

Budget Consultation:

It's time to talk about the budget 2016-17

The findings from the public consultation

Headlines:

In December 2015 we concluded our six week public consultation on your council's budget for 2016-17. This happened by asking the public to 'weigh up' a series of statements, asking them to choose the ones that come closest to their own opinions. We also asked the public to name the single most important thing they think the council does.

The budget consultation period ran alongside a Community Challenge as part of the wider 'It's Time to Talk' engagement activity. The Community Challenge asked the public which of 12 activities they could do to make a difference in their local area.

In summary:

- **1410 people** took part in the consultation
- 90% of responses were from residents of Kirklees
- The **most popular** of the 12 options were:

Parents have a clear responsibility for getting their children to school safely

I think the council should help to maximise disabled people's independence by helping them do more for themselves

I think that the council should use modern technology to deliver services and reduce costs wherever possible

- The **least popular** of the 12 options were:

The council should provide services that enable children to get to school safely

I think it's important to meet the needs of disabled people by doing things for them

Modern technology doesn't really suit me - I need to have other options available to me

- When asked what the most important thing the council does is, the most popular theme was supporting vulnerable people.

Introduction

In 2014 we ran the largest and most successful (in terms of responses) public consultation on the budget. Split over two phases a total of 4595 responses were received. This consultation was on both broad themes for the direction of prioritisation of the council, and specific budget options and ideas on council service changes, for 2015 – 2018.

The feedback from the 2014 consultation gave many future options and ideas which continue to help make decisions for 2015-16 and beyond.

The public consultation for 2015 was open for six weeks (Monday 26th October to Sunday 6th December 2015). It focused on what the public supported the least and the most, on options of how the council will work differently in the future.

As we continue making some big changes to Kirklees Council, to make it both more innovative and modern, with the backdrop of a reducing budget from central Government, we seek to best support three key priorities:

- supporting communities to do more for themselves and each other
- keeping vulnerable people safe and helping them to stay in control of their lives
- focusing on the things that only the council can do

Councillors will use the findings from 2015 alongside the feedback from 2014 to help them make budget decisions, with the final budget being set in February 2016.

Who took part?

We received a total of 1410 responses to the public consultation. All of these responses were received online (a small print run of paper copies was available on request but no responses were received).

The majority of consultation responses were from Kirklees residents (90%). 2% came from local community groups, organisations, or local businesses. 20% were from Kirklees Council employees (most of our staff live locally).

There were more responses from South Kirklees (69%) than North Kirklees (27%). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 92, and 62% were female. 8% said they were from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background, 10% identified themselves as disabled and 6% as lesbian, gay or bisexual. 72% said they were in paid work.

Summary of results

We asked people to 'weigh up' which of two statements came closest to their own opinion to 12 options of how the council could work differently in the future. The table below summarises the results in order of popularity, with **most popular** statement first:

Most support



	Total %	Most supported 'weighing up' options
1	1150 (84%)	Parents have a clear responsibility for getting their children to school safely
2	1139 (83.5%)	I think the council should help to maximise disabled people's independence by helping them do more for themselves
3	1124 (81.5%)	I think that the council should use modern technology to deliver services and reduce costs wherever possible
4	1020 (74%)	I would generally prefer to travel to a central location, with a wider range of services available
5	1011 (74%)	Parents and voluntary organisations should provide services for young people, such as out of school activity
6	1000 (73%)	The council should focus its resources on preventing people dropping litter and fly-tipping
7	940 (68.5%)	The council should prioritise its own budget concentrating on the services it should provide
8	868 (63%)	I would be prepared to make a voluntary financial donation when I use a service
9	829 (60%)	People should be willing to pay a small extra amount of money for these services that don't usually have a charge
10	778 (57%)	I think it's important that the council sets aside some money to support new and existing businesses
11	754 (55.5%)	I think the collections should stay where they are now
12	716 (52%)	The council should prioritise maintaining services that are used by most people or that all residents benefit from

The second table summarises the results to show the **least popular** statement first:

Least support



	Total %	Least supported 'weighing up' options
1	223 (16%)	The council should provide services that enable children to get to school safely
2	225 (16.5%)	I think it's important to meet the needs of disabled people by doing things for them
3	255 (18.5%)	Modern technology doesn't really suit me - I need to have other options available to me
4	353 (26%)	The council should provide all services for all young people
5	353 (26%)	I would generally prefer to travel to separate places to access different services
6	377 (27%)	The council should focus its resources cleaning up litter and abandoned waste
7	433 (31.5%)	The council should top-up other public service budgets where they have reduced, to help preserve the services they provide
8	510 (37%)	I would not be prepared to make a voluntary financial donation when I use a service
9	548 (40%)	People should not be asked to pay extra for these council services that don't usually have a charge
10	597 (43%)	I don't think that the council should set money aside to support new and existing businesses
11	605 (44.5%)	I think the council should hold exhibitions in new and different locations around Kirklees
12	661 (48%)	The council should prioritise maintaining services for the most vulnerable adults and children in Kirklees

We then asked people to state what they think is the **single most important thing the council does**. We received 752 statement responses to this question, plus an additional three via social media (Facebook).

These statements have been themed, with the most common theme being ‘**supporting vulnerable people**’ with roughly a third of participants indicating that this is the single most important thing the council does.

Other popular responses were ‘**waste collection**’, ‘**services for all**’, ‘education’, ‘**the environment**’, ‘**safe communities**’ and ‘**roads**’.

Selection of some of the responses:

“Looking after vulnerable people, young and old”

“Most important = ensuring vulnerable people are supported.”

“providing support to disadvantaged groups”

“Cleaning and refuse collection, including management of recycling”

“Collects bins as it's the only service I feel I get from my monthly huge payment of council tax”

“Emptying domestic bins and collecting fly-tipped or other dumped waste, street cleaning”

“Provide & Maintain the local infrastructure, so that residents can work & live well for themselves.”

“Provide essential services for all.”

“Supports the education of all Kirklees residents”

“Provide good quality education”

“Looking after the environment in which we live, i.e. litter, lighting, highways etc.”

“They make Kirklees a fabulous place to live work and visit!”

“Making sure that the communities are safe and happy.”

“Ensuring a safe friendly and supportive environment for all residents.”

“Highway maintenance”

“Keeping roads in a good condition (this could be better) so we don't all grind to a halt.”

“Offering experiences and resources to the public through its great museums, galleries and libraries”

“Collect Council Tax”

“Be a central point of contact”

“Concentrate on things that really matter”

“Helping people with council homes and repairs”

“Supporting growth and development of Huddersfield e.g. growth of the University.”

What next?

Results from this public consultation will be used by councillors, to help them make decisions on the budget for 2016-17 and beyond.

Final budget decisions for 2016-17 will be made at Full Council meeting in February 2016.