

Balancing the books

Planning your council's budget for 2015-18 and beyond

The findings from Phase 1 of the public consultation

Headlines:

In September 2014 we started Phase 1 of our public consultation on your council's budget. More than 1,600 of you took part in this and gave your views on council tax, selling council assets, economic growth and development, and our three bold themes in planning for the future.

In summary:

- Just over half of you (52%) said residents should pay a 2% increase in council tax, and 16% supported an increase of 5%. Around a third (32%) felt there should be no increase in council tax at all.
- Two thirds (65%) agreed that the council should sell some of its assets (land and buildings) for cash.
- Almost three quarters (72%) agreed that the council should support economic development – including building more homes and business premises in Kirklees.
- There was also support for continuing to focus on our three bold themes of health and wellbeing, economic resilience, and early intervention and prevention.

We received lots of comments too, which have helped us to understand more about what's important to you.

Introduction - a two phase approach

We are now part way through 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.

This report summarises the findings for the Phase 1 consultation. As part of our ongoing commitment to listening to our local communities, we asked some general questions to inform our budget proposals.

Phase 2 will ask for views on specific budget proposals. Following Phase 2, an overall report will be compiled bringing together the results from both phases. Councillors will use this report in helping them make budget decisions, with the final budget being set at the Council meeting on 18th February 2015.

Who took part?

The **response rate** for Phase 1 of this year's budget consultation has been the highest ever.

We received 1679 responses, of which:

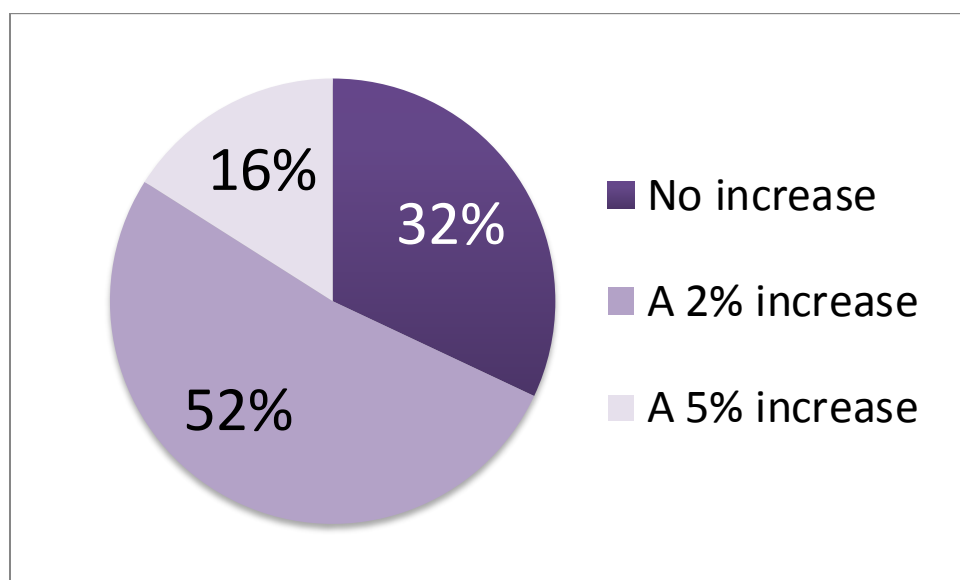
- 1245 were online surveys
- 398 were paper surveys
- 36 were written comments (letters or emails)

Of the 1643 completed questionnaires, the majority (77% - 1258 people) came from Kirklees residents. 556 responses (34%) were from Kirklees Council employees – most of our employees are also Kirklees residents. We received 61 responses on behalf of local community groups/organisations, and 24 on behalf of local businesses.

Breakdown of results

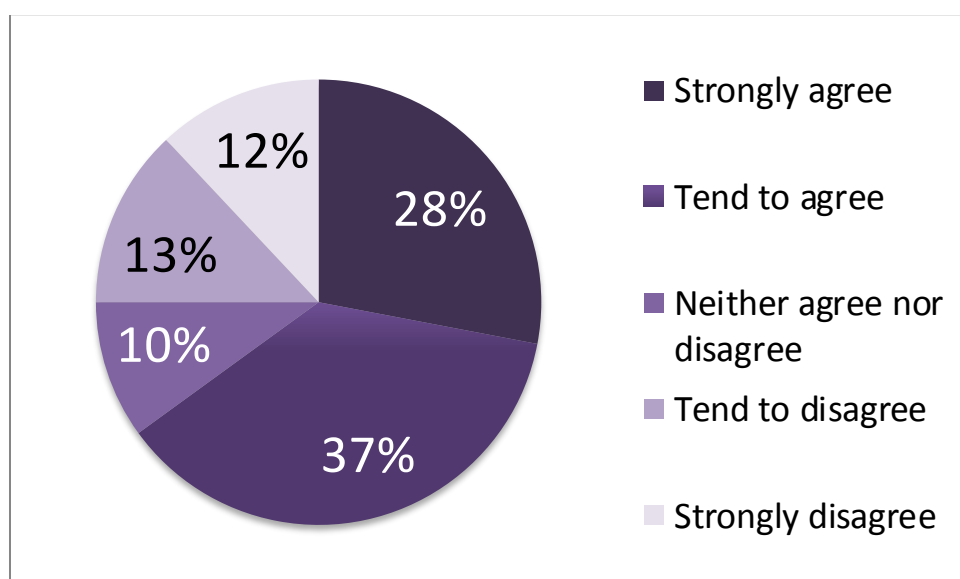
Council tax

Thinking about council tax for 2015-18, do you think Kirklees residents should be asked to pay..



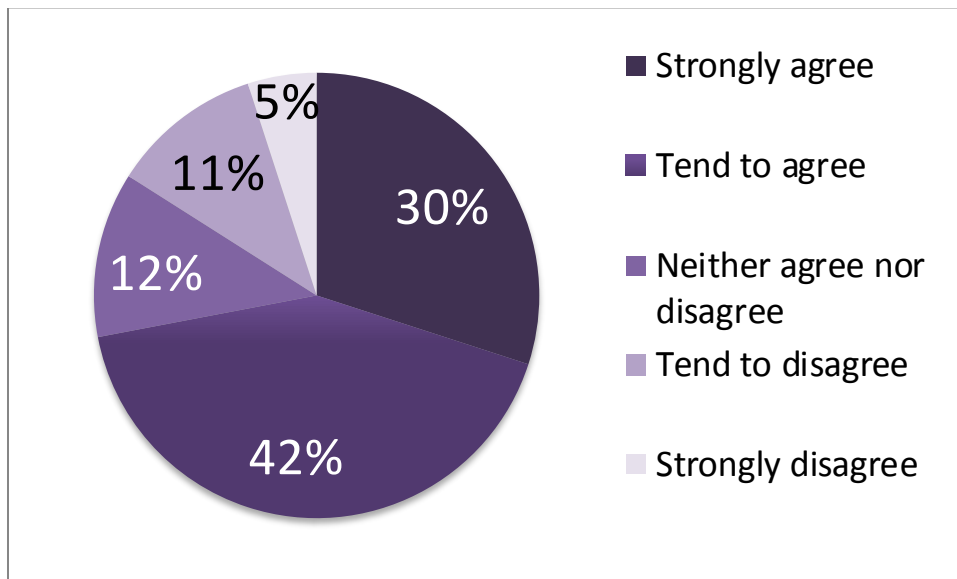
Selling council assets

How far do you agree or disagree that your council should sell some council assets (land and buildings) for cash?



Economic growth and development

How far do you agree or disagree that your council should support economic growth and development in Kirklees – including building more homes and business premises?



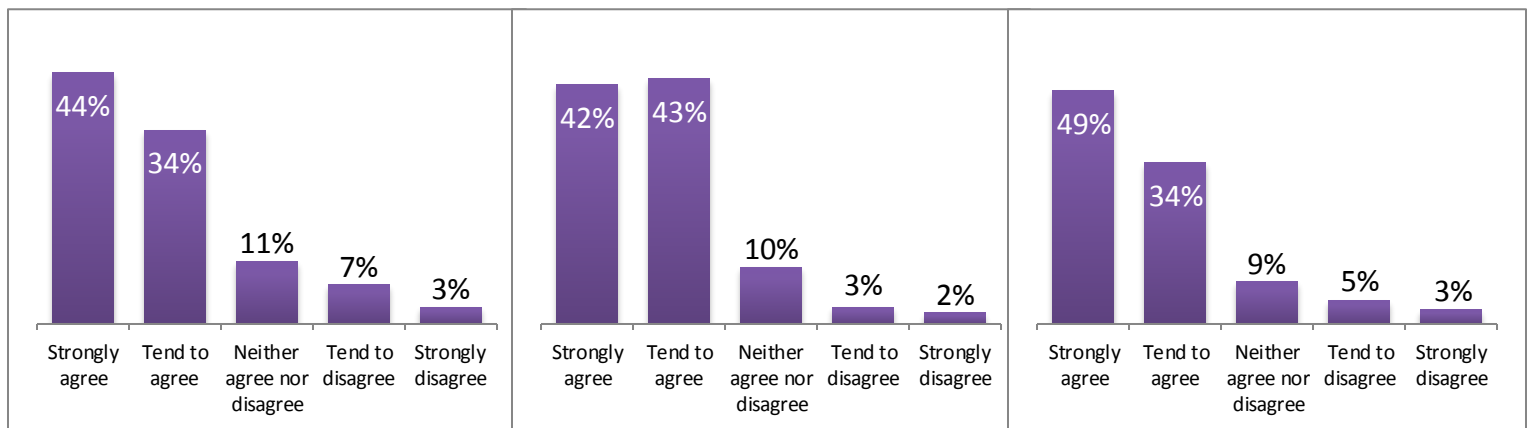
Planning for the future – our three bold themes

How far do you agree or disagree that your council should continue to make plans to support each of the following:

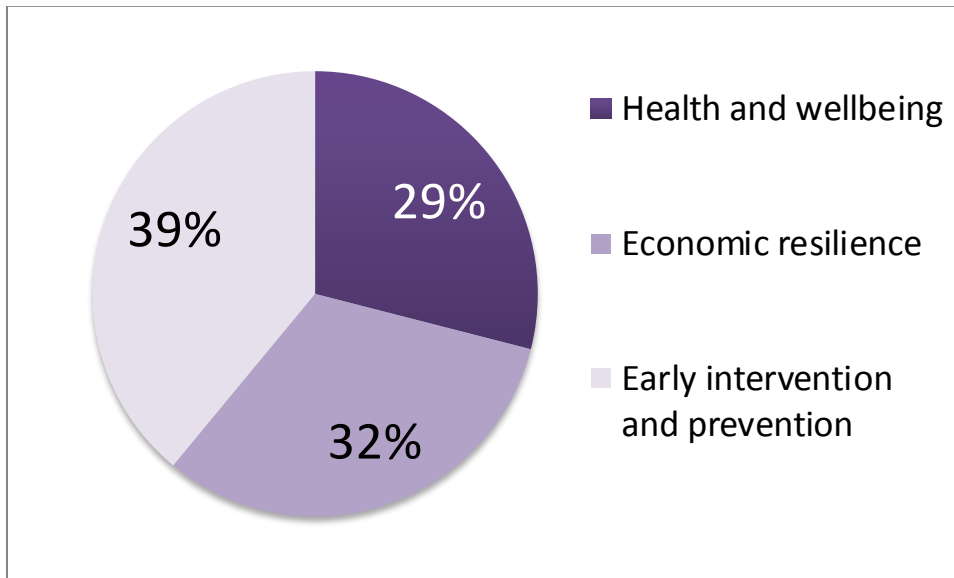
Health and wellbeing

Economic resilience

Early intervention and prevention



And which ONE of these themes do you think is the most important for your council to focus on in the future:



What next?

Many written comments were also included with people's completed surveys. These comments help explain the reasoning behind the results.

Both the results from this consultation (phase 1) and the phase 2 consultation will be used to help councillors make decisions on the budget. A full report on all the findings will be available in early 2015.