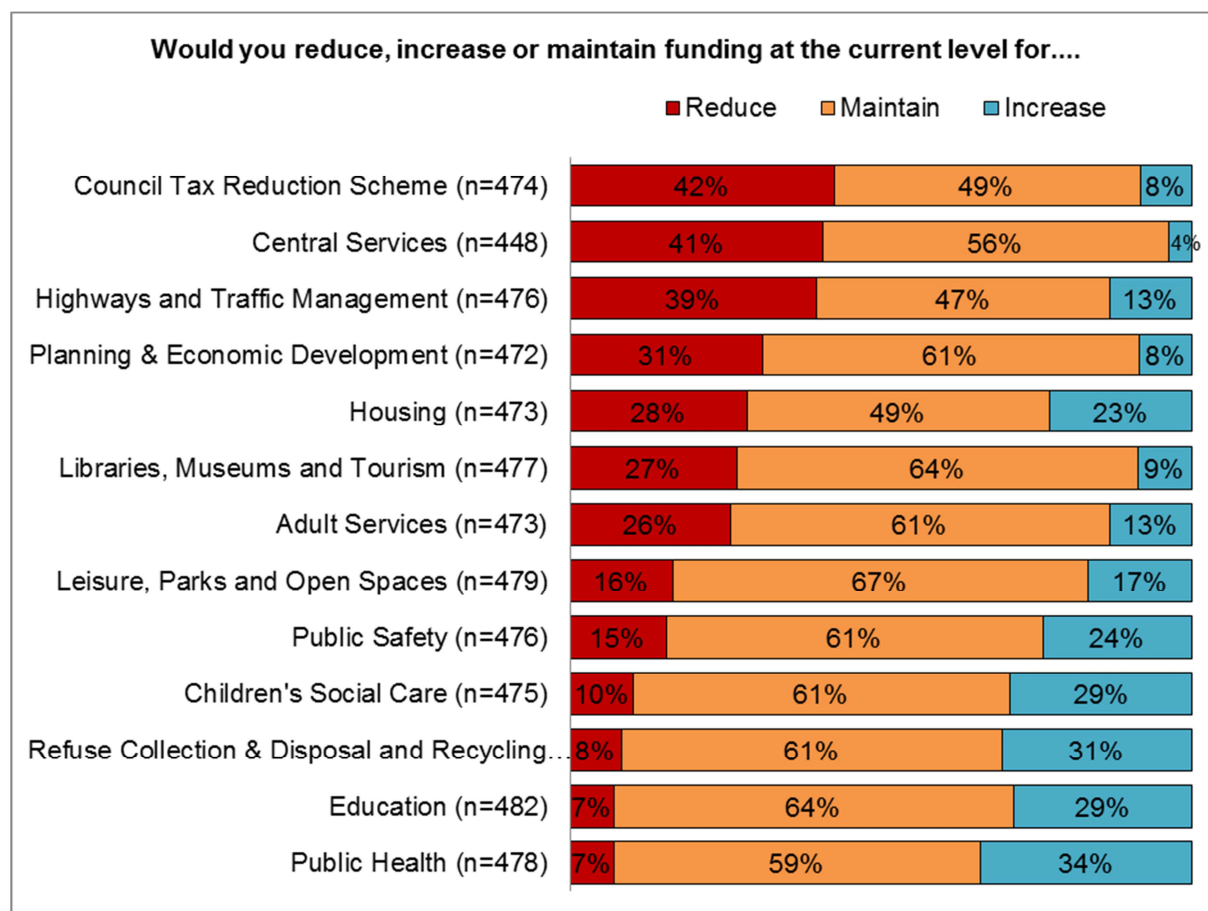Bottom five (largest proportion rating low priority for the city)

- Central Services (33% low)
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (31% low)
- Highways and Traffic Management (24% low)
- Adult Services (21% low)
- Planning & Economic Development (19% low)

- As in previous years, Central Services was the lowest rated area with just 11% rating it a high priority for the city, and only 9% rating it high for themselves. A third of respondents rated it a low priority for the city.
- Although, generally, larger proportions rated service areas as lower priorities this year, just two areas were rated low by around a third; Central Services and Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Despite differences in how respondents rated services for themselves and for the city, the four lowest rated services were the same. These were Central Services, Adult Services and Council Tax Reduction Scheme, all of which were rated low priorities by at least a fifth of respondents.

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- The service area with the largest proportion, 53%, rating it a low priority for themselves and their family was Housing. This compares to 15% rating it low for the city.

Areas with the widest spread of opinion

- Analysis of areas with a spread of opinion shows where views are more polarised, with comparable proportions rating areas high and low. When rating services for themselves there was more variance than when rating services for the city. As mentioned before, this is likely to be as people rate services they currently use, or are more likely to use, as a higher priority.
- The widest spread of opinions when rating services for themselves and their families were Highways and Traffic Management (26% high, 28% low) and Libraries, Museums and Tourism (28% high, 30% low).
- Service areas where views were divided over the priority for the city were Highways and Traffic Management (32% high, 24% low) Adult Services (31% high, 21% low).

Respondents were asked to say whether they would reduce, increase or maintain service area funding at the current level. This year, respondents were more inclined than last year to say funding should be reduced, and less inclined to say it should be increased, across all service areas (except Public Health which was not asked about last year). Results are shown below.

Would you reduce, increase or maintain funding at the current level for....

■ Reduce　■ Maintain　■ Increase

Service Area	Reduce	Maintain	Increase
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (n=474)	42%	49%	8%
Central Services (n=448)	41%	56%	4%
Highways and Traffic Management (n=476)	39%	47%	13%
Planning & Economic Development (n=472)	31%	61%	8%
Housing (n=473)	28%	49%	23%
Libraries, Museums and Tourism (n=477)	27%	64%	9%
Adult Services (n=473)	26%	61%	13%
Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (n=479)	16%	67%	17%
Public Safety (n=476)	15%	61%	24%
Children's Social Care (n=475)	10%	61%	29%
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Recycling…	8%	61%	31%
Education (n=482)	7%	64%	29%
Public Health (n=478)	7%	59%	34%

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Reduce funding

Respondents generally didn't want funding (spending) reduced with the majority opting to either maintain or increase funding for all areas.

That said, 42% would reduce funding for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, 41% would reduce funding for Central Services and 39% would reduce it for Highways and Traffic Management.

Increase funding

The only service area where at least a third wanted funding (spending) increased was Public Health, with 34% saying they would increase funding and just 7% saying they would reduce it. A comparatively large proportion, 31%, would increase funding for Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling. 29% each said they would increase funding for Education and Children's Social Care.

Maintain funding

With the exception of 3 service areas (Housing, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Highways and Traffic Management) over half of respondents thought funding should be maintained at the current level. Service areas with the highest proportions of respondents thinking funding should be maintained were Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (67%), Education (64%) and Libraries, Museums and Tourism (64%).

Respondents were then asked if they felt Council Tax should ever rise to reduce pressure on the council's finances.

Do you think Council Tax should rise?
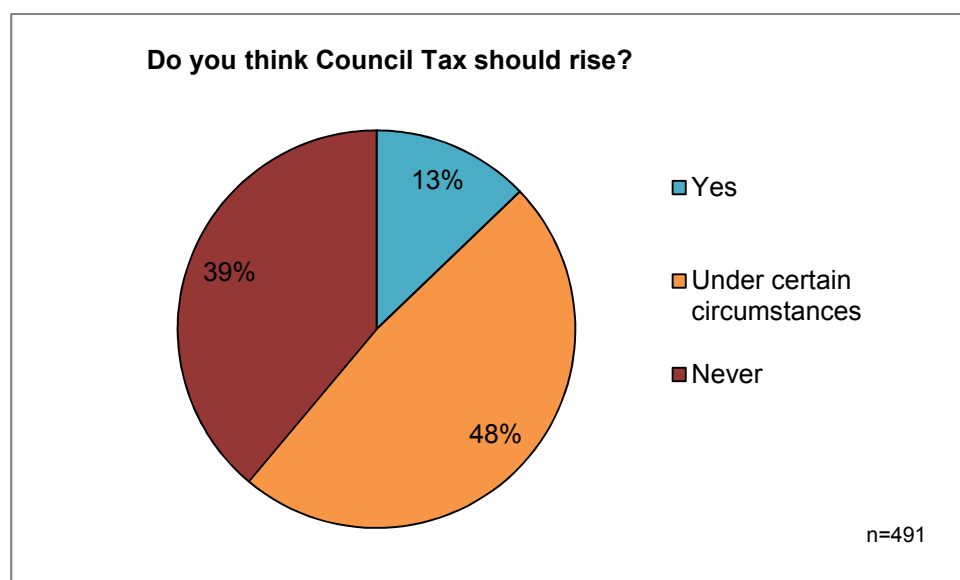
13% of the sample felt that Council Tax should rise, a notably larger proportion than the 6% saying it should in response to last year's survey. However, 39% thought that it should never rise whilst 48% felt that an increase in Council Tax could be justified in certain circumstances; both of these results are within +/- 5% of last year's results.

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Analysis of comments made by respondents who answered that Council Tax could rise "under certain circumstances" has been conducted to establish what those circumstances are. It shows there are 4 main positions:

- If there's clear evidence of the money being put to "good use" (22%[1])
- If the rise is in line with cost of living increases/inflation (11%)
- If the system is progressive[2] (9%)
- If the rise is in order to maintain essential services (8%)

Circumstances under which a rise in Council Tax would be acceptable

Clear evidence of good use	22%
To keep in line with rise in cost of living/inflation	11%
Progressive taxation	9%
Maintain essential services	8%

n=211
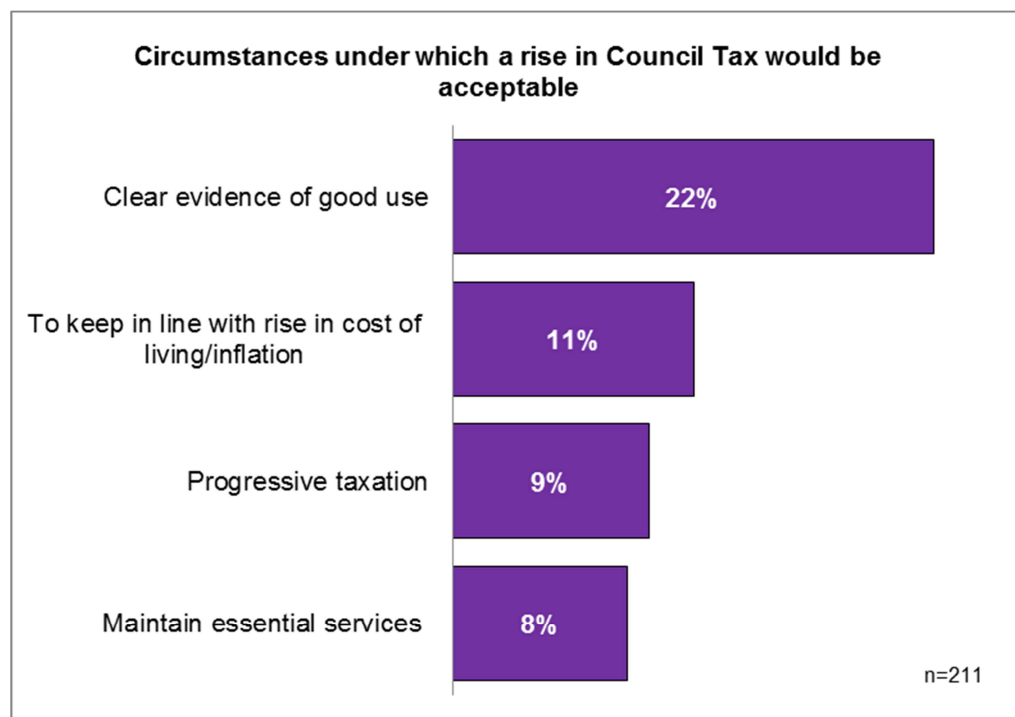
Some respondents specified particular services that money raised from any rise in Council Tax should be used to fund. In order of mentions these were:

- Public Health (6%)
- Waste and recycling (5%)
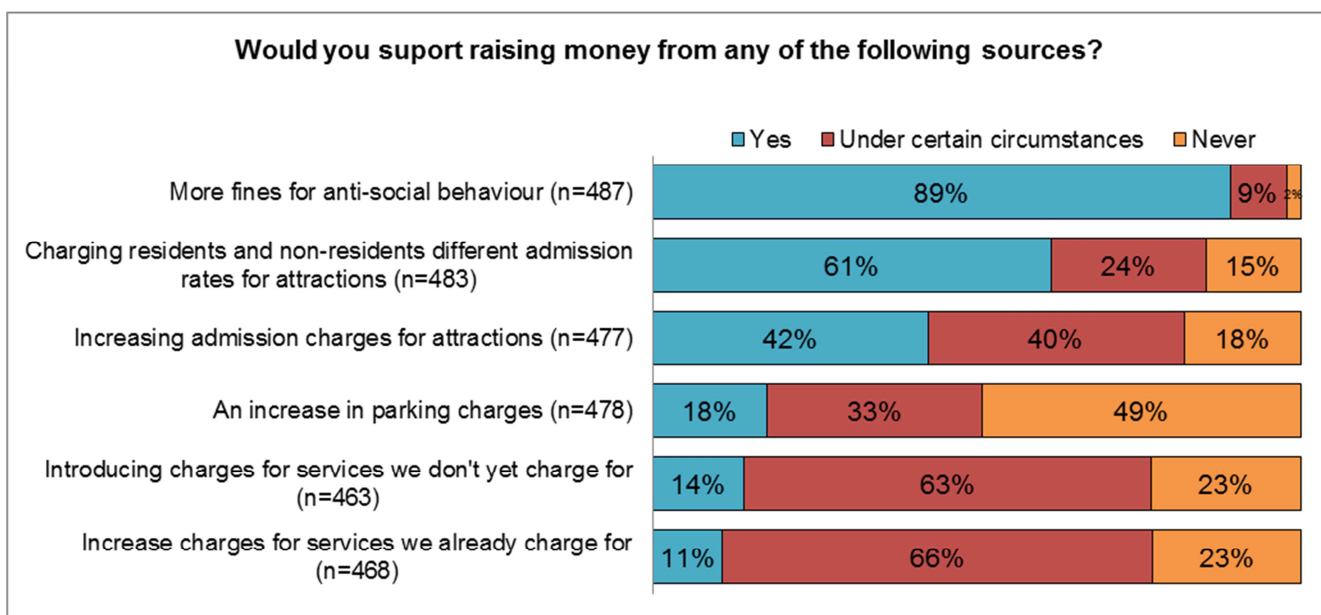- Social care (5%)
- Schools and Education (4%)

4% of respondents would support a rise in Council Tax to finance the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

There was a wide range of other circumstances under which a rise in Council Tax would be acceptable, but, with the exception of those noted above, none were mentioned ten times or more.

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[1] Proportion calculated as the number of mentions of an issue as a percentage of respondents answering the question "under certain circumstances".

[2] The term "progressive" was used by some respondents in their answers to different questions, and implied by many more. It has been used in this analysis to indicate views which essentially implied 'taxing those with greater wealth' or basing the system on ability to pay.

8

Respondents were then asked if they would support raising money from any of 6 different sources. Two new sources were asked about in this year's survey: "charging residents and non-residents different admission rates for attractions" and "introducing charges for services we don't yet charge for", and the wording of one option changed from "increasing admission charges for services" to "increasing charges for services we already charge for".

Would you suport raising money from any of the following sources?

Legend: ■ Yes   ■ Under certain circumstances   ■ Never

Source	Yes	Under certain circumstances	Never
More fines for anti-social behaviour (n=487)	89%	9%	2%
Charging residents and non-residents different admission rates for attractions (n=483)	61%	24%	15%
Increasing admission charges for attractions (n=477)	42%	40%	18%
An increase in parking charges (n=478)	18%	33%	49%
Introducing charges for services we don't yet charge for (n=463)	14%	63%	23%
Increase charges for services we already charge for (n=468)	11%	66%	23%

As in previous years, there was clear support for easing pressure on the council's finances through more fines for antisocial behaviour such as litter, dog fouling and noise, with 89% of the sample saying they would support raising money via such fines and only 2% saying this should never happen.
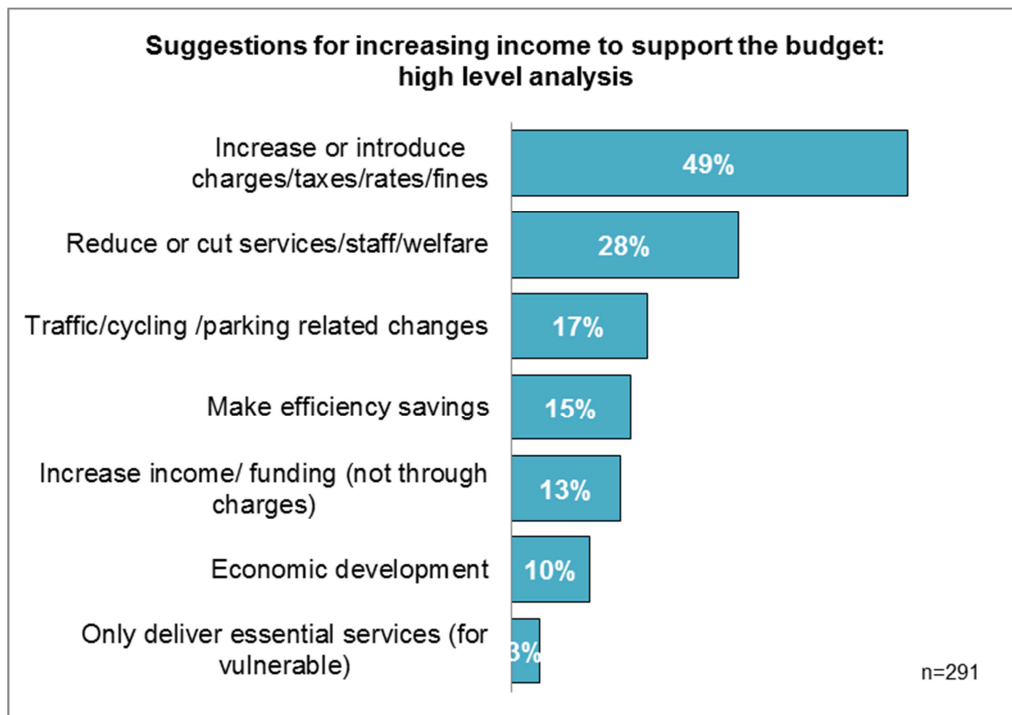
The majority, 61%, also favoured charging residents and non-residents different rates for attractions.

This year there was more of an appetite to increase charges for attractions with 42% in favour. Last year respondents were divided as to whether increasing admission charges for attractions should be done, with similar proportions in favour (26%) as opposed (27%).

49% of respondents were opposed to increasing revenue through raising parking charges, a slightly lower proportion than last year (55%).

The majority (around two thirds in each case) said that only under certain circumstances would they favour the introduction of charges for services we don't yet charge for and increasing charges for services we already charge for.

Respondents' other suggestions for increasing income to support the budget were wide ranging. Analysis has therefore been undertaken at two levels; at a high level, with suggestions grouped into broad themes or categories, and then at a more granular level, with counts of mentions of single issues.

Suggestions for increasing income to support the budget: high level analysis

Category	%
Increase or introduce charges/taxes/rates/fines	49%
Reduce or cut services/staff/welfare	28%
Traffic/cycling /parking related changes	17%
Make efficiency savings	15%
Increase income/ funding (not through charges)	13%
Economic development	10%
Only deliver essential services (for vulnerable)	3%

n=291

Analysis at a high level shows increasing, or introducing charges, taxes, rates and fines was the most common type of suggestion from residents for raising income, with 49% of those responding to the question commenting to this effect. This compares against 28% who suggested making cut-backs and reductions, although note that many respondents made suggestions that fit into more than one category, so some have suggested raising charges, as well as reducing services. [3]

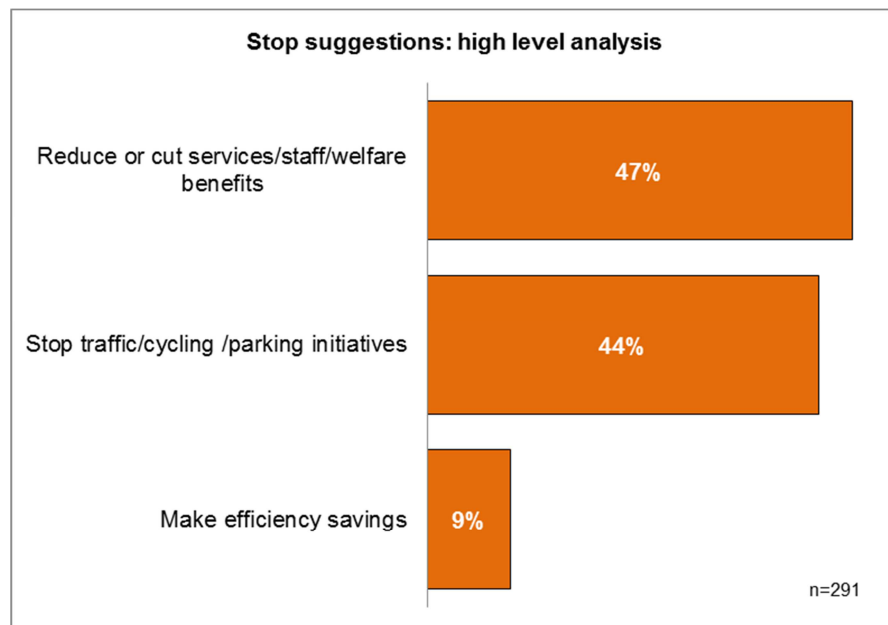The chart below shows only those suggestions that were mentioned at least ten times.

Suggestions for increasing income to support the budget: detailed analysis

Category	%
Improve efficiency /reduce bureaucracy	11%
Fines for ASB	7%
Encourage visitors/tourists	5%
Congestion charge	4%
Progressive taxation	4%
Reduce managers' salaries	4%
Enforce parking /cycling /driving restrictions with fines	3%
Sell council assets	3%
Stop spending on roads/traffic developments	3%
Tourist Tax	3%
Misc	21%

n=291

The most common single issue mentioned was to improve efficiency, cut out waste and bureaucracy and streamline services.
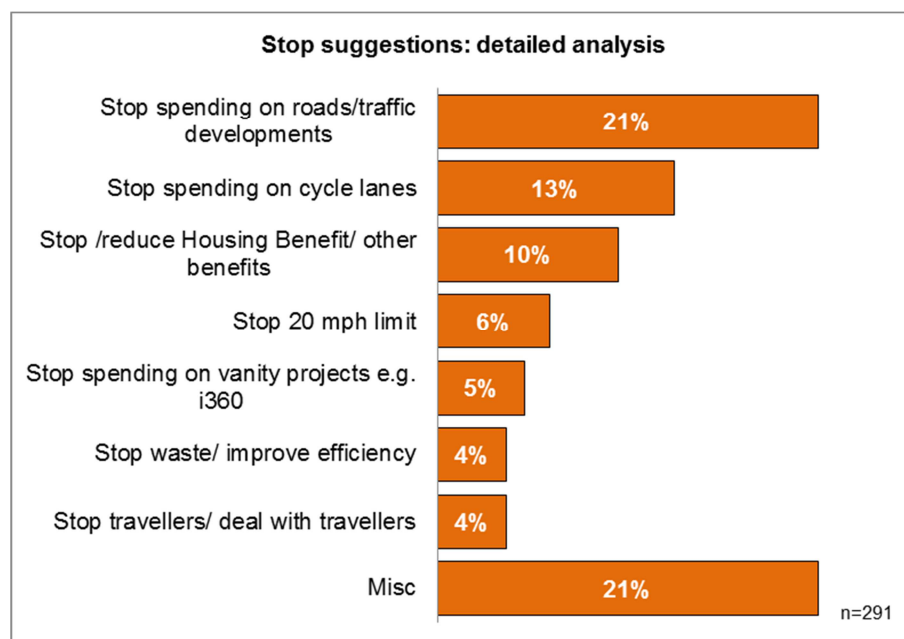
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[3] Where this is the case responses are multi-coded.

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Fines for anti-social behaviour were another popular suggestion, regarded as a win-win for the city. Some respondents singled out different types of ASB they would charge for, such as spitting and littering.

Respondents were asked, in the financial context, what they would stop doing, or do less of. Again, the charts below show only those issues mentioned at least ten times.

Stop suggestions: high level analysis

Category	Percentage
Reduce or cut services/staff/welfare benefits	47%
Stop traffic/cycling /parking initiatives	44%
Make efficiency savings	9%

n=291

Unsurprisingly, due to question wording, comments clustered around reducing or cutting services, staff and benefits. Stopping traffic, cycling and parking initiatives was a close second with 44% suggesting making fewer changes to transport infrastructure.

Stop suggestions: detailed analysis

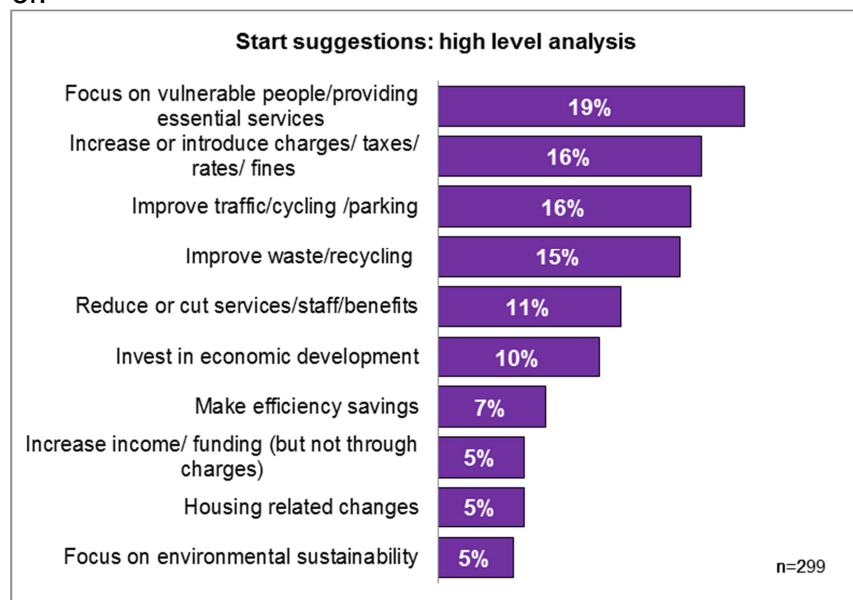| Category	Percentage
Stop spending on roads/traffic developments	21%
Stop spending on cycle lanes	13%
Stop /reduce Housing Benefit/ other benefits	10%
Stop 20 mph limit	6%
Stop spending on vanity projects e.g. i360	5%
Stop waste/ improve efficiency	4%
Stop travellers/ deal with travellers	4%
Misc	21%

n=291

Looking in more detail at what respondents felt could be stopped shows alterations to roads (including bus lanes) was the most frequently mentioned single issue, with 21% of responses referring to them.

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A further 13% referred specifically to spend on cycling lanes that they would stop to help close the budget gap.
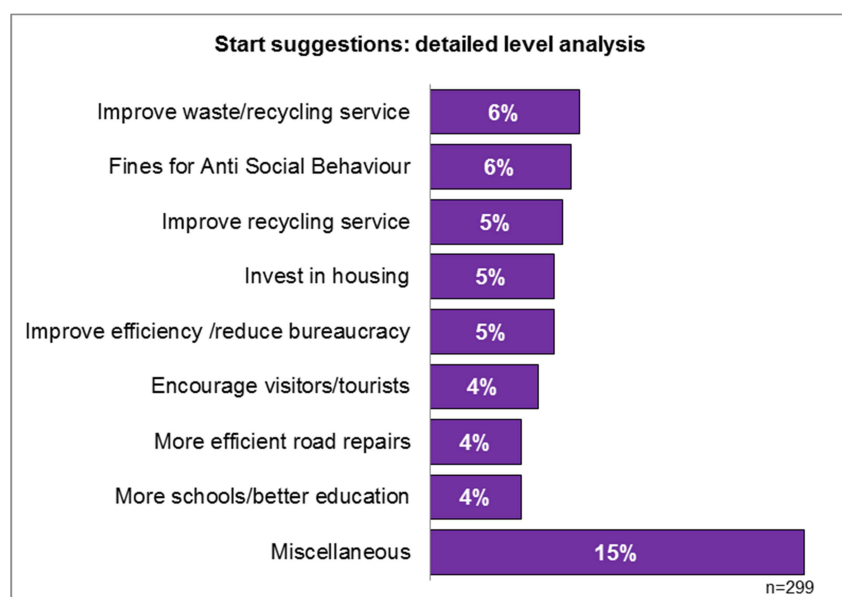
Reducing benefits, particularly Housing Benefit, was mentioned by 10%, and, in some cases, sentiments around this suggestion were expressed strongly.

The next question asked respondents what they would start doing, or do more of.

Start suggestions: high level analysis

Suggestion	Percentage
Focus on vulnerable people/providing essential services	19%
Increase or introduce charges/ taxes/ rates/ fines	16%
Improve traffic/cycling /parking	16%
Improve waste/recycling	15%
Reduce or cut services/staff/benefits	11%
Invest in economic development	10%
Make efficiency savings	7%
Increase income/ funding (but not through charges)	5%
Housing related changes	5%
Focus on environmental sustainability	5%

n=299

19% of respondents felt that the council should focus its efforts on delivering (only) essential services and prioritising vulnerable residents. Respondents had different views about what those essential services were and who the most vulnerable residents are, but there was general consensus that social care and children's services, including education, should be prioritised.
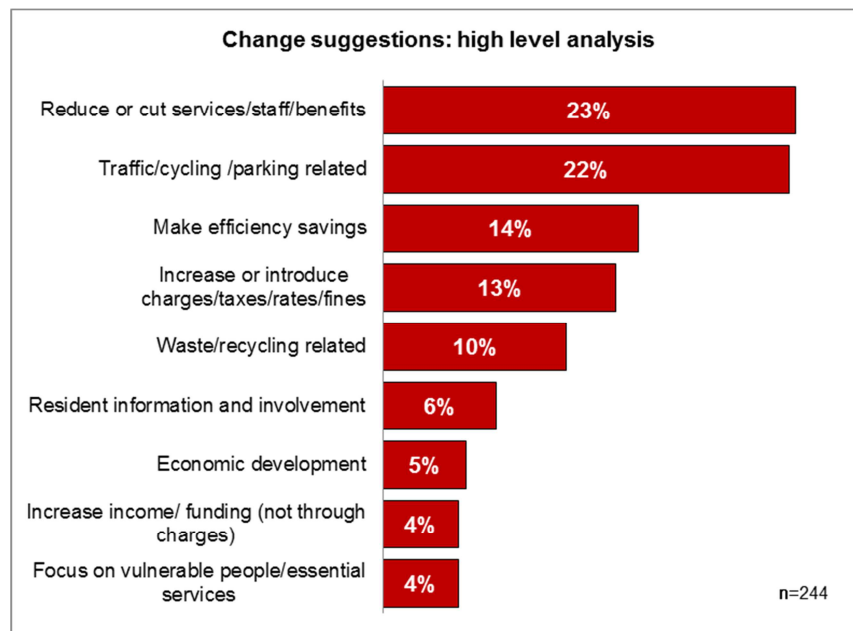
16% each said that, to help close the budget gap, they would introduce or increase charges/taxes or improve traffic/cycling/parking. 15% mentioned improving waste and recycling collections.

Start suggestions: detailed level analysis

Suggestion	Percentage
Improve waste/recycling service	6%
Fines for Anti Social Behaviour	6%
Improve recycling service	5%
Invest in housing	5%
Improve efficiency /reduce bureaucracy	5%
Encourage visitors/tourists	4%
More efficient road repairs	4%
More schools/better education	4%
Miscellaneous	15%

n=299

Looking in more detail at suggestions reveals that, whereas 6% of respondents referred to improving the waste/recycling service, a further 5%
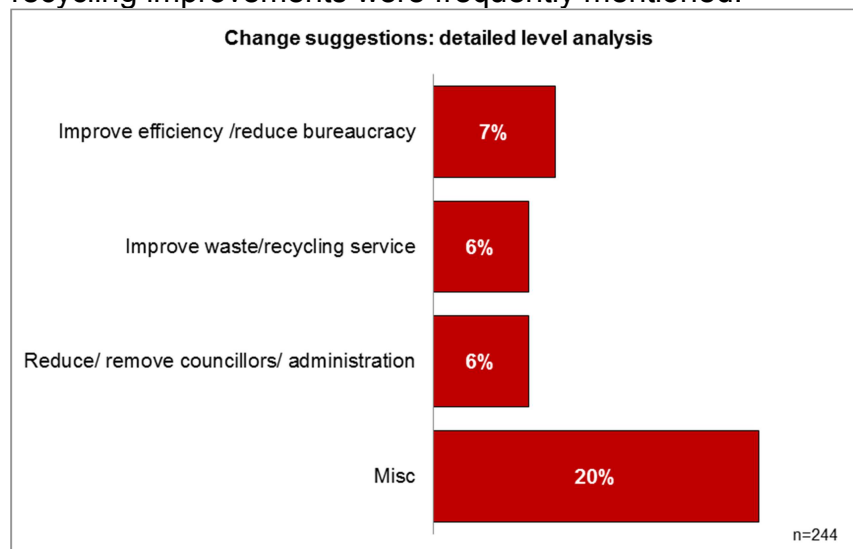
specifically singled out improvements to recycling services as something they would start to focus on.

Finally, respondents were asked what they would change or do differently. Most respondents chose to recap on their previous answers here.

Change suggestions: high level analysis

Category	Percentage
Reduce or cut services/staff/benefits	23%
Traffic/cycling /parking related	22%
Make efficiency savings	14%
Increase or introduce charges/taxes/rates/fines	13%
Waste/recycling related	10%
Resident information and involvement	6%
Economic development	5%
Increase income/ funding (not through charges)	4%
Focus on vulnerable people/essential services	4%

n=244

Reducing or cutting services/staff/benefits was the top suggestion for change mentioned by 23%; 13% felt increasing or introducing charges should be part of the funding gap solution. This suggests that, on balance, respondents would favour cutbacks rather than paying more to maintain the status quo.[4]

Again, traffic, cycling and parking related changes and waste collection and recycling improvements were frequently mentioned.

Change suggestions: detailed level analysis

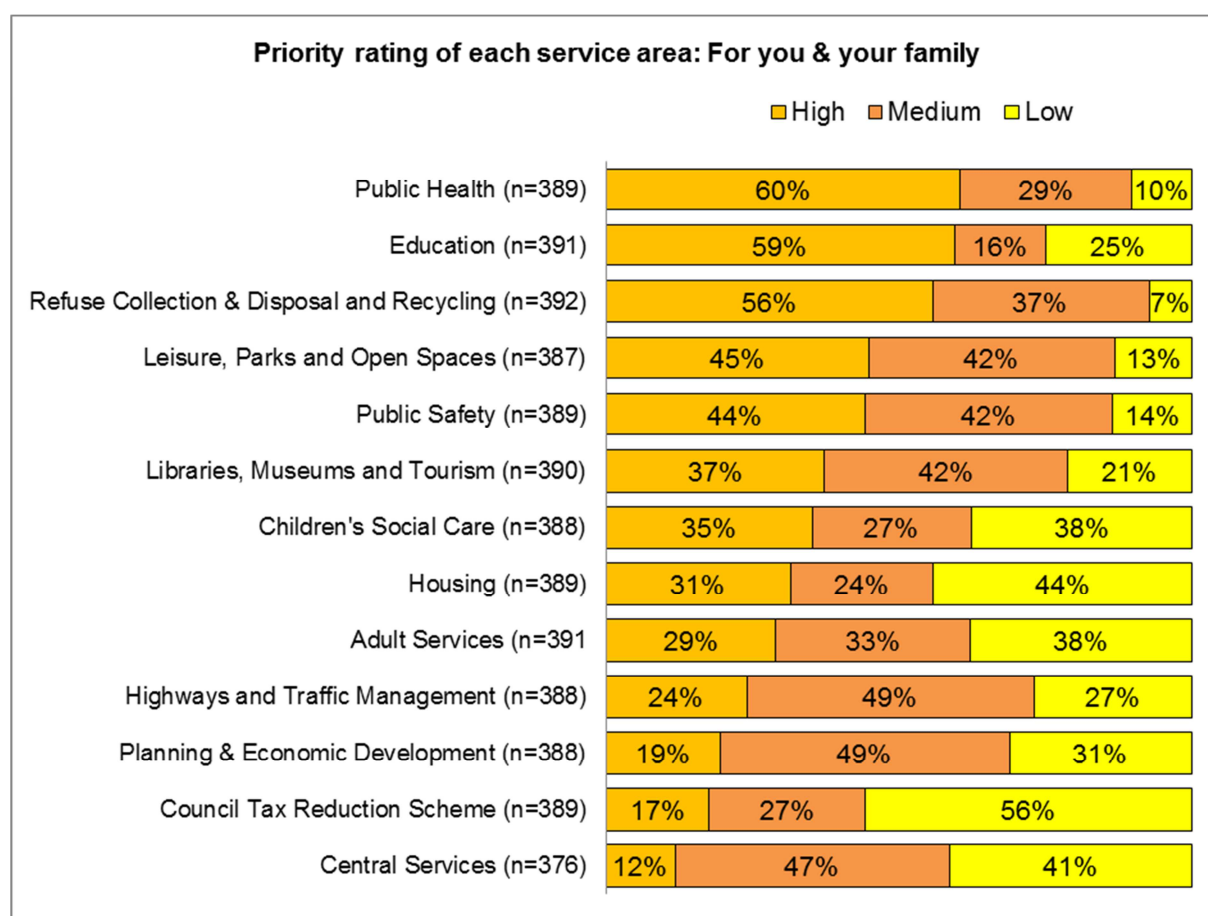| Category	Percentage
Improve efficiency /reduce bureaucracy	7%
Improve waste/recycling service	6%
Reduce/ remove councillors/ administration	6%
Misc	20%

n=244

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[4] This finding appears to contradict respondents' earlier answers around suggestions to increase income, whereby increasing or introducing charges was favoured over cutbacks. However, this is likely to be due to question wording; the former question asked about increasing income specifically, and cutbacks would not increase income, although they would effectively increase the amount of money available to divert to where it was needed.

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There was a particularly wide range of single issues mentioned in response to this question, and, as in previous charts, the chart above shows only those issues mentioned by at least ten respondents.

The biggest single issue respondents would change, mentioned by 7%, was improving efficiency within the council.
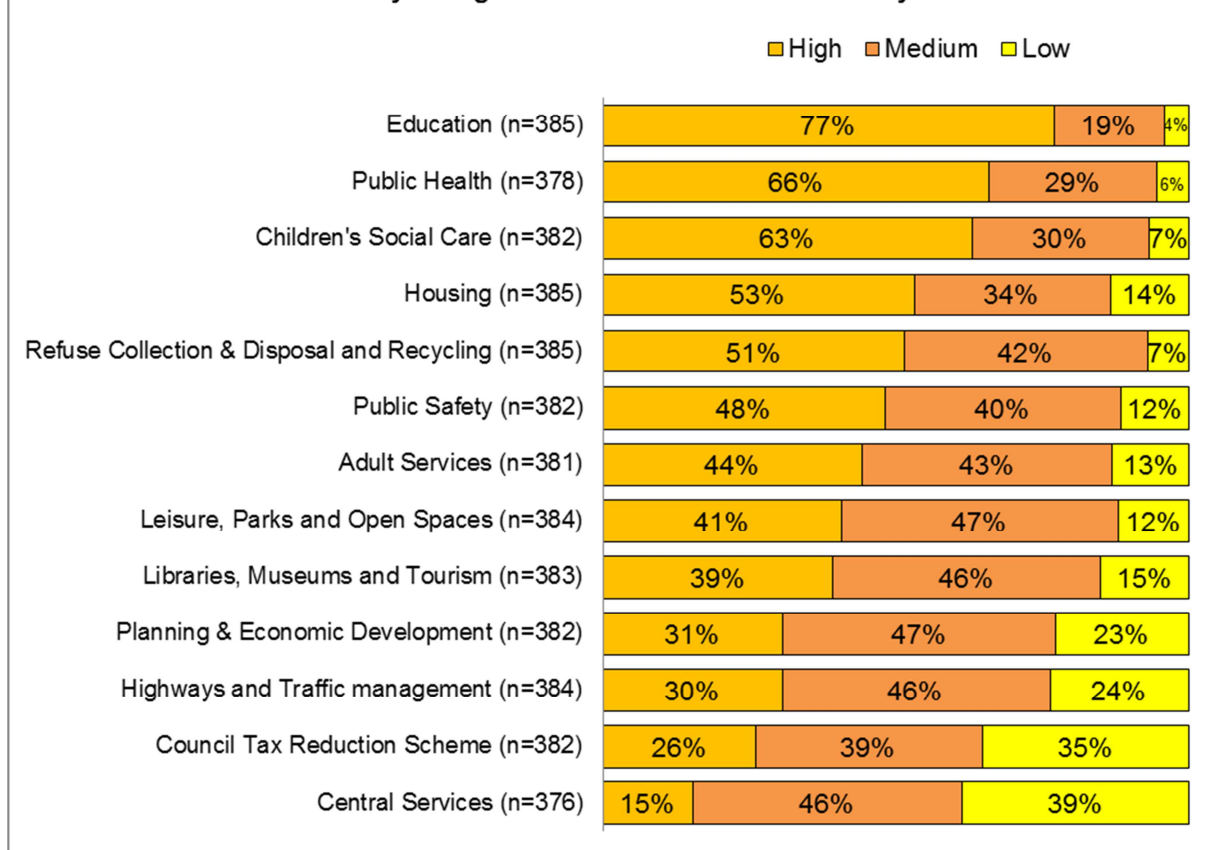
B) <u>Results from self-selecting[5] sample (405 responses): Paper and online survey</u>

The charts that follow show the analysis of self-selecting survey responses to the same survey that the random sample completed. Commentary is only made to highlight similarities and differences between this self-selecting sample's responses and the random sample's responses.

Priority rating of each service area: For you & your family

High ■ Medium □ Low

Service area	High	Medium	Low
Public Health (n=389)	60%	29%	10%
Education (n=391)	59%	16%	25%
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Recycling (n=392)	56%	37%	7%
Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (n=387)	45%	42%	13%
Public Safety (n=389)	44%	42%	14%
Libraries, Museums and Tourism (n=390)	37%	42%	21%
Children's Social Care (n=388)	35%	27%	38%
Housing (n=389)	31%	24%	44%
Adult Services (n=391	29%	33%	38%
Highways and Traffic Management (n=388)	24%	49%	27%
Planning & Economic Development (n=388)	19%	49%	31%
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (n=389)	17%	27%	56%
Central Services (n=376)	12%	47%	41%

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[5] Generally, self-selecting respondents tend to differ from the general population by having 'stronger' opinions. This causes self-selection bias which is not present in a random sample.

Priority rating of each service area: For the city

Legend: ■ High ■ Medium □ Low

Service Area	High	Medium	Low
Education (n=385)	77%	19%	4%
Public Health (n=378)	66%	29%	6%
Children's Social Care (n=382)	63%	30%	7%
Housing (n=385)	53%	34%	14%
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Recycling (n=385)	51%	42%	7%
Public Safety (n=382)	48%	40%	12%
Adult Services (n=381)	44%	43%	13%
Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (n=384)	41%	47%	12%
Libraries, Museums and Tourism (n=383)	39%	46%	15%
Planning & Economic Development (n=382)	31%	47%	23%
Highways and Traffic management (n=384)	30%	46%	24%
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (n=382)	26%	39%	35%
Central Services (n=376)	15%	46%	39%

Higher priority areas

Top five (largest proportion rating high priority for the city)

- Education (77% high)
- Public Health (66% high)
- Children's Social Care (63% high)
- Housing (53% high)
- Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling (51% high)

Four of the top five priorities of self-selecting respondents were the same as those of the random sample and the top two are the same. Housing was not in the top five of the random sample (it was 6th with 45% rating it high), whereas Public Safety was 57% high.
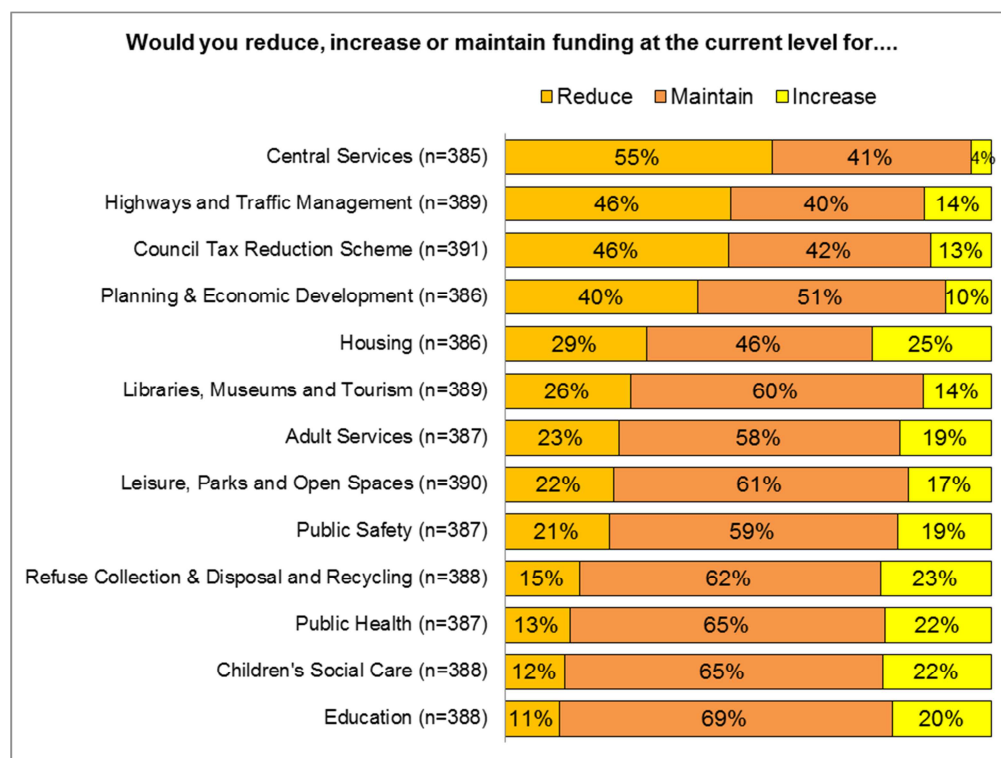
Lower priority areas

Bottom five (largest proportion rating low priority for the city)

- Central Services (39% low)
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (35% low)
- Highways and Traffic Management (24% low)
- Planning & Economic Development (23% low)
- Libraries, Museums and Tourism (15% low)

15

Again, four of the bottom five priorities for this self-selecting sample were the same as for the random sample. The exception is Libraries, Museums and Tourism which was in this sample's lowest five priorities, whereas Adult Services was in the random sample's bottom five (21% low).

Respondents were asked to say whether they would reduce, increase or maintain service area funding at the current level.
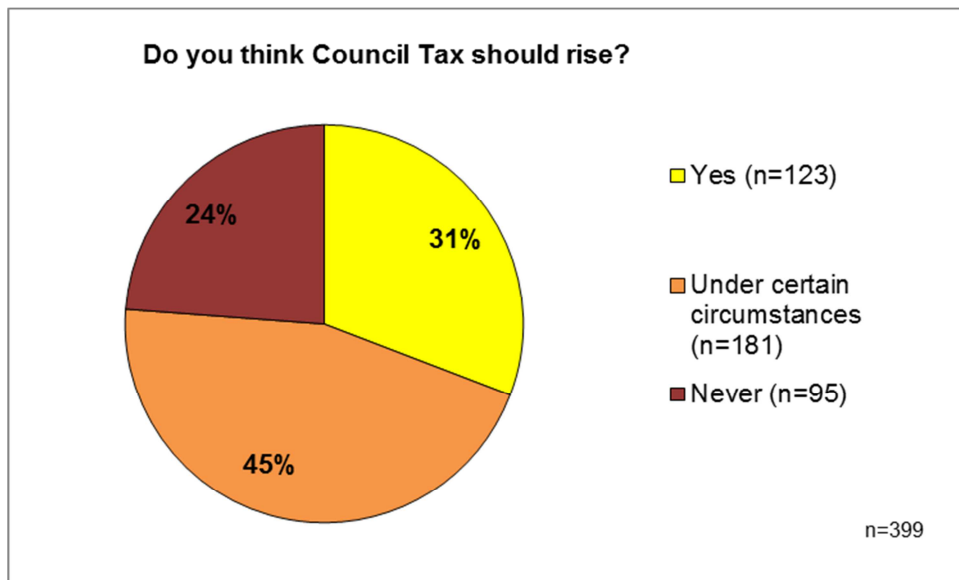
Would you reduce, increase or maintain funding at the current level for....

□ Reduce   ■ Maintain   □ Increase

Service area	Reduce	Maintain	Increase
Central Services (n=385)	55%	41%	4%
Highways and Traffic Management (n=389)	46%	40%	14%
Council Tax Reduction Scheme (n=391)	46%	42%	13%
Planning & Economic Development (n=386)	40%	51%	10%
Housing (n=386)	29%	46%	25%
Libraries, Museums and Tourism (n=389)	26%	60%	14%
Adult Services (n=387)	23%	58%	19%
Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces (n=390)	22%	61%	17%
Public Safety (n=387)	21%	59%	19%
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Recycling (n=388)	15%	62%	23%
Public Health (n=387)	13%	65%	22%
Children's Social Care (n=388)	12%	65%	22%
Education (n=388)	11%	69%	20%

Reduce funding

Self-selecting respondents were notably more likely to think funding for Central Services should be reduced (55% compared to 41% of the random sample) as well as funding for Planning & Economic Development (40% compared to 31%) and Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling (15% compared to 8%).

Increase funding

Self-selecting respondents were more likely to think that funding for Adult Services should be increased (19% increase compared to 13%) as well as funding for Libraries, Museums and Tourism (14% compared to 9%).

Respondents were then asked if they felt Council Tax should ever rise to reduce pressure on the council's finances.

16

Do you think Council Tax should rise?

- Yes (n=123)
- Under certain circumstances (n=181)
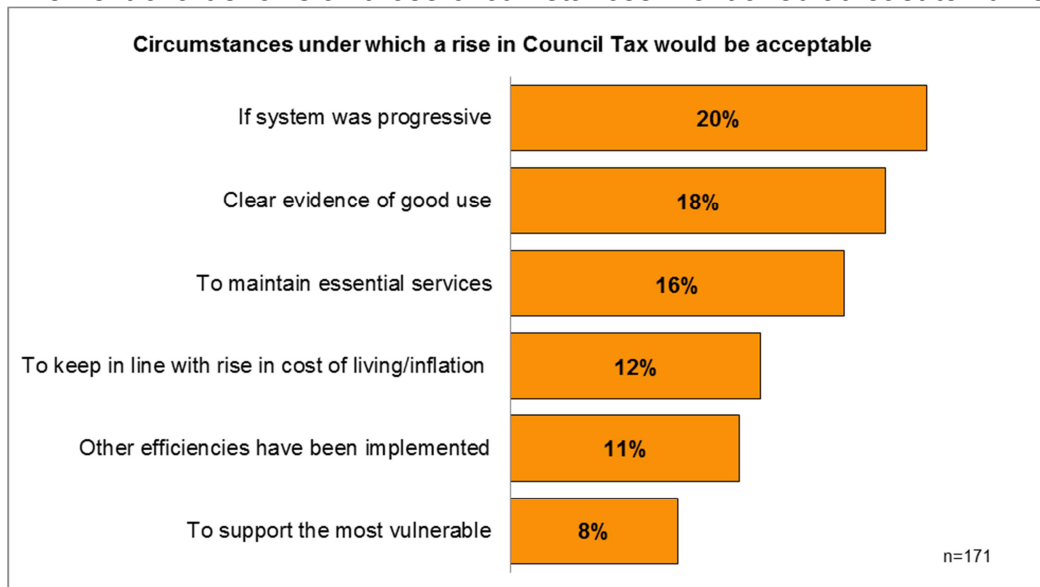- Never (n=95)

24% 31% 45%

n=399

The self-selecting sample was more supportive of a rise in Council Tax. Whereas just 13% of the random sample felt that Council Tax should rise, 31% of the self-selecting sample felt it should.   A lower proportion than the random sample felt it should never rise (24% compared to 39%).

Analysis of comments made by respondents who answered that Council Tax could rise "under certain circumstances" is presented below.

Self-selecting respondents' 4 main circumstances under which a rise would be acceptable are the same as the random samples, although ranked in a different order. The system being progressive was this sample's primary concern, mentioned by 20% of this sample, compared to 10% of the random sample. Maintaining essential services was also more frequently mentioned by this sample (16%, compared to 9% of the random sample).

The next chart shows all those circumstances mentioned at least ten times.

Circumstances under which a rise in Council Tax would be acceptable

If system was progressive	20%
Clear evidence of good use	18%
To maintain essential services	16%
To keep in line with rise in cost of living/inflation	12%
Other efficiencies have been implemented	11%
To support the most vulnerable	8%

n=171

3% of self-selecting respondents would support a rise in Council Tax to finance the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

17

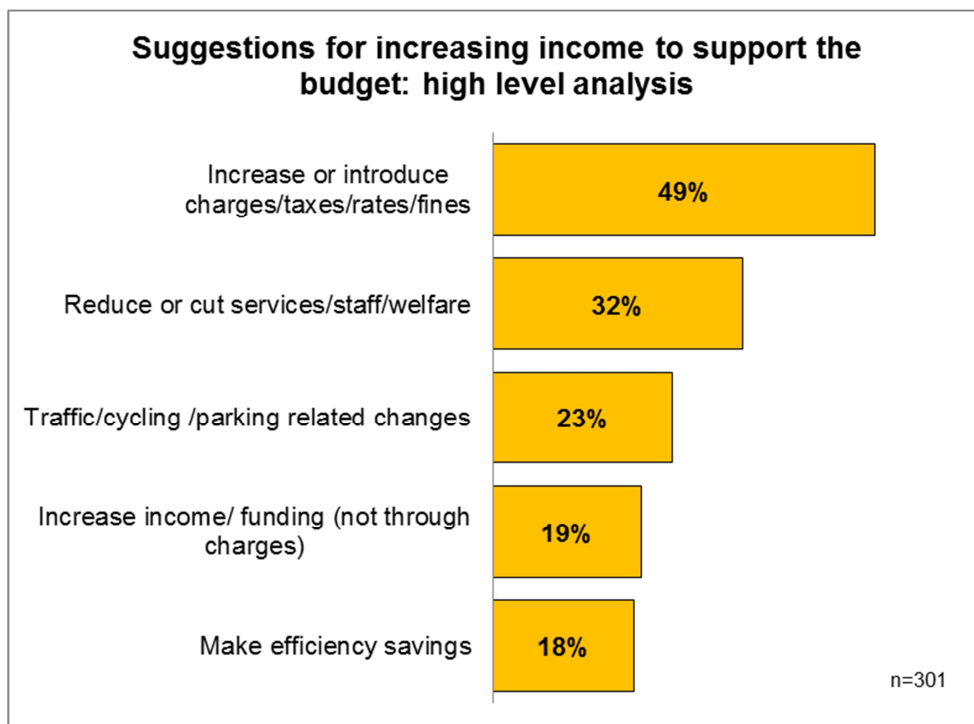Respondents were then asked if they would support raising money from any of 6 different sources.

Would you suport raising money from any of the following sources?

Legend: ■ Yes ■ Under certain circumstances ■ Never

Source	Yes	Under certain circumstances	Never
More fines for anti-social behaviour (n=397)	85%	12%	3%
Charging residents and non-residents different admission rates for attractions (n=395)	69%	20%	10%
Increasing admission charges for attractions (n=390)	47%	42%	11%
An increase in parking charges (n=394)	30%	31%	39%
Introducing charges for services we don't yet charge for (n=388)	24%	59%	18%
Increase charges for services we already charge for (n=387)	24%	62%	14%

Self-selecting respondents were generally more likely to be in favour of raising money from the potential sources asked about in the survey and less likely to say they should "never" be exploited.

This sample was notably more likely to be in favour of increasing charges for services the council already charges for (24% in favour compared to 11% of the random sample), increasing parking charges (30% in favour compared to 18% of the random sample) and introducing charges for services the council doesn't yet charge for (24% compared to 14%).

This sample's suggestions for increasing income to support the budget were more varied, wide ranging and often quite detailed. Therefore, mirroring the analysis approach adopted for the random sample, suggestions have been analysed at two levels; at a high level, with suggestions grouped into broad categories, and at a more granular level of mentions of single issues.

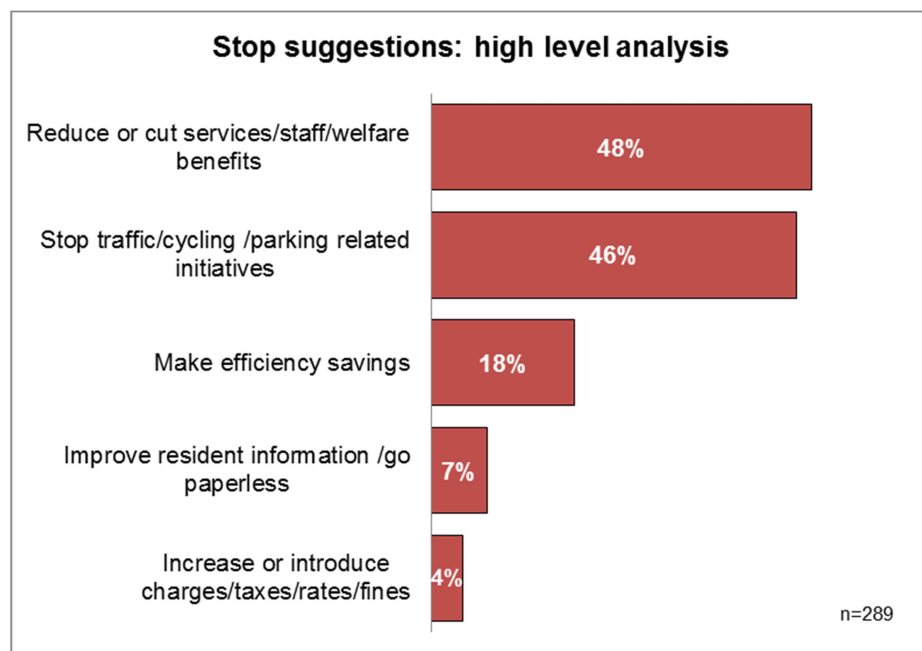Only the top five issues are charted from this point on as so many issues were raised.

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Suggestions for increasing income to support the budget: high level analysis

Category	Percentage
Increase or introduce charges/taxes/rates/fines	49%
Reduce or cut services/staff/welfare	32%
Traffic/cycling /parking related changes	23%
Increase income/ funding (not through charges)	19%
Make efficiency savings	18%

n=301

The top five high level issues for both the self-selecting and random sample are the same, although the bottom two issues were ranked in reverse order.

The next chart shows more detailed analysis.

Suggestions for increasing income to support the budget: detailed analysis

Category	Percentage
Improve efficiency /reduce bureaucracy	10%
Fines for ASB	8%
Reduce managers / their salaries	6%
Charge for services	6%
More entrepreunerial/commercial approach e.g. sell sponsorship	6%
Miscellaneous	14%

n=301
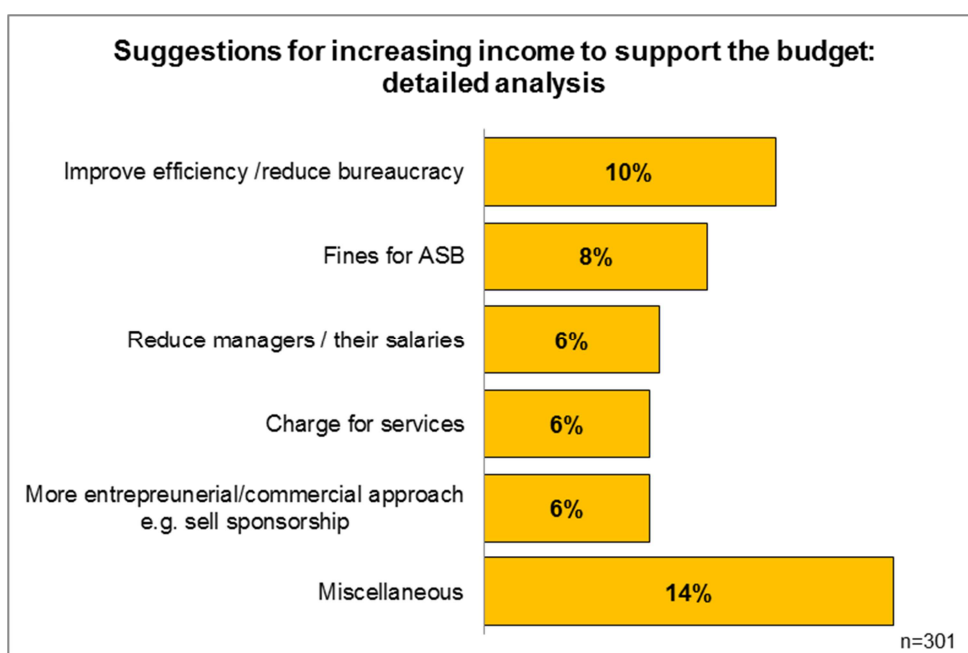
The top two suggestions for both samples are the same. The self-selecting sample was slightly more likely to suggest reducing council managers or their salaries, charging for services and adopting a more entrepreneurial approach. Note that the category of charge for services encompassed a wide range of opinion, with, for example, some in favour of small charges for all services, sometimes on a means-tested basis, and others only in favour of charges for very specific issues like library use.

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The charts below show what the self-selecting sample said they would stop doing, or do less of, to address the budget gap.

Stop suggestions: high level analysis

Category	%
Reduce or cut services/staff/welfare benefits	48%
Stop traffic/cycling /parking related initiatives	46%
Make efficiency savings	18%
Improve resident information /go paperless	7%
Increase or introduce charges/taxes/rates/fines	4%

n=289

The top three suggestions were the same across the different samples. The self-selecting sample was more likely to favour exploiting efficiencies and reducing waste than the random sample (18% compared to 9%).

Stop suggestions: detailed analysis

Category	%
Stop spending on roads/traffic developments	20%
Stop 20 mph limit	10%
Stop spending on cycle lanes	9%
Stop spending on vanity projects (i360 and 20 mph)	8%
Stop /reduce Housing Benefit/ other benefits	7%
Miscellaneous	13%

n=289
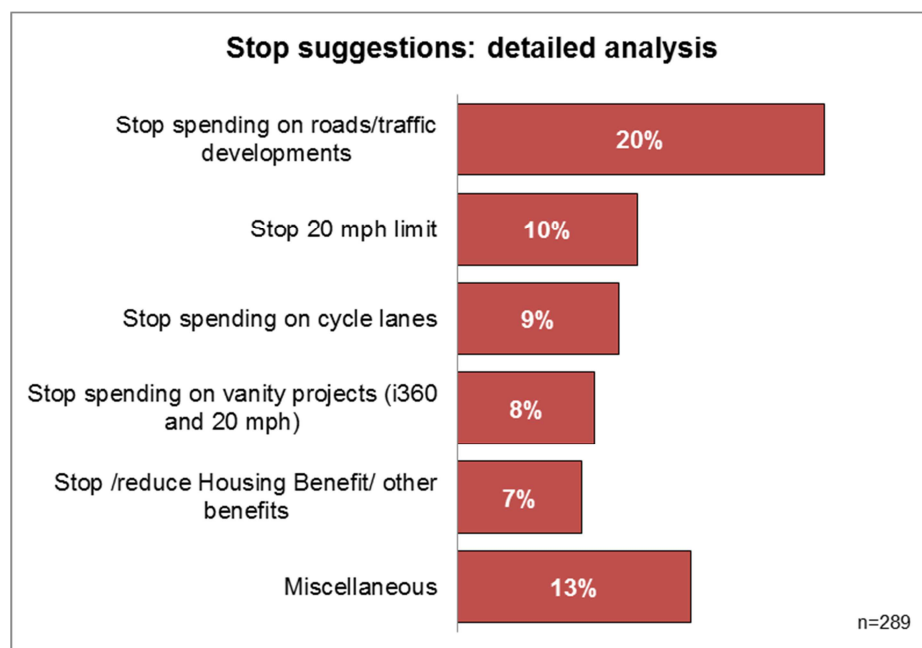
The top five single suggestions to 'stop' were the same across both samples, although in a slightly different order, with the self-selecting sample more likely to suggest stopping the 20 mph limit and associated spend (10% compared to 6%), more likely to suggest stopping spend on what they describe as "vanity" projects (8% compared to 5%) and less likely to suggest stopping spend on cycle lanes (9% compared to 13%) and reducing housing and welfare benefits (7% compared to 10%).

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The next question asked respondents what they would start doing, or do more of.

Start suggestions: high level analysis

Category	Percentage
Increase or introduce charges/taxes/rates/fines	19%
Improve traffic/cycling /parking	18%
Focus on vulnerable people/essential services	17%
Make efficiency savings	15%
Improve resident information /involvement	13%

n=288
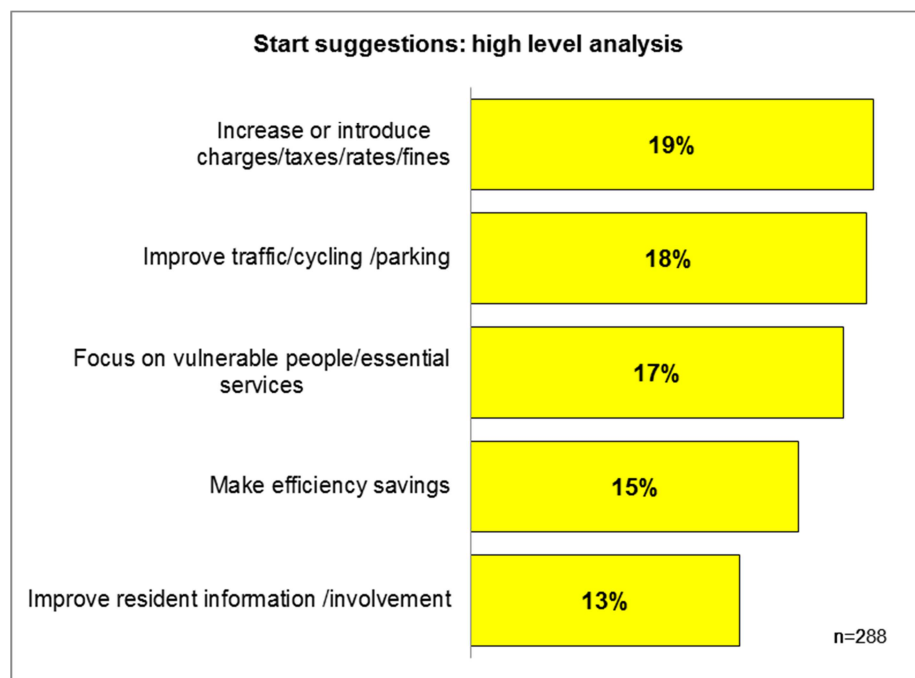
The top three suggestions to start were the same across the samples although in a different order with the self-selecting sample slightly more likely to suggest increasing or introducing charges/taxes/fines than the random sample (19% compared to16%).

One notable difference between the samples is the much higher amount of suggestions regarding resident information and involvement made by the self-selecting sample. Within this category there was a range of suggestions from ensuring that residents know and understand the council's predicament, to passing responsibility for maintaining their street to residents.

Start suggestions: detailed level analysis

Category	Percentage
Improve efficiency /reduce bureaucracy	5%
Invest in housing	5%
Improve waste/recycling sevice	5%
Fines for ASB	5%
Use more volunteers/pass responsibility to residents	5%
Change of attitudes/culture	5%
Misc	15%

n=288

21
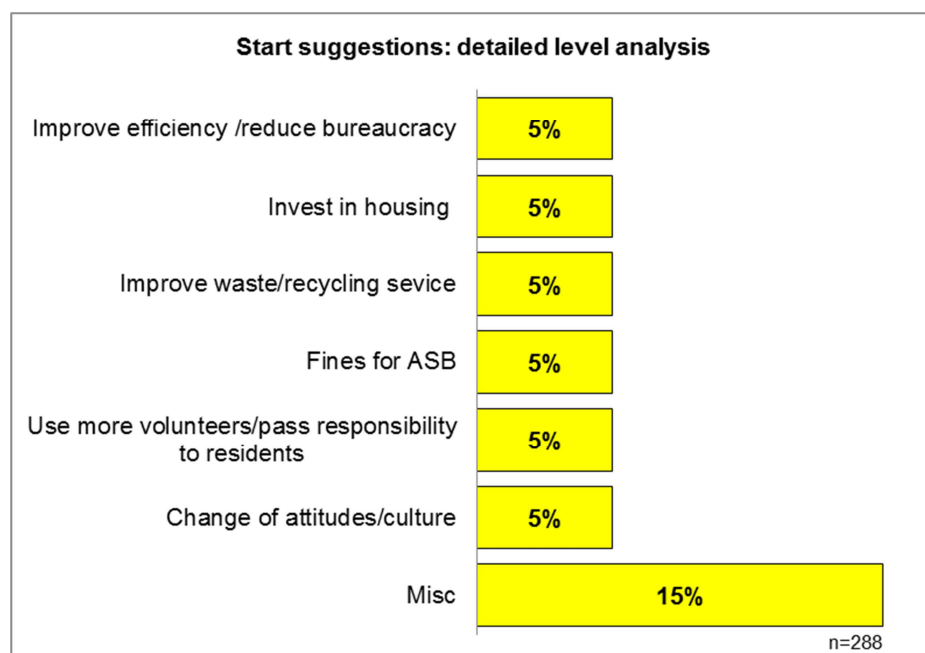
As was the case with the random sample there was a wide range of suggestions made by comparatively small proportions of the self-selecting sample; the six suggestions on the chart above were all mentioned by 5% of the sample so in this case the chart shows the top six suggestions. Four of the top six issues are the same across the samples. The self-selecting sample were more likely to suggest using volunteers more, or passing responsibility on to residents, and to suggest a change of attitudes and culture, either within the council, or across partners and residents in the city or both.

Finally, respondents were asked what they would change or do differently.
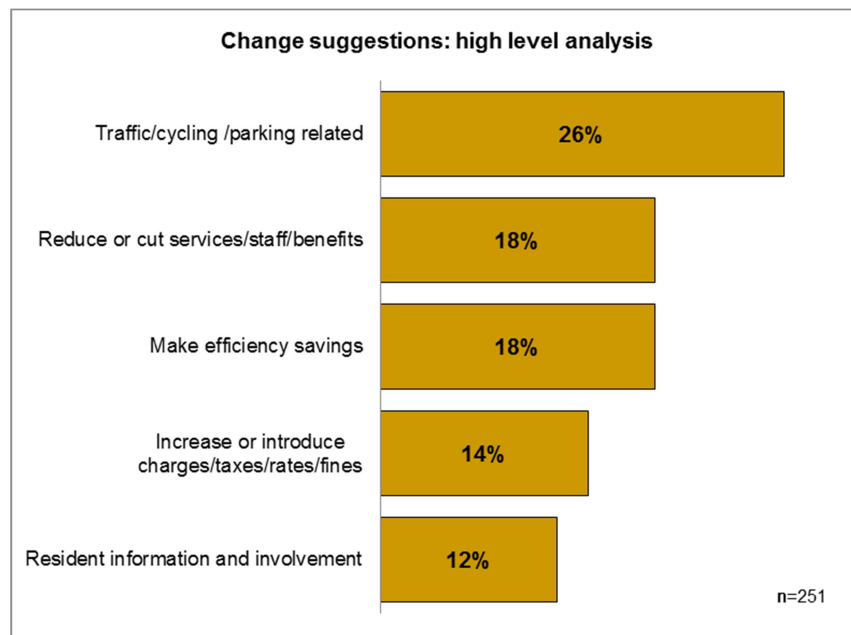
Four of the top five issues were the same across the samples; waste and recycling services was the 5th most suggested change by the random sample (10%) but the 7th by the self-selecting sample (also 10%), and resident information and involvement was the 5th most suggested change by the self-selecting sample (12%) but the 6th by the random sample (6%).

22
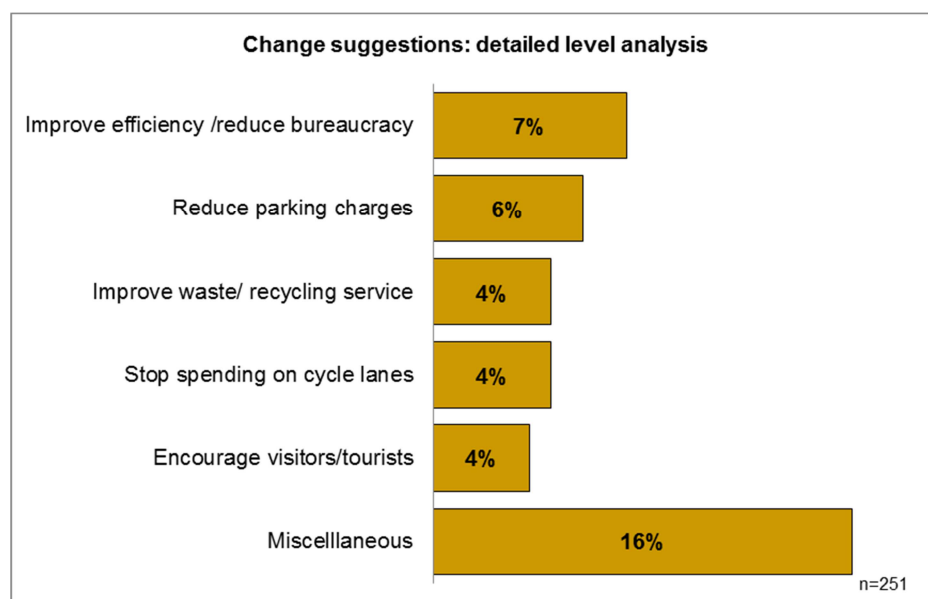
As for the random sample, the biggest single issue respondents would change, mentioned by 7%, was improving efficiency. In fact two of the top three suggestions for change were the same across the samples; Improve efficiency /reduce bureaucracy and improve the waste/recycling service. Also of note is that reducing parking charges was the second most frequently suggested change made by the self-selecting sample.

C) <u>Results from self-selecting sample of City Partners, stakeholders and community and voluntary group representatives (22 responses): Online survey</u>

The following results show only where City Partners, stakeholders and community and voluntary group representative results were at least 10% different to the remainder of the self-selecting sample.

These respondents were less likely to rate the following as high priorities for the city;
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling
- Public Safety

These respondents were less likely to rate Central Services as a low priority for the city.

They were more likely to advocate a reduction in funding for;
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Housing
- Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces

They were less likely to advocate an increase in funding for these services;
- Adult Services
- Children Services

These respondents were less likely to advocate a reduction in funding for Planning and Economic Development.

They were more likely to say 'yes' that Council Tax should rise.

These respondents were less likely to say 'never' to the following;
- An increase in parking charges
- Introducing charges for services we don't yet charge for.

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D) Results from discussion of survey questions by young people (12 participants)

Twelve young people took part in a facilitated discussion, focussing on the last three survey questions (What would you stop, start, change to help close the budget gap). The young people came up with six suggestions under each heading (in one case, seven suggestions) and then selected one action under each heading that they felt was the most important for the council to focus on. Results are presented below.

What would you <u>STOP</u> doing, or do less of?
Young people said their priority would be to stop funding services for those who can afford to pay.

Young people also said they would stop:

1. Giving free bus passes when you reach retirement age.
2. Providing street lighting in unnecessary places or places where there is sufficient lighting (But do not compromise on safety).
3. Unnecessary road-works (or at least communicate why they are happening).
4. Capital investment by 25%.
5. Paying high salaries to council officers.

What would you <u>START</u> doing, or do more of?
Young people's priority would be to start providing more work experience, apprenticeships and volunteer opportunities for young people.

Young people also said they would start:

1. Pay as you go lights! Consider motion sensors; solar panels; only on when necessary etc. But do not compromise on safety.
2. Promoting mental health awareness and encourage volunteering as helping hands.
3. Discussing how lessons are planned in school to consider alternative options to learning in and out of school.
4. Offering free music lessons/ creative opportunities for the under 16s as this can help improve self-confidence, self-esteem and gives young people something to do.
5. Investing in youth programmes such as Youth Voice.

What would you <u>CHANGE</u> or do differently?
Young people said their priority would be to change council tax to a more progressive system.

Young people also said they would change:

1. The way people who make claims for financial support are checked.
2. Street lighting to be solar powered to provide energy and generate income.
3. Council bureaucracy, i.e. to reduce it.
4. Cycle lanes, to improve them.

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5. Libraries/museums/tourist attractions to generate income and reward (pay staff) based on how much they bring in.
6. Encourage better recycling and improve the recycling service.

E) Results from online budget literacy and prioritisation tool (294 responses)
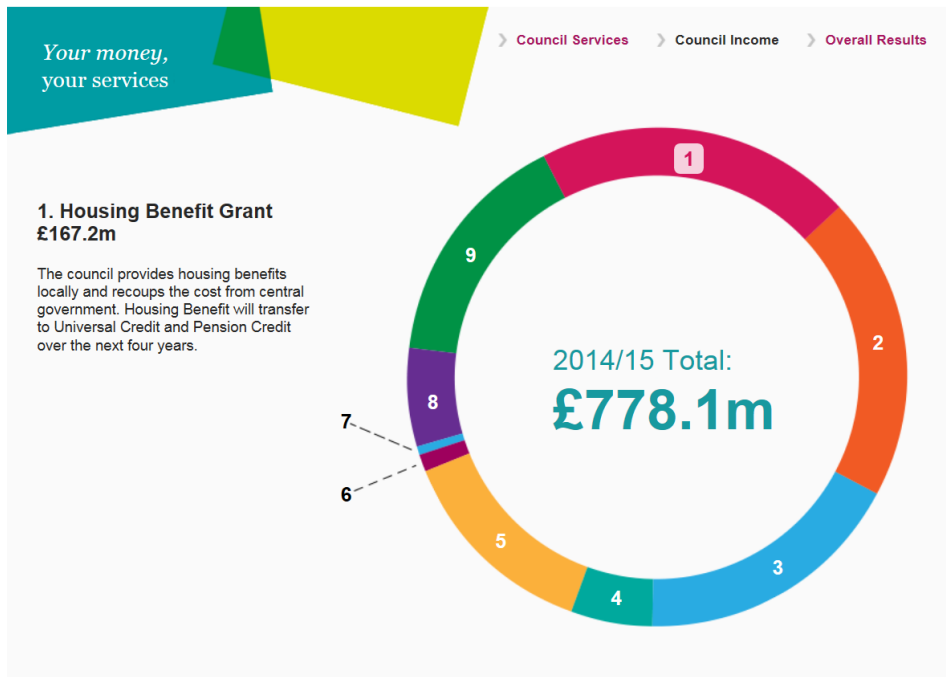
By 13 January 2015 686 people had elected to use the interactive budget tool on the council's website which shows how much money is spent on different service areas, as well as where it comes from. On the first screen, when a user clicks a particular service area, details of what each area includes appear, as well as the cost in 2014/15.

The screenshot below shows the tool when the user has clicked on Adult Social Care.
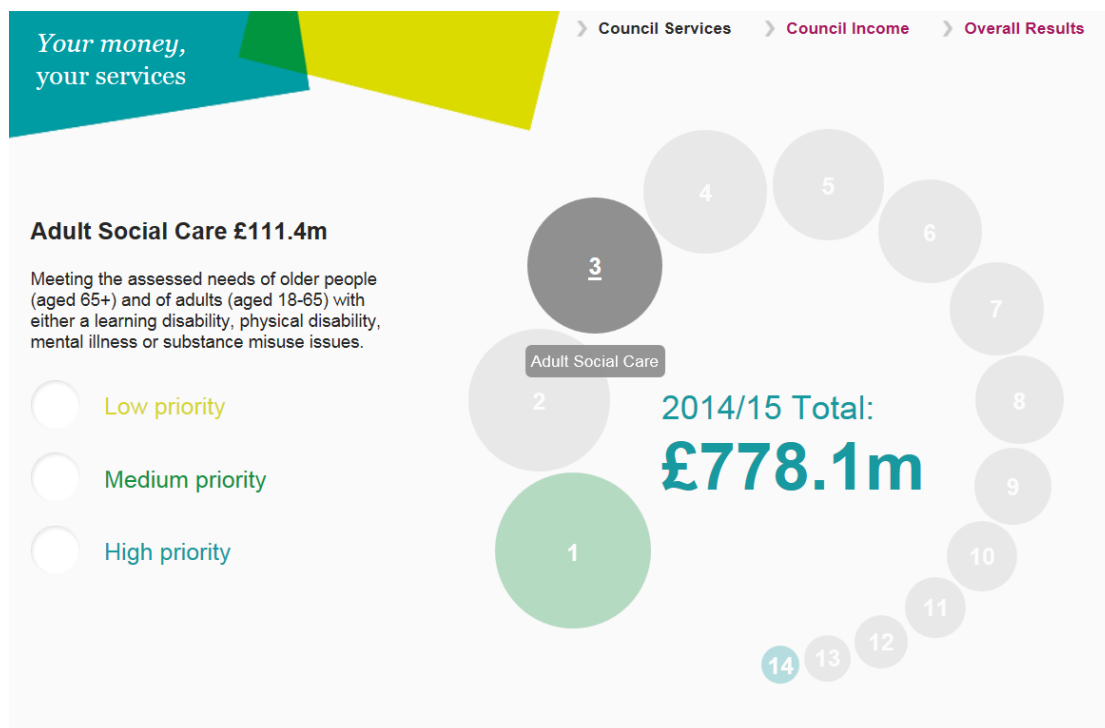
Users of the tool have the opportunity to rate the 14 different service areas with a priority rating of high, medium or low. Not all users choose to do this, and the tool is as much, if not more, about budget literacy as it is about gathering feedback. So, whilst 686 people have looked at the tool (these are individuals looking at the tool rather than the number of visits which is 1076) a maximum of 294 have gone on to prioritise service areas. This sample is self-selecting and so should not be considered statistically robust, but the results are indicative of users' views.

On the second screen users can find out where council income comes from. In the screenshot overleaf the user has clicked on the red section of the chart (labelled 1) relating to the Housing Benefit Grant.

*Your money,
your services*

**1. Housing Benefit Grant
£167.2m**

The council provides housing benefits locally and recoups the cost from central government. Housing Benefit will transfer to Universal Credit and Pension Credit over the next four years.
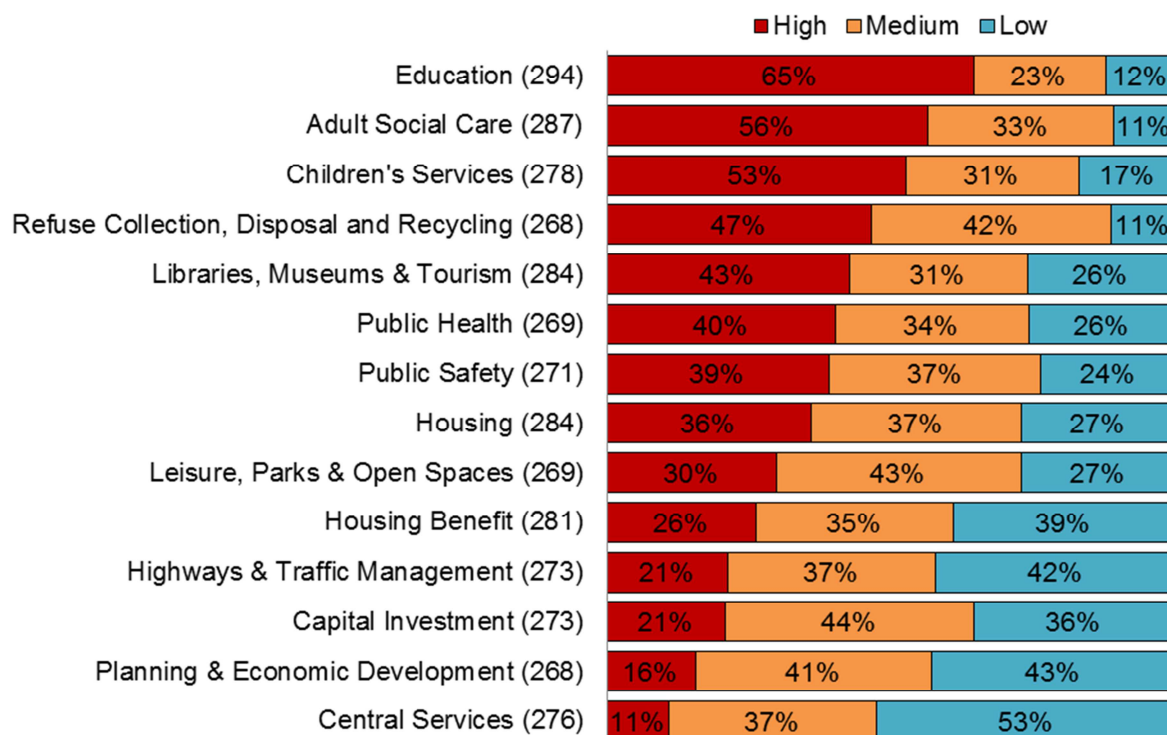
2014/15 Total:

£778.1m

On the final screen of the tool users can see the average results of how users of the tool have prioritised services.

Not all users who prioritised any services as high, medium or low prioritised all services; they missed out rating some. For example, 294 users have given Education a priority rating but only 268 have given Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling a rating.

The chart below shows the percentage of all users rating each service area as high, medium or low.

Note that there are two additional service areas in the tool to the ones asked about in the survey outlined above; "Capital Investment Programme" and "Housing Benefit". Also the term "Adult Social Care" is used on the tool where "Adult Services" is used on the survey and "Other children's services" is used on the tool where "Children's Social Care" is used on the survey. Council Tax Reduction Scheme is included in the survey and not the tool.

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Priority ratings of each service area: online tool

Legend: ■High ■Medium ■Low

Service Area	High	Medium	Low
Education (294)	65%	23%	12%
Adult Social Care (287)	56%	33%	11%
Children's Services (278)	53%	31%	17%
Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling (268)	47%	42%	11%
Libraries, Museums & Tourism (284)	43%	31%	26%
Public Health (269)	40%	34%	26%
Public Safety (271)	39%	37%	24%
Housing (284)	36%	37%	27%
Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces (269)	30%	43%	27%
Housing Benefit (281)	26%	35%	39%
Highways & Traffic Management (273)	21%	37%	42%
Capital Investment (273)	21%	44%	36%
Planning & Economic Development (268)	16%	41%	43%
Central Services (276)	11%	37%	53%

As for the survey, compared to last year's results, the proportions rating services as high priorities are lower, and proportions rating services as low priorities are higher. For example, last year, three service areas (Education, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care) were rated a high priority by at least two thirds of tool users. This year no services have been rated a high priority by quite such a large proportion. Last year, the largest proportion rating any service as a low priority was 39%, (for Planning and Economic Development) whereas this year it's 53% for Central Services.

Higher priority areas

Top five (largest proportion rating high priority):
- Education (65% high)
- Adult Social Care (56% high)
- Children's Services (53% high)
- Refuse Collection, Disposal & Recycling (47% high)
- Libraries, Museums and Tourism (43% high)

- Education and Adult Social Care, as in previous years, were given high priority ratings; this year at least half of respondents (65% and 56% respectively) thought they were high priorities.
- Adult Social Care, along with Refuse Collection, Disposal and Recycling, had the smallest proportions (11%) rating them a low priority.
- Libraries, Museums & Tourism was considered a high priority by 43%, making it the 5th highest rated service this year, whereas last year it was 10th out of fourteen. That said, 26% felt it was a low priority, indicating mixed views.

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- Analysing results by adding the proportions rating services as high or medium priorities reveals that four services were rated as such by at least four fifths of respondents: Adult Social Care (89%), Refuse Collection, Disposal & Recycling (89%), Education (88%) and Children's Services (83%).

Lower priority areas

Bottom five (largest proportion rating low priority)
- Central Services (53% low)
- Planning and Economic Development (43% low)
- Highways and Traffic Management (42% low)
- Housing Benefit (39% low)
- Capital Investment (36% low)

- Over half (53%) of tool-users thought that Central Services was a low priority and just 11% thought it was a high priority.
- Planning and Economic Development received slightly higher ratings, but 43% also felt this was a low priority area, and just 16% felt it was a high priority.
- Highways and Traffic Management and Housing Benefit both had around two fifths rating them low (42% and 39%) but Housing Benefit also had 26% rating it high.
- Capital investment had a comparatively smaller proportion rating it a low priority (36%), but a comparatively high proportion rating it a medium priority (44%).

Areas with the widest spread of opinion

- Housing and Leisure Parks & Open Spaces appear to divide opinion, with smaller differences between high and low ratings than other service areas.

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F) **Methods and response rates**

Paper and online survey: random sample
A paper based survey was issued to a stratified random sample of 3,000 households across the city in the first week of October 2014. The cover letter accompanying the survey explained that households could also complete the survey online. The sample was stratified to ensure that all areas of the city were targeted.

A reminder letter and another survey were issued to those households that had not responded three weeks later.

A closing date of 31 October 2014 was set, although surveys received up to 30 November are included in the analysis.

In total 502 surveys were received via this method, representing a response rate of 16.9% (once void addresses are removed from the base). Despite using the same methodology as last year, the response rate was lower than anticipated (25%). However, the sample is robust at the city level at a confidence interval of +/- 3.99% depending on how many people responded to each question. This means that we can be sure that the results are accurate to within +/- 4%. For example, if a result from this sample of households is 45% we know that the actual result, were we to survey all households in the city, would be within the range 41% to 49%.

Paper and online survey: self-selecting sample
Paper copies of the survey were available in public buildings such as our libraries, customer service centres and other council buildings and the survey was available online on the Consultation Portal from 26 September 2014 to 12 January 2015.

A link to the online survey was sent to city partners with an invitation to complete the survey and also to forward it on to city stakeholders. 22 surveys were received from city partners, stakeholders and community and voluntary group representatives so the results were analysed within the self-selecting sample. However, where answers of this sub-group of stakeholder representatives differed by 10% or more compared with the rest of this sample this has been highlighted in a short section of the report.

In total, 405 surveys were received via this approach by 12 January 2015.

As this sample was self-selecting we can assume it differs from the general population, by being more engaged about the issue(s) being consulted on and therefore having stronger, or more considered, opinions. Therefore the results have been analysed separately to the results of the random sample survey.

Discussion of survey questions by young people
The Youth Service Participation Team facilitated consultation with young people about the budget, which included asking 12 young people to discuss the final three survey questions (What would you stop, start, change). The discussion took place at Brighton Town Hall on 18 December 2014. Their collective views are presented in this report.

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Online budget literacy and prioritisation tool
The budget pages of the Brighton & Hove City Council website include a link to an interactive budget tool. This enables users to see how much money is spent on different service areas, where the money comes from and, if they wish, to indicate what priority they would give the service areas if they were setting the budget.

The tool is still available at the time of writing but data was downloaded for analysis on 13 January 2015.

In total 686 people had used the tool and a maximum of 294 people went on to prioritise service areas, a much larger number than last year when just 83 people prioritised services over the same five month analysis period.

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