

# Children's Services Committee

Date: **Tuesday 13 January 2015**

Time: **2 pm**

Venue: **Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY A g e n d a 2**

- 6. Strategic and Financial Planning 2015-18.**  
Briefing on the Budget Consultation findings.

**(C2)**

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## **Budget and services consultation 2015 – 2018**

### **Briefing to Children's Services Committee on the Findings of the Budget Consultation**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1. Between the 29 October and 19 December the County Council undertook a formal consultation about proposals for its 2015/16 budget.
- 1.2. Over 1,650 people responded to the consultation, making over 4,790 individual comments.

#### **2. Key information ahead of the committee meeting**

- 2.1. Because of the closing date of the consultation, and the time required to analyse all of the responses, it is not possible to prepare a report that summarises the findings as part of the formal papers for the committee. Instead:
  - a) A short presentation will be made at the committee meeting, as part of the Budget item, summarising the findings.
  - b) Detailed summaries of the analysis of the responses for the proposals relevant to this committee are available in the appendices of this briefing.

#### **3. Findings Summaries**

- 3.1. The appendices to this briefing are:

##### **Proposals relating to the Children's Services Committee:**

- APPENDIX A: Summary of Findings for proposal to remove the subsidy we give schools for community organisations using their facilities

##### **Proposals relating to the whole council**

- APPENDIX B: Increase council tax by up to 1.99% – summary of responses
- APPENDIX C: Protecting services – summary of responses
- APPENDIX D: Efficiency savings – summary of responses

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## Remove the subsidy we give to schools for community organisations using their facilities

### Summary of proposal

We currently subsidise schools who keep their rates at a low threshold for community groups. Our subsidy ensures that the schools costs are fully covered. However, many schools charge groups above the threshold and so do not qualify for our subsidy. We propose to stop this subsidy which would save £97k in 2015/16. If our proposal went ahead it could mean that some schools may increase the rate that they charge community groups to use their school.

### Organisation, group or petition responses

Please describe any petitions received.

No petitions were received.

Please record any groups or organisations which responded.

Responses were received from nine groups/organisations:

- Toftwood infant School
- Alderman Swindell School & Nursery
- Sprowston skaters
- Swanton Morley Parish Council
- St.Francis Church, Norwich
- Sharks Swim Club
- RED ROSE women's & girls FC
- Norwich Swan Swimming Club
- Girl Guiding Norfolk

Please summarise all petition or group responses.

**Four of the groups agreed with the proposal.** The reasons were in line with those expressed by individual respondents below. Three of the groups who agreed with the proposal said that schools should charge the **market rate** to all groups: "As a school, we should be charging a rate that covers our costs and I anticipate it would still be lower for groups than external rental in other premises", "This should be subject to market forces, like all community facilities", "Our school is PFI and we have no access to this so this will create a level playing field."

**Six of the groups disagreed with the proposal.** Several (four groups) expressed concern that the proposed loss of the subsidy could make hire of facilities **unaffordable** for groups or their members – some of the groups said this could lead to **groups closing**: "We have been able to keep costs down due to the subsidised costs of the hall. If these are removed many voluntary clubs would have to raise prices which could force some families to stop their children attending or clubs could close reducing the activities available in the communities.", "By taking away the subsidy we would have to reflect this in our fee structure, we are a non-profit making organisation, as are all clubs and groups who have a subsidy. By raising our fees this will limit the amount of children who are able to come to us for tuition by putting it out of financial reach.", "In many cases there is no alternative meeting place available in the area, and therefore units would have no alternative to either paying the increased amount or closing the unit.", "If all of these small initiatives are

	<p>removed by councils across the country, the small independently run activities could cease and the health of the nation &amp; Norfolk would eventually suffer.”</p> <p>One group expressed <b>concern at the way the consultation had been conducted</b> – relying on schools to contact groups who use their facilities to let them know of the proposal to cut the subsidy: "I am disappointed as a regular hirer of school premises not to have been given access to the letter dated 7 November sent to schools regarding the subsidy for clubs and have waited until the end of the term to contact you. I hire two different school premises and sometimes a third and not one of these schools has been in touch, despite clear guidance in your letter asking them to contact community groups who use their premises, the only way I have heard of this is via a colleague who works at Wymondham College. In the circumstances I don't think your responses will be a true and fair representation of the opinions of clubs and groups who hire facilities.”</p>
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Looking at all of the responses, are there any consistent, repeated or notable reasons given for people's views in...	
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Agreeing with the proposal?	<p><b>61% (222 people) accepted the proposal.</b></p> <p><b>The main reasons given for agreeing were that groups should pay the full cost of hire themselves or that schools should manage without the subsidy and be more business-like or compete in the market with other venues.</b></p> <p>40 respondents said that they agreed with our proposal because it is right that <b>groups hiring facilities should pay the full cost themselves</b> without a subsidy or discount. For example: “The people who benefit from using the schools should fund this”, “In most cases these groups can cover higher costs or can seek an alternative venue”, “Totally agree with this proposal. Community organisations understand the need for subsidies such as these to go and necessarily for charges to go up. Again tough, but hard times make such decisions very necessary”, “People who use these building should have to pay the going rate”, “Schools are not a charity. Groups should pay to cover costs”.</p> <p>33 people made comments that the proposal was acceptable because <b>schools should manage without a subsidy and compete in the market</b> of community venue hire like other venues. Comments also referred to the principle of schools controlling their own budgets. For example: “If the schools want to make money from hiring their spaces I don't think they need a subsidy.”, “Schools should be able to decide their own budgets”, “This should be subject to market forces, like all community facilities”, “As a school, we should be charging a rate that covers our costs and I anticipate it would still be lower for groups than external rental in other premises”.</p> <p>18 respondents agreed with the proposal because they saw the subsidy as <b>something NCC should not do or offer</b> – not part of the Council's core role. For example: “The county council seems to give money away to the voluntary sector, community groups etc willy nilly. Stop all subsidies now”, “Not everything can be subsidised - this is perhaps one area that needs to be addressed”, “Ridiculous to subsidise in a market economy”, “Schools do not require county council. The spread of academies is rendering county function in education increasingly redundant”.</p>
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	<p>18 respondents made comments that they accepted the proposal because there are <b>other community venues available</b> for groups to hire so they can choose to go elsewhere if they can no longer afford the cost of school hire. For example: "Sensible proposal. There are alternatives to schools for community groups that can't afford it.", "Agree as there are village halls/community halls/church halls/parks which could be used instead of school facilities.", "Many other places also offer community hire and provision will not be affected."</p>
Disagreeing with the proposal?	<p><b>25% (89) rejected the proposal.</b></p> <p><b>The main reason giving for disagreeing was that community activities and organisations contribute to personal and community wellbeing.</b></p> <p>35 respondents rejected the proposal because of views that <b>community activities and organisations should be supported for personal and social wellbeing</b>. For example: "Schools are at the heart of their communities - or should be. This proposal would reduce significantly the number of small groups able to take advantage of facilities which lie empty for much of the time.", "Surely encouraging community activity is a key responsibility of councils.", "People need community spaces for groups etc. we do not have community centres so these can be key to the community", "Because of the impact on community capacity which isn't robust anyway", "Making schools available for communities is invaluable."</p> <p>19 respondents rejected the proposal because of concerns about the impact of this on the community groups currently using school facilities. In particular concern that <b>groups may close/stop if they can no longer hire school venues at a discounted rate</b>. For example: "Community groups rely on being able to use cheap spaces. Without a venue many community groups may have to close.", "Some community groups have very limited resources and may fold if charges increase dramatically.", "I run a Brownie pack and cannot afford to keep the pack running if rates go up. I also feel it is unfair to ask parents to pay more to cover costs in this current climate."</p>

**Don't know: Of the 'Don't Know' responses (and where explanatory text is provided), what are the main reasons why people are unable to come to a clear decision?**

	<p><b>50 people (14%) said that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal.</b></p> <p>Of these, seven people suggested that the subsidy should remain for certain groups, be phased out or scaled in some way; five people emphasised the impact on communities and importance of community organisations in their responses; and eight people critiqued our process/the consultation itself (see analyst notes).</p>
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

Describe any information in the responses	<p><b>Seven people made comments relevant to our EqIA.</b></p> <p>Of these, three respondents made comments about the proposal particularly</p>
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which relates to EQIA	<p>impacting on <b>poorer families</b>: “While this is a change that could negatively impact the poor, it is to be hoped that community services can look elsewhere for support, grants, etc. and as a result, this should not have too significant an impact.”, “This will impact less well-off and disadvantaged members of the community who may not be able to pay higher fees”, “I worry that it will be the poorer areas that could be affected?”</p> <p>Four respondents made comments about the impact of the proposal in <b>rural areas</b>: “Schools are at the heart of their community and in a rural area provide, through use by community groups, facilities and activities often for older and vulnerable groups, who otherwise would get unwell, unhealthy and ultimately cost more to look after through the health service. This is an uneconomic choice which will cost us more in the long run.”, “Community organisations perform an invaluable service, especially in rural and deprived areas. The Council should give them all the support it can.”, “As a small rural club the removal of subsidies would hit us very hard.”, “I do not have figures for Norfolk but as we are a rural area with few swimming pools I suspect we are worse than the National figure.”</p>
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Analyst notes	
Any other things you think report writers should know when presenting findings	<p>Eleven people <b>critiqued</b> the consultation itself or the consultation process, for example saying that more information/detail was needed or that the consultation was difficult to access. Nine people said more information was needed, including examples or further explanations of the types of groups currently receiving the subsidy. One respondent expressed concern at the way the consultation had been conducted – relying on schools to contact groups who use their facilities to let them know of the proposal to cut the subsidy.</p>

Other Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 361 responses received for this proposal.</li> <li>• 89 people (25%) disagreed with the proposal</li> <li>• 222 people (61%) agreed with the proposal</li> <li>• 50 people (14%) told us that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal</li> <li>• The majority of respondents were not part of a community group that currently rents rooms from a school (77%)</li> <li>• <b>Summary completed 6.1.15, Business Intelligence and Performance Service</b></li> </ul>

## Council Tax – agree/disagree (up to 1.99%) and reasons why you say this

### Summary of question

We asked people “Do you agree or disagree that Norfolk County Council should raise its share of the council tax by up to 1.99% in 2015/16 and use that money to protect key council services in the future?” with the option to select agree, disagree or don’t know. We then asked “why do you say this?”

### Organisation, group or petition responses

Please describe any petitions received.

No petitions were received.

Please record any groups or organisations which responded.

Responses were received from the following groups/organisations:

- Toftwood infant school
- Equal Lives
- Swanton Morely Parish Council
- St Francis Church Norwich
- Wells-Next-the-Sea Town Council
- Welbourne Village Hall
- South Norfolk Older People’s Forum
- North Norfolk Older People’s Forum
- Norfolk Older People’s Strategic Partnership
- Norwich Older People’s Forum Working Group
- Norwich Swan Swimming Club

Please summarise all petition or group responses.

Nine of the groups/organisations agreed with the proposal and two disagreed.

Those that **agreed** had reasons in line with those expressed by individuals and described below – the main reason was to **protect** services particularly those for **vulnerable** people and comments that the suggested raise was **small** or **reasonable**.

One group that **disagreed** did not give a reason other than to question the wisdom of raising tax in the run up to a general election. The other said that families are struggling and need support not higher bills.

### Looking at all of the responses, are there any consistent, repeated or notable reasons given for people’s views in...

Agreeing with the proposal?

**339 people (74%) agreed with the proposal.** The main reason given for agreeing with a rise in council tax was because it would **protect services**.

154 people commented that they supported a rise in council tax **because/if it would protect services**. For example: “Protecting services is absolutely essential, as it protects the most vulnerable in society.”, “If necessary, to maintain local services, the [...] council does not object to an increase of the

	<p>council tax by 1.99%.”, “It is important we contribute to protecting services” “I absolutely do not want services cut any further and believe that an increase in tax is a far better option.”, “Council tax has not kept pace with inflation and it would take an immense increase to get back to the income levels of five to seven years ago. I would be happy to pay more council tax in order to stave off the draconian cuts that are facing the Council”.</p> <p>54 people said that they supported the proposal because <b>the rise was small, proportionate or reasonable</b>. For example: “Yes because in real terms it’s only a very small increase. Why do you even need to ask the question? Just do it!!”, “This has been frozen for a number of years. The increase is marginal”, “Council tax is a large payment already but with so many cuts to essential services I think this 1.99% rise is small enough rise for most households to pay.”, “A small increase, largely in line with inflation, will ensure services valued by rate payers can still be delivered.”, “A 1.99% increase is reasonable.”, “A relatively small increase for householders, while producing a small benefit in the first year would produce an greatly increased benefit for the county in general in the future”, “A small increase to protect key services would seem a reasonable solution”.</p> <p>Other reasons given for supporting the proposal included that services had been cut and respondents did not wish to see <b>further cuts</b> made (22 people), or that respondents were concerned about services for <b>vulnerable people</b> (21 people).</p>
Disagreeing with the proposal?	<p><b>101 people (22%) disagreed with the proposal.</b> The main reason given for disagreeing with the proposal was that the rise would be <b>unaffordable</b>.</p> <p>33 respondents said that they rejected the proposal because <b>the rise would be unaffordable for them or for others</b>. For example: “Incomes continue to reduce for the tax payer so an increase in Council Tax is unaffordable”, “As my wife and I are pensioners on a VERY modest income, we are very pleased and relieved that the Norfolk County Council has held down the Council Tax. We would not support any increase in it whatsoever.”, “Because people cannot afford to pay anymore.”, “We should not be required to pay for everything”, “Any increase in Council Tax is too much for hard working families to cope with at the present time.”, “I cannot afford it”, “My salary hasn’t increased by 1.99% why should you increase my council tax?”.</p> <p>13 respondents gave the <b>government grant</b> as their reason for disagreeing – for example saying that it did not make sense to raise council tax because it would mean the loss of the grant: “Does not seem cost effective to lose central grant. I would however support an increase of this amount in 2016/17.”, “Because we would lose the grant for a year, so the government is not helping us to help ourselves.”, “We would lose the government grant”, “Would be unwise to lose money generated to a government fine”.</p> <p>15 respondents said that council tax should not be raised because there are <b>inefficiencies within NCC that need to be saved first</b>: “There is still massive waste in local government. Cuts can be achieved without harming service provision”, “Because there are many inefficiencies within the council system and you could save costs easily”, “You need to do some serious housekeeping. I certainly would not agree to a hike in my council tax until such a waste of money is stopped.”, “In the present climate I believe there is still the ability to reduce Council spending.”</p>



	11 respondents said that council tax was <b>already too high</b> : “I already pay too much.”, “The council tax is too high already.”, “I pay too much now!”
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<b>Don't know: Of the 'Don't Know' responses (and where explanatory text is provided), what are the main reasons why people are unable to come to a clear decision?</b>	
	<p><b>17 people (4%) said that they didn't know if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal</b></p> <p>Of these, six respondents <b>critiqued</b> the consultation itself or the process (see analyst notes) and three responses made reference to the government grant.</p>

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)</b>	
Describe any information in the responses which relates to EQIA	<p><b>Two people made comments relevant to our EqIA.</b> Both related to the impact on <b>people with disabilities</b>: “I think the time has come that to protect essential frontline services to the poor, the disadvantaged, the disabled and the defenceless that the council tax bill to households needs to rise”, “Because disabled people have taken the brunt of the cuts and they are on limited budgets which sometimes only stretches to essentials like food, heat and rent”</p>

<b>Analyst notes</b>	
Any other things you think report writers should know when presenting findings	<p>Six respondents <b>critiqued</b> the consultation process, for example saying that we had not provided enough information/detail to make a decision, requesting that more detail be provided as to where extra funds would be spent, or comments that it was not clear if the additional money would negate the need for cuts. One respondent said that the consultation had not been publicised enough and was timed too close to Christmas to get a good response.</p>

<b>Other Information</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were 457 responses received for this proposal.</li> <li>• 101 people (22%) disagreed with the proposal</li> <li>• 339 people (74%) agreed with the proposal</li> <li>• 17 people (4%) told us that they did not know if they agreed or disagreed with the proposal</li> <li>• Respondents were not asked if they were service user question not asked for this proposal</li> </ul> <p><b>Summary completed 6.1.15, Business Intelligence and Performance Service.</b></p>	

**Protect – if we were to raise council tax in 2015/16 which of these services would you like the income we generate to be spent on? – please tell us why you selected these services.**

### Summary of question

We asked people “If we were to increase council tax in 2015/16, which service would you like the income we generate to be spent on?” In answering this question people were given a choice of defined service areas and were asked to nominate their ‘top 5’ services. We also asked people to tell us why they selected the services they had chosen.

### Organisation, group or petition responses

Please describe any petitions received.

No petitions were received.

Please record any groups or organisations which responded.

Responses were received from four groups/organisations:

- St Francis Church
- Swanton Morley Parish Council
- Toftwood Infant School
- Norwich Swan Swimming Club

Please summarise all petition or group responses.

Responses from groups/organisations were in line with individual comments received below with the main focus being on services for vulnerable adults and children.

### Looking at all of the responses, are there any consistent, repeated or notable reasons given for people’s views on:

Adult care services

**78% of respondents who answered this question (293 people) ranked adult social care in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.**

The main reasons given for prioritising adult care services were:

- Comments that it is a service for the **most vulnerable people** in society and should therefore be protected: “we need to ensure that vulnerable adults and children are cared for and supported” “direct services for vulnerable people are really important” “expenditure should be focused on securing services for vulnerable people and families”.
- Comments that it is a **key service** – essential, a priority, statutory: “significant component of a civilised society”, “these are essential services”, “more important than anything else”, “services that protect lives”.
- Comments that adult social care needs investment because of the **demographics** of the county, growing pressure on services for the elderly: “The demographic time bomb is ticking ever louder and clearly additional resources are required for any authority to adequately provide quality services and care for this very vulnerable section of society”, “Ageing population - more funds will be needed to support people at home with their long term health condition”,

	<p>Other reasons given included support for this area because adult social care is important for personal and social wellbeing, comment that this is an area that has been cut in the past/can't sustain further cuts, and comments about the importance of prevention including that it saves money in the long run.</p>
Children's Social Care	<p><b>63% of respondents who answered this question (236 people) ranked children's social care in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising children's social care were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that it is a service for the most <b>vulnerable</b> people in society and should therefore be protected: "most at risk groups" "We need to ensure that vulnerable adults and children are cared for and supported." "Vulnerable people should always have continuing support." And "those least able to protect themselves"</li> <li>• Comments that it is a <b>key service</b> – essential, a priority, statutory: "essential service" "necessary to protect life" "Protecting and supporting vulnerable people has to be the highest priority" "Direct services for vulnerable people are really important and should be the mainstay of what the council does."</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given for protecting this service included comments about children being the future so needing investment, comments that children's social care is an important prevention service, comments that the service has been cut and should not be cut further, and comments about the importance of the service for health and wellbeing.</p>
Schools and education	<p><b>50% of respondents who answered this question (190 people) ranked schools and education in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising schools and education were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that school and education is a <b>key service</b>, priority, essential or more important than other services: "top priority" "important" "essential services" "vital public services" and "Because Norfolk children deserve a better education"</li> <li>• Comments that schools and education are important because children are the <b>future</b>: "to ensure a good future", "good education helps children and young people secure a good future", "children are the future...don't scrimp on their development" and "children are the most important product of a generation"</li> <li>• Comments that schools and education are important because they support or protect the <b>vulnerable</b>: "protect the innocent", "protect services to the most vulnerable", "services for people who need the most assistance from society"</li> <li>• Comments about the role schools play in education, supporting skills development and the <b>economy</b>: "without a well educated population we cannot achieve the required economic growth", "long term they will give Norfolk a more competitive economy" "they support economic growth in the region, via investment in people through education"</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given for protecting this service included comments that schools and education helps to prevent spend in other areas, or that investing in schools builds good foundations for the future, and comments about the role schools play in communities, contributing to personal and social wellbeing.</p>

Libraries	<p><b>36% of respondents who answered this question (138 people) ranked libraries in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising libraries were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments about the role libraries play in <b>improving personal and social wellbeing</b> and the broader <b>role libraries have in communities</b> e.g. “important for happy healthy communities” “The diverse services libraries provide cater for a range of audiences and purposes. They are a hub from which people can learn, get in touch with other council services, attend groups and sessions that provide social and economic benefits” “Libraries - again, accessible to all sectors and have countywide spread, good for people who need to get out of the house, interact with community, and who are not well off”</li> <li>• Comments that the service is a <b>key service</b>, essential or a priority: “valuable services”, a lifeline to people who have to spend a lot of time at home and people living in rural areas”, “vital to a society’s sense of identity, wellbeing and mental health” “provides a vital service often to vulnerable people”</li> <li>• Comments about the role libraries play in the <b>economy</b> including supporting the development of skills, employability and <b>education</b>: “we are better educated with libraries”, “improve educational attainment”, “education and reading are vital to the economy” “the library service promotes education for all”</li> <li>• Comments that libraries are a <b>universal</b> service, available to all residents: “service all use” “extraordinary service across all sectors of Norfolk’s population”</li> <li>• Comments that the service <b>has already been subject to cuts</b> and cannot sustain further cuts: “already taken enough cuts on what is a very small area of spend to start with” “they have been decimated by cuts” “These are all the services that get cut every time, you can only take so much from them”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given for wanting to prioritise this service included the impact on vulnerable people who use libraries and their services or as a safe place to go.</p>
Arts recreation and guidance service	<p><b>34% of respondents who answered this question (129 people) ranked arts recreation and guidance service in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising arts recreation and guidance service were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments about the broader role the arts play in communities for <b>personal and social wellbeing</b>: “Promoting health and happiness of the community has got to be the priority” “Because arts and culture are essential to well-being - they are what makes the difference between just existing and actually enjoying life” “It is also important to ensure that these opportunities to access arts, creativity and culture are open to all in county, as they have a positive impact on people’s health and wellbeing, which can ultimately mean less reliance on other services.” “The Arts grants are tiny but make a real difference to local communities.”</li> <li>• Comments about the impact on the <b>economy</b> – education and skills, employments and tourism are included in this: “moving Norfolk on as a whole and creating opportunities for work and investment and attracting business and visitors bringing more money in” “Arts, creativity and culture is one of the fastest growing sectors in Norfolk, it creates jobs, investment and tourism.”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given to protect this service included comments that it is a key or</p>

	essential service, comments about the inherent worth or value of culture/the arts, and comments that the service is underfunded/has already been subject to cuts.
Fire and rescue	<p><b>31% of respondents who answered this question (117 people) ranked fire and rescue in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising fire and rescue were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments that it is a <b>key service</b> – essential, a priority, statutory: e.g. “essential service” “necessary to protect lives” “vital services in need of protecting” emergency response is highest priority” “most important area”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given for protecting this area were that it is about people’s safety, that the service is important for wellbeing, that the service is underfunded/has already been cut, that it is a universal service used by all, and that the service has an important role with the vulnerable.</p>
Environment and waste	<p><b>31% of respondents who answered this question (116 people) ranked environment and waste in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising environment and waste were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments referring to environment and waste as a <b>key or essential service</b>, top priority, more important than others: “important” “necessary” “vital” “most important areas” and “good environmental services are vital in our modern world”</li> <li>Comments that environment and waste are <b>important for personal or social wellbeing</b> – creating a nicer environment to live in or making the county an attractive place to live: “better health from a cleaner environment”, “make life in Norwich particularly attractive” or “make Norfolk a good place to live”</li> <li>Comments that environment and waste is a <b>universal service</b>, used by all residents: “Waste services are universally required and important on a day to day basis.” “Important to everyone” “Environment &amp; Waste as we all have rubbish to dispose of and see the need to improve on recycling. “</li> </ul>
Travel and transport	<p><b>28% of respondents who answered this question (107 people) ranked travel and transport in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising travel and transport were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role transport plays in the <b>economy</b> – getting people to work and school and keeping businesses moving, this includes references to tourism and people accessing other services. For example: “the way to sustain the economy is to keep Norfolk moving” “Highways and transport are key to economic growth, reducing accidents, and accessing services” “public transport to get people to work” “Good transport and travel systems are important to Norfolk’s businesses, employment, education, health and leisure.”</li> <li>Comments referring to travel and transport as a <b>key or essential service</b>, top priority, more important than others.</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given included support for this area because it has important positive impact on the environment – through public transport, cycling and pedestrian access investment and that it supports people’s wellbeing – both</p>

	personal and social/community.
Public Health	<p><b>26% of respondents who answered this question (99 people) ranked public health in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising public health were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that public health is a <b>key service</b>, priority, essential or more important than other services: “Education and caring for people are more important than anything else.” Or “Direct services for vulnerable people are really important and should be the mainstay of what the council does.”</li> <li>• Comments that public health helps to <b>prevent</b> spend in other areas and prevent health problems: “public health remains an important function - particularly with regard to the preventative role that it plays.” “Investing in public health I feel will help support other care services so that people are not unnecessarily relying on services when they could be supported in other ways” and “Public health always requires significant investment in preventative measures.”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given for prioritising this service included the role public health plays in personal and social wellbeing/quality of life, the role it has in supporting the vulnerable, and the contribution made to the economy by keeping people fit and well to work.</p>
Highways	<p><b>24% of respondents who answered this question (91 people) ranked highways in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising highways were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role highways play in the <b>economy</b> – getting people to work and school and keeping businesses moving. Includes references to tourism and people accessing other services. For example: “Road maintenance has an impact on most areas of the Council's priorities: - Norfolk economy- (access to/for rural businesses for example) environment, health- (why encourage cycling for example if the roads are too dangerous due to disintegration), access for emergency response.”, “Norfolk needs investment and improved infrastructure is essential for attracting external investment. Economic growth of the county is essential for sustainable future. Norfolk is geographically isolated and the council needs to take strategic leadership of generating opportunities for future growth, not focusing inwards.”</li> <li>• Comments that highways is a <b>key service</b>, essential or priority, describing it as “important” “priority services”, or “vital services”.</li> <li>• Comments that highways is a <b>universal service</b>, used by all residents: “used by the majority of people in Norfolk” “Highways is the one universal service used by everyone in the county” “services that all use” or “important to everyone”.</li> </ul>
Supporting the Norfolk economy	<p><b>23% of respondents who answered this question (87 people) ranked supporting the Norfolk economy in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising supporting the Norfolk economy were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of <b>supporting the economy</b> – including the effect on education, employment, tourism and overall keeping Norfolk growing and thriving: “Actions to promote the economy and support in particular young people through apprenticeships is critical to creating a vibrant area and helping people be able to stay and work in the county” “Economic growth is</li> </ul>

	<p>crucial for Norfolk if it is to continue to thrive - economic growth will provide additional income to the council.” “we must support businesses to help the economy grow” “investing in Norfolk’s future” “moving Norfolk on as a whole and creating opportunities for work and investment and attracting business and visitors bringing more money in”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that this is a <b>key service</b> – essential or priority: “vital for the county council to provide” “key areas”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given included support for this area because it enhances personal or social wellbeing.</p>
Early years and childcare	<p><b>22% of respondents who answered this question (83 people) ranked early years and childcare in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising early years and childcare were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments that the service is important because it supports the <b>vulnerable</b>: “the young – particularly the vulnerable is obviously a main priority”, “we should protect the vulnerable”, “the weakest have suffered the most and should receive more support”, “the most vulnerable should be protected first”</li> <li>• Comments that early years is a <b>key service</b>, priority, essential or more important than other services: “Because it is essential for young people to have the very best start in life. Affordable childcare enables more low income families to enter the workforce thereby strengthening the local economy” “the most vital public services” “Education and caring for people are more important than anything else.” “Investing in the next generation is critical”</li> <li>• Comments that services to children should be protected because they are the <b>future</b>: “children and young people are our future and the resources are inadequate” “children are the future and deserve support and encouragement to develop fully”</li> <li>• Comments that early years helps to <b>prevent</b> spend in other areas: “Failing to invest in our young children is a false economy that increases costs in the future, e.g. if young people do not learn the skills and attitudes to fulfil their potential then they are less likely to secure good jobs and are more likely to become dependent on the state for support.” and “I also feel early years is critical”</li> </ul>
Museums	<p><b>16% of respondents who answered this question (61 people) ranked museums in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising museums were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments about the importance of the service for <b>personal and social wellbeing</b> and quality of life: “important to the wellbeing of people in the community” protect services that enrich lives”, “they enhance life”, “museums make a good contribution to the local culture”, museums are important places in these depressing times”</li> <li>• Comments about the <b>economy</b>, education and skills and tourism: “they help generate income and/or tourism” “they provide otherwise unobtainable education”, “Cultural services are undervalued and therefore have never been properly funded yet the benefits are wide ranging and extend far beyond the cultural sector. Tourism, quality of life, health and well-being, education and training are just a sample of the areas on which our cultural offer has a positive impact.”</li> <li>• Comments that museums are a <b>key service</b>, essential or a priority over other</li> </ul>

	<p>services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments that this is an area that has been <b>cut in the past</b> and cannot sustain more cuts “Museums – are desperately underfunded”</li> </ul>
Public protection	<p><b>9% of respondents who answered this question (35 people) ranked public protection in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reasons given for prioritising public protection were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments referring to public protection as a <b>key or essential service</b>, top priority, more important than others: “essential services” “very important” “essential services” and “most important”</li> <li>Comments that the service supports and protects <b>vulnerable people</b>: “public protection is essential otherwise the unscrupulous will seek to take advantage” or “there are many scams about now and people who prey on the elderly and vulnerable it is important to protect this work”</li> </ul>
Adult education	<p><b>9% of respondents who answered this question (34 people) ranked adult education in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reason given for prioritising adult education were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments about the <b>economy, education and skills</b>: “We should not penalise...education at a time when the need for highly-skilled youngsters and fresh ideas for the future (not to mention tax revenues) is at a premium”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given to prioritise this service included that it is an area that is underfunded/has been cut before and comments about the contribution of the service to personal/social wellbeing.</p>
Norfolk record office	<p><b>5% of respondents who answered this question (17 people) ranked the Norfolk Record Office in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The main reason given for prioritising the Norfolk Record Office were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That NRO is a <b>key/vital service</b>: “the loss of what’s in the record office and the service it provides would be a monumental act of cultural irresponsibility and vandalism”</li> </ul> <p>Other reasons given for prioritising this service included its contribution to social and individual wellbeing and the role of the NRO in the local economy including education and skills.</p>
Customer services	<p><b>2% of respondents who answered this question (7 people) ranked customer services in their top five services to protect with a rise in council tax.</b></p> <p>The reason given for prioritising customer services were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments that the service is <b>universal</b> or used by most people: “These are the only ones that are used by the majority of people in Norfolk. There is already too much spent on Children, the elderly etc.” or “Putting every single citizen first before particular selected individuals and groups”</li> </ul>

Equality Impact Assessment	
Describe any information in	There were no specific comments about our EqIA.



the responses which relates to EQIA	
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Analyst notes	
Any other things you think report writers should know when presenting findings	<p>Nine respondents <b>critiqued</b> the consultation itself/the process.</p> <p>Of these, five people were not happy with the way services were grouped/divided: “Why put Libraries, Museums and Adult Education as separate entities when you do not divide up Environment and Waste?” One respondent was unhappy with the way the question was phrased, saying they would have preferred two questions, one about priority and one about services perceived to be underfunded. Two respondents were unhappy at having to list in order of priority and would have preferred to select five services without having to give a preference order.</p>

Other Information
<p>377 people responded to this proposal/section</p> <p>78% of people (293) ranked Adult care services in their top five  63% of people (236) ranked Children’s social care in their top five  50% of people (190) ranked Schools and education in their top five  37% of people (138) ranked Libraries in their top five  34% of people (129) ranked Arts recreation and guidance services in their top five  31% of people (117) ranked Fire and rescue in their top five  31% of people (116) ranked Environment and waste in their top five  28% of people (107) ranked Travel and transport in their top five  26% of people (99) ranked Public health in their top five  24% of people (91) ranked Highways in their top five  23% of people (87) ranked Supporting the Norfolk economy in their top five  22% of people (83) ranked Early years and childcare in their top five  16% of people (61) ranked Museums in their top five  9% of people (35) ranked Public protection in their top five  9% of people (34) ranked Adult education in their top five  5% of people (17) ranked Norfolk Record Office in their top five  2% of people (7) ranked Customer services in their top five</p> <p><b>Summary completed 6.1.15, Business Intelligence and Performance Service.</b></p>

## Efficiency savings

### Summary of proposals

Our efficiency savings focus on cutting our own costs and getting even more efficient; many are about our internal processes. Many of the savings will be achieved by using modern technology more efficiently. Our proposed efficiency savings are:

#### How we buy things:

- (1a) Reducing our costs by retendering contracts and changing the way we buy things (£1.9m)
- (1b) Changing the way that we use our rebates and funding sources (£1.15m)
- (1c) Reduce costs by finding more cost effective IT and business travel options for staff (£0.6m)
- (1d) Reduce the cost of our buildings and make full use of our own facilities (£1.55m)

#### How we generate income:

- (2a) Make more money and recover more costs from the services we charge for (£0.27m)

#### How we organise our staff and resources:

- (3a) Review management and staff structures (£0.945m)
- (3b) Develop different ways of working to reduce the cost of delivering our shared services (£0.961m)
- (3c) Redesigning the way we deliver our services to reduce our costs (£0.395)
- (3d) Cutting some budgets (£0.45m)
- (3e) Reduce the costs of delivering services (£1.03m)
- (3f) Manage our investments in a different way (£2.7m)

### Organisation, group or petition responses

Please describe any petitions received.	No petitions were received.
Please record any groups or organisations which responded.	<p>12 group or organisation responses were received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break</li> <li>• Equal Lives</li> <li>• Swanton Morley Parish Council</li> <li>• St Francis Church Norwich</li> <li>• Welbourne Village Hall</li> <li>• South Norfolk Older People's Forum</li> <li>• Blakeney Parish Council</li> <li>• Healthwatch Norfolk</li> <li>• Norwich Swan Swimming Club</li> <li>• Norfolk Rural Community Council</li> <li>• Sperry - online community for people on the autistic spectrum</li> <li>• South Norfolk District Council</li> </ul>
Please summarise all petition or group responses.	One organisation contrasted direct payments to directly commissioned services and provided figures to show savings: "we have calculated that over the last three years £6,378,053.57 has been returned to NCC from those using personal budgets. This works out roughly as over £177,000 per month. As far as we know, no home care or private sector provider returns money to NCC". The

	<p>organisation concluded: “there is also clear evidence that people who are in control of their own money through direct payments are extremely prudent”.</p> <p>Potential savings in children’s residential care were highlighted by another group: “I am fairly sure that if those services were outsourced considerable savings could still be made – primarily because NCC pay higher salaries. There are a number of proven voluntary and private providers in Norfolk who could take on this work and deliver the same quality of service – if not better”.</p> <p>One group considered that older and vulnerable people are already suffering hardship from previous cuts and should not have to bear a reduction in quality of service.</p> <p>The cumulative effect of (previous and future) cuts was also commented on by another organisation who observed that a broader view of the whole service offer across Norfolk may be a more productive way of handling change than focusing on individual proposals for relatively small savings. The organisation welcomed NCC’s focus on prevention but pointed out a “need for greater investment and support in developing resilience within our communities if the prevention shift is to be successful”.</p> <p>One local organisation wanted more information on which to base their decision and also asked that NCC considers the value added by the third sector to local residents.</p>
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General comments about efficiency savings	
	<p>68 people <b>expressed their agreement</b> with the overall efficiency saving proposal saying it was “sensible”, “all make perfect sense” and “wouldn’t argue with any of them”.</p> <p>Six people <b>disagreed</b> with the proposal: the reasons given were not wanting to make further cuts, not thinking that anymore can be saved through efficiencies, and the negative effects of further cuts on staff and services.</p> <p>24 people commented on <b>inefficient practices or a perception of inefficiency</b> within the Council. Some expressed surprise or disappointment that such efficiency savings had not already been implemented: “I would have thought that internal policies such as business travel, efficient procurement and effective use of your own building spaces would have already been maximised to reduce costs as far as possible!”</p> <p>12 people warned against <b>making short term savings</b> which end up costing more in the longer run: “can look like savings on paper but cost of implementation can sometimes negate the savings” and “be careful not to make changes that cost as much or more than the potential savings, this has invariably been the outcome in my experience, albeit in private commerce”.</p>
Responses to specific proposals	
1a - Reducing our costs by	<b>29 respondents commented on proposal 1a to reduce our costs by retendering contracts and change the way we buy things. People gave</b>

<p>retendering contracts and changing the way we buy things.</p>	<p><b>examples of current poor practice and expressed concern about quality of services and value for money. They also cautioned against making decisions rashly or without evidence and showed concern about the potential for shifting costs or service burdens onto the third sector.</b></p> <p><b>Inefficient or bureaucratic tendering/procurement processes</b>  “The costs of tendering are not made public nor the impact on service delivery – only contract savings. Recent re-tendering has created other problems in the system as the commissioners do not sufficiently understand what they are changing – the specification is flawed and unintended consequences have arisen.”</p> <p>“I am certain that savings could be made on the hugely complicated system of tendering made at the Council.”</p> <p>“Procurement is always a difficult one, but the procurement team need to engage more with staff – FIMS provides all the data (well if you can extract it) to enable analysis of who buys what and if anything can be achieved. Be open not secretive and it'll save them time. Process that are there to make one team's life easy is creating inefficiencies. ... Failure to make staff accountable is [also] a major issue, especially with expenditure.”</p> <p>“I'm a little sceptical about putting resource into new tendering as the tendering process itself seems to create a large, slow and expensive bureaucracy of its own. I would like to see tendering processes, simplified so that good staff can move lightly, take their own decisions and build on constructive relations with suppliers.”</p> <p><b>Perceived relationship between current contractors and NCC</b>  “Current contract bidding is wide open to commercial manipulation - you must stop telling them what they can get away with.”</p> <p>“The retendering of contracts will be a waste of time as the same companies will still get in as the preferred option even though they are no good.”</p> <p><b>Value for money</b>  “Procurement in particular needs to be reviewed. Most public bodies seem to pay more for goods and services through business accounts than members of the public might pay for the same things.”</p> <p><b>Quality of services</b>  “Also by retendering services increase the risk that the cheaper option might be chosen to the detriment of the quality of service. We have seen it with some of the domiciliary care providers.”</p> <p><b>Short-sightedness</b>  “In redesigning contracts and the way things are bought it will be very important to ensure a good quality of service and not buying on the cheap which would cost more in the longer term.”</p> <p><b>Rationale for retendering</b>  “What evidence do the County Council have that over a reasonable period that re-tendering has realised efficiencies and quality services?”</p> <p><b>Cost-shifting</b></p>
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	I fully support recommissioning as long as it isn't a ploy to get the same services for cheaper therefore placing burden on charities and third sector orgs.
1b – Changing the way that we use our rebates and funding sources.	Two people commented on proposal 1b and both were concerned that <b>suppliers</b> would be 'squeezed' or penalised.
1c - Reduce costs by finding more cost effective IT and business travel options for staff.	<p><b>22 respondents commented on proposal 1c: there was general agreement with the proposal to reduce costs by finding more cost effective IT and business travel options for staff.</b></p> <p><b>Cost effective IT</b>          "Nobody ever saved real money through IT - do better with what you have."          "Better ICT would allow staff to make far more of their time, as would reducing unnecessary bureaucracy."          "IT efficiency needs to be a top priority."</p> <p><b>Travel options</b>          "Stop leasing cars and pay people a mileage, surely? I appreciate that there will still be a need for some instances of leasing though."            "I know sometimes travel is necessary (for your staff) but I think it should be reduced to virtually never. I work from home for Oxford University. I work closely with my boss and yet have only seen him in person, rather than on Skype, once in the last four years."            One person said NCC should be more commercially minded and another gave an example of a recently introduced IT system in libraries which has proven to be time-consuming rather than time-saving.</p>
1d - Reduce the costs of our buildings and make full use of our own facilities.	<p><b>14 people commented on proposal 1d: there was overall agreement with the proposal to reduce the costs of our buildings and make full use of our own facilities.</b></p> <p>Suggestions included installing solar panels on schools, selling off land or properties, and offering IT facilities in schools to the public after hours. One respondent, whilst in agreement with the proposal expressed concern with the practicalities: "I cannot see how a fire station could be used as an external venue, surely they don't have conference rooms to let...that is not their purpose".</p>
2a – Make more money and recover more costs from the services we charge for.	<p><b>Seven people commented on proposal 2a: there was overall agreement with the proposal to make more money and recover more costs from the services we charge for.</b></p> <p>One person suggested making money from cafes in libraries and charging for internet use; another that revenue from recycling should be increased and costs of land-fill reduced by offering discounted garden composting and charging for black bins. Two people commented that NCC should draw inspiration from the private sector and "be more ambitious and commercial to raise more income".</p>

<p>3a – Review management and staff structures</p>	<p><b>44 people commented on proposal 3a to review management and staff structures: opinions were divided about the benefits of this proposal.</b></p> <p>Some respondents said that the number of managers and Members in NCC is excessive and their salaries are too high. Others contrasted previous cuts to front line services with general staff restructuring: “as front line services have been cut in previous years it is now time to look at the higher levels to see if any jobs overlap and could be put together to save cost”.</p> <p>Respondents also focused on the possible effects of reducing levels of staff on different groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service users: “when reviewing staffing levels it must be recognised that good service to customers is dependent on motivated and valued staff”.</li> <li>• NCC - “sometimes means paying more to hire in contractors to do the work that still needs to be done”.</li> <li>• Staff – “Frontline staff in particular should not have workloads continually increased so they feel unable to provide an effective service.”</li> </ul> <p>The cost of continued reorganisation was also commented upon: “making people redundant and then hiring them back on higher wages as contractors makes no sense and effects staff morale”.</p>
<p>3b – Develop different ways of working to reduce the cost of delivering shared services.</p>	<p><b>Five people commented on proposal 3b</b> to develop different ways of working to reduce the cost of delivering our shared services. Two people suggested we make better use of technology and one stated that technology cannot replace people.</p>
<p>3c – Redesigning the way we deliver our services to reduce our costs</p>	<p><b>Two people responded on proposal 3c</b> to redesign some services and reduce costs. One person highlighted the need to consult with services users about potential change and the other referred to the possibility of working more closely with health partners.</p>
<p>3d – Cutting some budgets.</p>	<p><b>Five people commented on proposal 3d</b> to cut some budgets; two people made reference to reducing retirements costs, one to the need to continue consultation and another to the cost of producing the newsletter.</p>
<p>3e – Reduce the cost of delivering services.</p>	<p><b>Eight people commented on proposal 3e</b> to reduce the cost of delivering services. Four respondents were in favour of reducing street lighting.</p>
<p>3f – Manage our investments in a different way.</p>	<p><b>Two people commented on proposal 3f</b> to manage our investments in a different way. One respondent was in favour of the proposal on the grounds that it: “relates to the financial efficiency of the council, generates large savings and does not appear directly to impact on core services” and the other wanted more information.</p>

Ideas	
	<p>Some respondents made suggestions to improve efficiency but there were many more general comments about how we work and what we do: some were based on factually incorrect information (for example, that staff receive subsidised meals in the County Hall canteen) but are reported here to give a flavour of the breadth of people's concerns and current thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff:</b> challenge staff who appear to lack accountability or are resistant to innovation, make it easier for staff to be innovative and challenge bad practice, use community development workers differently for whole community support, ask staff for their suggestions, create new posts to review efficiency.</li> <li>• <b>Members:</b> reduce number of Members or their allowances.</li> <li>• <b>County Hall:</b> charge for car parking and reduce subsidies in canteen, improve electronic systems such as Oracle, cap mileage claims.</li> <li>• <b>Ways of working:</b> align everything to outcomes, make people [service users] aware of costs and charge more for expensive services, create an efficiency working group in NCC to review working practices.</li> <li>• <b>Partnership working:</b> work with private sector, merge or work with other councils, work alongside local businesses.</li> <li>• <b>Schools and early years:</b> review small school policy, ensure all lights are turned off in schools out of hours, ask grandparents to volunteer in nurseries, cut nursery provision, add solar panels to each school.</li> <li>• <b>Travel and transport:</b> improve pavements and road signage, invest more in cycling and public transport, stop the NDR, defer the NDR Western section.</li> <li>• <b>Revenue raising:</b> sell compost from recycled materials, put café in Park and Ride bases and libraries, sell off land and property, charge for waste collection, charge for internet use in libraries.</li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> attract more businesses, charge tourists a small fee towards the services they use while in the county.</li> </ul>

Equality Impact Assessment	
Describe any information in the responses which relates to EqIA	<p>In their response to this proposal, one group highlighted a potential legal challenge as a result of previous cuts and proposed reductions: "furthermore, we are aware that an independent report to NCC as part of the peer review process has shown that the last round of cuts to adult social care were too deep to keep people safe and meet statutory duties".</p>

### Analyst notes

Any other things you think report writers should know when presenting findings

16 people **critiqued** the consultation process on the grounds of lack of clarity or format. One respondent wanted to know the cost of making the proposed savings: making staff redundant, the cost of major retendering exercises, the impact on society if care is not provided, and the costs of not investing in education.

### Other Information

- 311 people responded to this proposal.

**Summary completed 6.1.15, Business Intelligence and Performance Service.**