

Draft Budget and Council Plan Consultation 2017-18 – Feedback Summary

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to set out the Draft Budget and Council Plan consultation process, key consultation findings (including an understanding of who participated in the consultation) and how the feedback will be used to inform decisions on the final Budget and Council Plan.

2. Cabinet decision and formal consultation

The Draft Budget and Council Plan proposals were agreed by Cabinet on the 6th December 2016. This began a six week period of consultation, as set out in the council's constitution¹, which ran from 13th December 2016 to 24th January 2017. Full details of the Draft Budget consultation can be found on the county council's Consultation Register².

3. How was the consultation promoted?

Councillors, local MPs and MEPs, district and borough councils, parish and town councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, representatives from protected characteristic groups, local business groups, customer and user groups and members of the Northamptonshire Residents' Panel were formally invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, and/or within their local area.

Opportunities to take part in the consultation were also promoted in the local media, through the council's website, e-newsletter and via the county council's social media channels.

4. How did consultees have their say?

Local people and organisations were able to have their say in a range of ways:

- Visiting the Draft Budget and Council Plan Consultation webpage
- Visiting the county council's Consultation Register
- Completing an online survey
- Emailing: consult@northamptonshire.gov.uk
- Writing to Draft Budget and Council Plan Consultation, Northamptonshire County Council, County Hall, Northampton, NN1 1DN
- Using social media: Tweeting @mycountycouncil or posting comments on the mycountycouncil Facebook page or LinkedIn page
- Using the toolkit to hold their own discussions and feeding back to us
- Signing or submitting a petition or e-petition

Some consultees choose to submit their views about the Draft Budget Proposals directly to local MPs, the county council's Chief Executive, or other senior officers or managers in NCC. These responses would then be forwarded to the 'Consult' mail box for logging with other responses received.

¹ On the 27th November 2014 Full Council agreed a [change](#) to Part 4(c) Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules to reduce the period of draft budget and council plan consultation from 8 weeks to 6 weeks.

² <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/consultations/pages/register.aspx>

5. Budget scrutiny

In addition to the consultation channels outlined above, local people and organisations were invited to take part in five separate Budget Scrutiny meetings (also known as 'challenge sessions'):

- Monday 19 December 2016 – The first meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, to identify which proposals should be subject to further scrutiny.
- Tuesday 3 January 2017 – An opportunity for members of the public to give their views about environment, planning and transport matters (NCC Place directorate).
- Wednesday 4 January – An opportunity for members of the public to give their views about children, families and education proposals.
- Thursday 5 January – An opportunity for members of the public to give their views about adult social care services proposals.
- Friday 6 January - An opportunity for members of the public to give their views about prevention, health and wellbeing matters.

Scrutiny of the draft council budget happens at the same time as the consultation process but has a different focus. Here, councillors look at the draft budget proposals and make recommendations that reflect their views about whether or not proposals will do what is intended.

Members of the public and organisational representatives are also able to attend these sessions. A summary of the views expressed by three organisations (Corby Borough Council, Healthwatch, and Home Start Northamptonshire) and a member of the public who attended some of the different Scrutiny challenge sessions detailed above. . As these are not technically consultation responses, they have not been added to the overall count of responses received (section 6, below).

6. Number and type of consultation responses received

During the six week draft budget consultation period, excluding unique web page views of Draft Budget specific web pages (which may, or may not, have led to a consultation response), and social media comments (which have been logged, but not counted as consultation feedback) using the various means available to consultees, **158** local people and organisations have contributed to the consultation. Responses were made through the following channels.

- The Draft Budget consultation website received a total of 1,860 unique views.
- 18 local people, partner agencies and local organisations (including borough and district councils, parish councils, charities, support and advocacy services) made formal representations by email, letter or social media, through the Consult mailbox.
- 140 consultees completed the online survey, hosted at SurveyMonkey.com
- Via social media, two relevant draft budget specific tweets were recorded (e.g. individuals voicing their opinion about specific Draft Budget Proposals) and opinions about the Draft Budget were logged by two individuals on Facebook.

During the consultation period a weekly summary of all consultation responses received was circulated to decision makers and scrutiny councillors to ensure such responses were considered in full.

6.1 Why is the volume of Draft Budget Consultation feedback for 2017-18 so much lower than 2016-17?

In comparison to last year's Draft Budget and Council Plan consultation, far fewer consultation responses have been received through all relevant channels. For the 2016-17 consultation, 101 bespoke (e.g. individual or organisational responses to the Draft Budget Consultation, sent by email or letter) responses and 376 online surveys were received, and close to 4,000 unique web page views of Draft Budget specific web pages on the NCC site. In the 2016-17 consultation, three separate petitions were also received during the consultation period, containing 3,534 signatures³.

The lower number of responses received in 2017-18 is not symptomatic of a lack of interest in the plans and proposals in the Draft Budget consultation, but is likely to reflect a different corporate approach being taken to consultation this year. The context in which this Draft Budget Consultation has taken place is different to previous years, with more of an emphasis on concurrent consultation and providing a clearer consultation narrative.

6.2 Concurrent consultation

Throughout December 2016 and January 2017, several high-profile consultations ran alongside the Draft Budget Consultation, mainly in Adult Social Care Services and Children, Families and Education, but also across other directorates. This is a relatively new approach to corporate consultation, which has been used this year to enable consultees to comment directly on key issues of concern to them, as well as the 'overarching' Council Plan and each directorate's plan/proposals.

Thus, whilst Draft Budget Consultation-specific responses are fewer, overall, rates of participation and engagement are actually higher. Consultees have been able to focus more specifically on the proposed service changes that they are most interested in, as well as the 'direction of travel' proposals and plans which are contained in the Draft Budget consultation. Examples of consultations running concurrently with the Draft Budget include:

- A consultation specifically on the development of Northamptonshire Adult Social Services.⁴
- Utilising Block Residential Care Contracts to facilitate greater choice (a consultation on the proposed expansion of existing provision for long term care beds for older people and people with dementia).⁵
- A consultation which focusses on changes to the ways in which Children's Centre Services will be delivered in Northamptonshire.⁶ As of 30th January, 462 have completed the online survey associated with this consultation.

³ Two of these petitions focussed on a general 'anti-cuts' theme, with the other focussing on opposition to the proposed closure of two elderly people's care homes.

⁴ <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/consultations/pages/Details.aspx?cid=6ab58f54-bc75-40b6-bad2-1304346a7653&search=current&page=1&sortby=3¤tposition=0>

⁵ <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/consultations/pages/Details.aspx?cid=6331c553-a776-46ee-b2c8-8d7931059da7&search=current&page=1&sortby=3¤tposition=0>

⁶ <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/council/consultations/pages/Details.aspx?cid=11d0e89c-11f1-41c8-aef2-382f31f637e9&search=current&page=1&sortby=3¤tposition=0>

The examples cited above are not the only consultations running concurrently with the Draft Budget consultation, but examples of consultation and engagement activities which have flowed from, and will feed back into, the proposals contained in the main Draft Budget Consultation.

6.3 A clearer consultation narrative

Another important contextual factor underlying the change in Draft Budget response rate is the adoption of a clearer consultation narrative. In the 2016-17 consultation (carried out in 2015-16) a significant volume of consultation feedback was received from individuals with concerns about service changes which were actually *not* being proposed (or even considered), and were not part of any of the Draft Budget proposals. Specifically, consultees raised concerns about what they understood to be proposed changes to short-break provision for disabled children, and clubs/organisations supporting disabled children. Neither of these were actually proposed as part of the consultation.

Having specific examples of proposed service changes for people to express their views and opinions on, rather than just overarching budget lines/proposals, can be seen to have helped consultees to understand exactly what is being consulted on, and how specific service changes fit into the overarching Council Plan, and each directorate's plans and proposals. Judging by the combined interest in the Draft Budget and Council Plan consultation and other directorates' proposed service changes, this new approach to consultation seems to be helping interested parties to consult more effectively, and target their responses accordingly. However, such an approach to consultation must be carefully managed and coordinated, if it is to continue to provide an effective and holistic way for stakeholders, partners and members of the public to engage with both the Draft Budget and Council Plan, and service-specific consultations.

7. What did people say?

The remainder of the report focuses on two specific types of consultation feedback: bespoke consultation responses received via the Consult mailbox and consultation feedback received through online surveys. The 'bespoke' responses tended to focus on single issues of concern to consultees, whilst responses to the online survey contained formal responses to a series of specific questions.

7.1 Consultation responses received via 'Consult' mailbox

At the conclusion of the consultation, **18** emails, letters and social media messages have been received through the bespoke mailbox for consultation correspondence⁷. Collectively, these have been grouped as 'organisational' or 'individual' representations.

⁷ Consult@northamptonshire.gov.uk - this mailbox is the key channel for consultees wishing to register representations directly, or for consultees with specific concerns or questions. Using this mailbox ensures all consultation responses are recorded and collated in the same way, and subject to the same scrutiny.

7.2 Organisational responses to the consultation [10]

- Five responses have been received from the borough and district councils. All borough and district councils in the county have submitted a consultation response, with the exceptions of Northampton Borough Council and Corby Borough Council⁸.
- One response was received from a Northamptonshire Parish Council (Irchester).
- Four responses were received from other organisations: The Lowdown (support/advocacy for young people); the National Deaf Children's Society; The Northamptonshire Breastfeeding Alliance and Healthwatch Northamptonshire.

The organisational responses tend to be lengthier and focus on a wider range of issues general than the individual consultation responses, commenting (in the majority of cases) on both the overarching Council Plan and directorate's plan and proposals.

7.3 Individual responses to the consultation [8]

Eight responses from individuals/members of the general public, writing in a personal and/or professional capacity were received. **Figure 1** (below) provides an overview of the primary interest of people registering an individual consultation response.

Excluding three consultees whose responses do not indicate why they have submitted a consultation response, the majority of the individual consultees expressed an interest in Adult Social Care, and specifically mentioned the proposed review of Olympus Care Services (ASC Directorate budget line 16-001-18). In both the individual consultation responses captured here, and the survey-based consultation responses covered in section 8 of this report, the directorate plans and proposals for Adult Social Care are the primary focus for the majority of consultees.

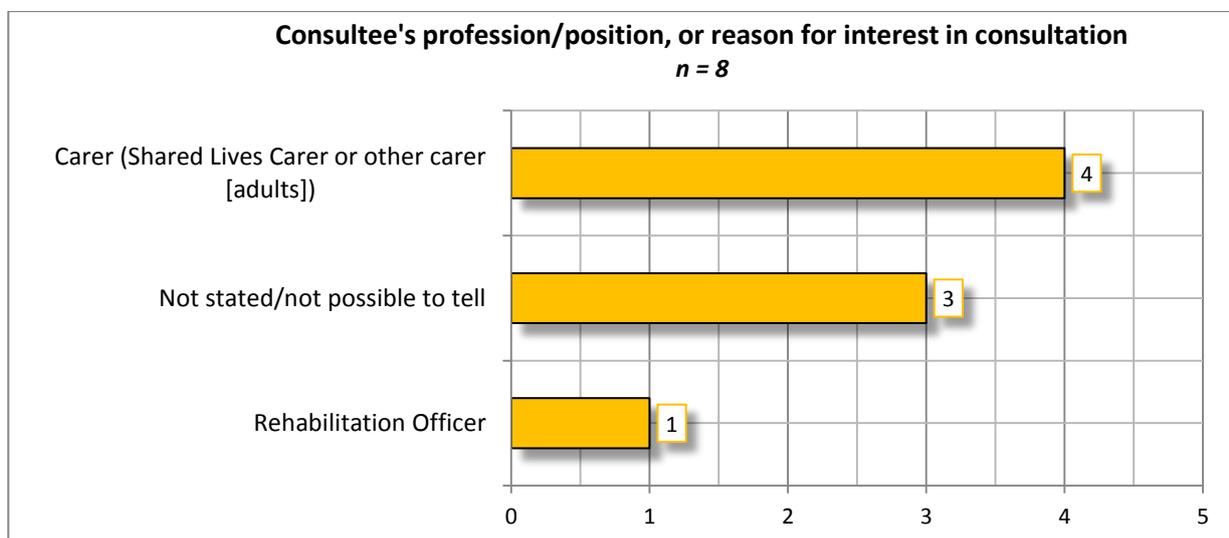


Figure 1: Consultee's profession/position or reason for interest in consultation

The remaining three consultees focus on different issues: how public money has (or should have) been spent by the county council; the provision of services within the CFE directorate,

⁸ A representative (The Director of Corporate Services) from Corby Borough Council did attend the introductory Scrutiny Challenge Session on 19th December 2016.

and what the consultee feels should be priority areas for NCC, and lastly, one consultee who strongly supports the idea of a unitary authority for Northamptonshire.

8. Consultation responses received via online survey

Responses to the online survey provide indications about the level of agreement with each of the four main elements of the consultation. These are outlined below, with the corresponding section of analysis in this report indicated by square brackets:

1. The proposed council tax increase of 3.95% (1.95% and 2% specifically for adult social care) [section 9]
2. The budget proposals and plans by each directorate [section 10]
3. The proposed schedule of fees and charges for 2016-17 [section 11]
4. An understanding of the demographics of the people who took part in this consultation (equalities monitoring) [Section 12]

9. Proposed Increase to council tax of 3.95%

As part of the draft budget and council plan consultation, a two-part increase to council tax was proposed, the same level of increase proposed in the 2016-17 consultation. This consists of a 1.95% general council tax increase to fund all NCC services, and a 2% increase, specifically to fund Adult Social Care.

9.1 To what extent do you agree with the proposed increase of 1.95% to council tax, to fund all services provided by Northamptonshire County Council?

Answer Options	Response (%)	Response (No.)
Strongly agree	25.6%	34
Agree	36.8%	49
Neither agree nor disagree	15.8%	21
Disagree	12.8%	17
Strongly disagree	9.0%	12
No opinion	0.0%	0
Number of respondents answering question		133
Number of respondents skipping question		7

Table 1: Consultee responses to the proposed 1.95% increase to council tax increase.

The balance of consultee responses to the first of the survey questions (**Table 1**, above) was consistent throughout the consultation period, with the majority of consultees (83 respondents, or 62.4% of all responses received) either ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ with the first part of the two-part proposed increase to council tax.

9.2 To what extent do you agree with the proposed council tax increase of 2%, specifically to fund adult social care?

Answer Options	Response (%)	Response (No.)
Strongly agree	38.8%	52
Agree	28.4%	38
Neither agree nor disagree	9.7%	13
Disagree	13.4%	18
Strongly disagree	9.0%	12
No opinion	0.7%	1
Number of respondents answering question		134
Number of respondents skipping question		6

Table 2: Consultee responses to the proposed 2% increase to council tax (to fund adult social care).

As with responses to question 1, the majority of consultees (90 respondents, or 67.2% of all responses received) also either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the second part of the two-part proposed increase to council tax, specifically to fund adult social care.

9.3 If you disagree with one, or both, of the questions above, please could you indicate what you think Northamptonshire County Council should be doing with respect to council tax? For instance, do you think we should be increasing council tax by more, or less, than the stated 3.95%?

This question had been completed by 42 consultees (30% of respondents), with 98 respondents skipping the question. The following section provides a thematic overview of the content of respondents’ answers:

- *Council tax should be increased by more than 3.95%* - ten respondents (24%) felt that the level of the increase was insufficient. For these consultees, the preference is for a higher rate of council tax (e.g. more than the proposed 3.95% increase) instead of ‘the council cutting vital services’.
- *Transparency and accountability* – five respondents (12%) conditionally agree that a council tax increase is needed, but many stress they want to see exactly what the revenue from the council tax increase will be spent on. One consultee notes: ‘If you want more money from the public there needs to be clarity regarding what it is going to be spent on and transparency when sharing information with the public.’
- *General objection to the increase (no reason given)* - 32% of respondents (fourteen consultees) object to the proposed increase, and feel that the proposed 3.95% is too much/too high, although none make any suggestion about what the level of increase should be, or why it is ‘too high’.
- *Specific objection to the increase/use alternative means to generate revenue* – ten respondents (24%) felt that other savings could be realised instead of an increase to council tax. Suggestions from these consultees included workforce and workplace efficiencies; lobbying central government for increased funding and reducing ‘social care hand-outs’. One respondent also felt that council tax increases were punitive on the ‘working poor’ and other means of raising revenue should be pursued instead.
- *Other priorities* – the remaining three consultees (7%) who answered this question focussed on what they felt should be other ‘priority areas’ for council tax expenditure,

instead of just adult social care. The other priorities for these consultees were: fire and rescue services, investment in children's services as well as adult services; children's services (in isolation)

9.4 Do you have any other comments you'd like to make about the proposed change in council tax?

This question has been completed by 47 consultees (34% of respondents), with 93 respondents skipping the question. Unlike the responses summarised in section 9.3, however, there is little thematic consistency in consultees' responses (e.g. no evidence of the similar themes being mentioned by multiple consultees), making it difficult to provide a succinct overview.

Responses cover a wide range of suggestions about how revenue could potentially be realised through other channels, as well as discussion of the perceived impacts of the proposed council tax increase.

- That more robust collection of council tax from non-payers should be actively pursued as a means of reclaiming lost revenue/income.
- That historical opportunities to increase council tax have been lost (and, for some consultees, continue to be lost), resulting in the need for increased efficiencies and changes, or reductions in some county council provided services. An example of this: '[You] should have considered increases in council tax prior to this instead of sticking to policies which have clearly not worked and left the council in the current financial issues and the county council residents with poor and lack of appropriate service provision.'
- That more should be done to realise the revenue from the extensive new housing being developed across the county (e.g. the income from S106/CIL monies).
- That council services should, wherever possible, aim to become self-sustaining.
- That there should be more 'transparency' to enable the public to see how the increased council tax revenue is being spent.
- That more opportunities for savings could be realised through organisational efficiencies (e.g. redundancies, more efficient working).
- That central government should be lobbied for more money to be spent on critical front line services, not just the Adult Social Care Precept.

Within this section, a fairly large proportion of consultees mentioned issues outside of the county council's control or influence (e.g. the Northampton Town Football Club Loan issue⁹, funding for the Police and Crime Commissioner, overseas aid) as 'alternatives' to a council tax increase.

Lastly, five consultees drew attention to the fact that although they did not regard the council tax increase as disproportionate or too much, they did want to emphasise that even a modest increase in council tax could severely impact on the poorest sections of our community:

⁹ A popular misconception in some responses, and as one consultee notes: "The money that you [NCC] gave the chairman of Northampton town football club: there's 10 million of it."

- ‘The only concern I would raise is that families that are just managing to make ends meet would face more financial hardship.’
- ‘I am a single mum working full time and I don't get any help for council tax so currently paying £166 a month towards council tax which is not affordable. If the council tax was rising to help adult social care or mental health facilities I wouldn't mind but last year it went up a huge deal for [a] 'police contribution'...’

10. Directorate Plans and Draft Budget Proposals

The second section of the survey provides direct links to the key documents underpinning this consultation: the overarching Council Plan 2016-2020, and each of the five NCC directorates' Draft Budget Plans and Proposals, and asks consultees to identify which of these documents their responses will focus on. Questions are structured so that respondents can either focus on specific directorate plans/proposals, the Council Plan; submit a response which encompasses a focus on one or more of the above, or provide an overarching/general response.

10.1 Please tell us which proposal(s) (by directorate) you wish to comment on:

The first of the questions in this section was answered by 42 consultees, with 98 respondents skipping this question.

Directorate (or Plan)	Number of consultees commenting on
<i>NCC Plan 2016-2020 (Overarching)</i>	3
<i>NCC Group (Chief Executive Services)</i>	0
<i>NCC People Commissioning – Children, Families and Education</i>	1
<i>NCC People Commissioning – Adult Services</i>	21
<i>NCC People Commissioning – Public Health</i>	1
<i>NCC Place Commissioning</i>	3
<i>Comments on two or more of the above</i>	4 (of which: 1 [FFW/ASCS], 1 [Council Plan/NCC Group], 1 [Council Plan/NCC Group/ASCS], 1 [‘Overall Budget Approach, ASCS/Place])
<i>‘All’</i>	3
<i>Other</i>	1 [unitary authority]
<i>Not possible to tell</i>	5

Table 3: Responses to question 5 - breakdown of consultee responses by directorate(s).

As with last year's consultation (and previous Draft Budget consultations) some consultees have expressed frustration about the length, number and complexity of both individual consultation documents (the directorate plans and proposals), and suggest that the budget lines contained therein can be vague and opaque.

This may obviously have an impact on the number of consultation responses received for this part of the Draft Budget Consultation, although despite this obstacle, as Table 3 (above) indicates, consultees have commented on *all* directorates' plans/proposals, as well as the overarching Council Plan.

For the 2017-18 consultation, the plans/proposals of the People Commissioning – Adult Services (Adult Social Care Services) directorate have received considerably more attention than the plans/proposals of any other NCC directorate. Of the respondents answering this

question, 21 (50%) are commenting on the Adult Services plan and proposals. A similar trend was evident in the non-survey based Draft Budget consultation feedback (see section 7.3), wherein the majority of individual consultees focussed on the proposed review of Olympus Care Services and other Adult Social Care Services specific issues.

10.2 Please describe the impact you feel that [these directorate plans and proposals] may have.

Question 6 was answered by 34 consultees¹⁰, with 102 respondents skipping this question. The following headers provide an overview of the key issues raised by consultees.

- *Impact on the elderly and adults with disabilities* - 20 respondents (58% of those answering this question) felt that proposed changes to Adult Social Care Services and provision for disabilities and disabled people will have a number of adverse impacts, including:
 - The loss of independence and self-determination for people with disabilities.
 - Removing services from elderly people that are extremely important to their quality of life.
 - Reduce the level of protection for the elderly, and for the wider community, and increasing elderly people's vulnerability
 - Potential disruption for those in Olympus Care Services Homes (this was stressed by a number of consultees with elderly relatives in OCS care homes)
 - The provision of poor quality care.
- *Perception that the Olympus Care Services Review will have negative outcomes* - five respondents (15%) explicitly mention the proposed review of Olympus Care Services, and their concerns about this. Consultees feel that the savings outlined are not deliverable, that changes will further undermine public confidence, and that a lower, poorer standard of care will be the outcomes.
- *The overall approach to the provision of public sector services* – six respondents (17%) discuss wider, organisational concerns about the ability of NCC to continue to provide public sector services, questioning the direction of the council. One consultee notes: 'It seems the 'public' sector is slowly diminishing, to be taken over by private companies, or CICs, or aided by charities, but then the model fails and we are left with nothing.'
- *Other* – the remaining three consultees (8%) each focus on different areas, NCC's approach to budget management; the development of the A43 as a dual carriageway, and an argument against the idea of a unitary authority for Northamptonshire.

10.2 Please tell us what you think we could do to address (or mitigate) any potential impact(s) you feel that these draft budget proposals may have.

Question 7 was answered by 37 respondents, with 103 respondents skipping the question. Following on from the responses summarised in previous questions in this section, consultees have increasingly focussed on Adult Social Care related issues, and the

¹⁰ A further four consultees answered this question in a way that is unclear.

Olympus Care Services Review in particular. One consultees' view of this mirror many others expressed in this section:

'The budget saving proposals assigned to OCS do not have any explanation against them. How can people contribute to a consultation when we don't know any of the details as to what we are consulting on? OCS provide specialised services to the vulnerable adult population in Northamptonshire and are a trusted provider of care services. [...] Has any analysis been done to ensure that there are care providers out there that provide the same specialist care that OCS do?'

Concerns about this and other proposed changes to Adult Social Care Services (for the elderly) have been restated by consultees in their responses to this question, but the only suggestions for mitigating the (perceived) impacts of these proposals have been responses to the effect of: 'Don't make the changes.'

In other responses some consultees feel they haven't been able to fully understand, or engage with, each of the directorate plans/proposals and/or the overarching Council Plan. One respondent commented that there was a need to "Provide clear facts [and] clear proposals. Use the draft budget for what it is intended for – outlay the actual proposals [...] don't bamboozle the county with words that mean nothing."

By way of mitigation of the potential (or perceived) impacts of the Draft Budget proposals, some respondents have suggested that alternative funding sources could be explored. The possibility of sustained lobbying of central government for more money (especially for health and social care) or institutions such as the National Lottery, to provide money for core services have been mentioned by different consultees.

11. Fees and Charges

The third section of the online survey gives respondents the opportunity to see, and comment on all of the fees and charges (for chargeable services) proposed by Northamptonshire County Council for 2017-18. By necessity, the schedule is a fairly lengthy document, and possibly because of this, or because of the range of fees and charges summarised herein, this section of the draft budget consultation online survey has traditionally received the least interest from consultees, and the fewest comments. For the 2017-18 consultation this trend has been repeated again.

11.1 Please could you indicate whether you will be commenting on specific section(s) of the proposed schedule [of Fees and Charges for 2017-18], or the document as a whole?

25 respondents answered the first of the Fees and Charges questions (13 of whom have mentioned a specific fee/charge or section of the schedule), with 115 respondents skipping the question.

This question consists of two parts. Firstly, respondents are asked whether they would like to respond to the schedule as a whole, or to any specific part, and secondly, if respondents are focussing on a single fee/charge (or a set of fees and charges), what this would be.

The response breakdown below follows this pattern: Table 3 shows how respondents chose to answer this question, and the following table shows the areas of the schedule that respondents identified as being of interest to them.

Q8. Please could you indicate whether you will be commenting on specific section(s) of the proposed schedule, or the document as a whole?		
Answer Options	Response (%)	Response (no.)
Specific fee/charge or a specific section of the schedule	32%	8
On the schedule as a whole (e.g. your views on all of the fees and charges contained in the attached document).	68%	17
If your comments relate to a specific fee/charge, or a specific section of the schedule, please indicate which (see Table 5, below, shows respondents' answers)		13
Number of respondents answered question		24
Number of respondents skipped question		105

Table 4: Responses to Question 8(a) – Fees and Charges question

#	Response
1	This charge does not seem to appear on the schedule for some reason we have been unable to ascertain from the documents on the website: Adult Social Services: £50 charge in respect of having an social care eligibility assessment in event of failure to qualify for free assessment.
2	Adult social care
3	You should charge more for using the Archives service. Wealthy people go there.
4	It's not overly clear in many cases what the fee will be for (e.g. for psychology services in school - is this a day rate, one session, hourly rate?) In some cases, the fees are detailed as an hourly rate or per item. There needs to be consistency.
5	Again and again the most vulnerable in our society are hit upon again
6	I agree with the council's fees and charges on this schedule.
7	Some of the charges look surprisingly high, but [I'm] in no position to comment on this matter.
8	Room hire
9	The increases are small but there are few decreases.
10	Some seem excessive
11	Missing from this information schedule is the profit you make on each item/charge, these should all have a healthy profit margin to remain sustainable or they are simply a drain on the budget.

Table 5: Responses to Question 8(b) – specific areas of Fees and Charges Schedule respondents have chosen to comment on. Respondents 'no comments' or unclear answers (2) removed from table.

At the conclusion of the consultation period, only a limited number of consultees have commented directly on the remaining Fees and Charges questions in the online survey (9, 10 and 11 – sections 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4 below). In only one of these questions have more

than 10% of consultees engaged with the question (considerably less in questions 10 and 11). As such, consultees' responses are reproduced verbatim for the remainder of the Fees and Charges questions, with any 'editing' or additional comments indicated by square brackets.

11.2 Please could you describe the impact that you feel that these proposed fees and charges may have?

Only 16 respondents have chosen to answer this question (two of whom answered 'N/A' or 'none', with 124 respondents skipping the question).

#	Response
1	We believe [that the Adult Social Services: £50 charge in respect of having an social care eligibility assessment in event of failure to qualify for free assessment] may deter vulnerable people from requesting an assessment, resulting in reduced wellbeing and ability to live independent which, in turn, will mean it is more likely that NHS/NCC interventions, when eventually made, will be more expensive than would otherwise be the case. We believe needs assessments should remain free.
2	I have no issues with the proposed charges
3	People who want to use [the chargeable services] will pay the extra.
4	How will those referencing this fees document know what to charge without this detail?
5	Most of these fees seem to be tiny increments here and there. When was the last time [that] any of the services benchmarked themselves against other authorities or against the private sector? Do these fees reflect cost of delivery plus reasonable profit, based on a zero-based budget? Do any of the people setting these fees have any clue about how to earn commercial income?
6	These proposals appear to impact on the most vulnerable within the county. [There is] no clear outline on how the services will impact the overall general public.
7	Your room hire charges seem very low in relation to other places. Perhaps this can help to plug the gap.
8	Positive impact for children, families and education. Reduce the cost long term by investing in early intervention
9	Any increases will effect personal living standards
10	I am unable to de-cipher what the impact will be other than an increase in council tax
11	Potential hit on finances
12	Fees at point of access are a disproportionate burden on the poor and vulnerable. They widen social inequality.
13	Wages are not increasing, people are now being classed as JAM (just about managing). What are these people going to have to go without in order to meet the increases?
14	Need to happen however need a new system/process to make sure we get them!

Table 6: Responses to Question 9 – respondents' views on the impact that the proposed fees and charges may have.

11.3 Please could you tell us what you think we could do to mitigate against the impact of the proposed fees and charges you have identified [in the previous question].

Only 10 respondents chose to answer this question (and two of those did so with 'N/A' and 'none'), with 124 respondents skipping the question.

#	Response
1	Cancel the [ASC Assessment] charge
2	The fees sheet needs to have relevant detail and rules when matters are applied and thus the costs that are charged out / back to the function
3	Don't do it
4	Put the proposals in context
5	Raise the cost of hiring the rooms. Also, thinking about the plan, why can't developers be responsible for the elderly? For instance the affordable housing should include an old age living facility for rent or to buy, making the elderly able to stay close to relatives for assistance.
6	Balance increases against decreases! Easy to say difficult to deliver.
7	No costing
8	Take a step back and ask the people on the front line about their views and how they think money could be saved.

Table 7: Responses to Question 10 – respondents views on what could be done to mitigate against the impact of proposed fees and charges.

11.4 Do you have any alternative suggestions for raising income through fees and charges for NCC chargeable services?

13 respondents have chosen to answer this question (with four respondents answering with 'no', 'none' or 'N/A'), with 127 respondents skipping the question.

#	Response
1	Not in respect of that charge.
2	How are they collected? Are fees collected in a timely manner?
3	I feel that an increase in fees across all sections of at least 10% would reasonable and would not impact too much on individuals.
4	No you have already made your minds up been there before with this council
5	Make the service gold standard so people can see what they are paying for
6	Yes, raise the council tax to cover the abject failures of the last decade. especially for the tory voters of Geddington
7	Accept that changes will need to be made, and costs do rise. However a clear outline, with reasoning's will help with the proposals to ensure the county is getting best value for the services received. Also, so they have a clear understanding of WHY and how this will impact us on a daily basis.
8	See previous answers concerning collection of costs/fees.
9	Fundraising or donations.

Table 8: Responses to Question 11 – respondents' suggestions for alternatives to raising income through fees and charges.

12. Who responded to the online survey?

In total, 140 people have contributed to this consultation via online survey. Whilst it has not been possible to ascertain the demographic characteristics of the individual consultation responses received via the Consult mailbox (see section 7.3), 46 of the people (or, 33% of all respondents) who completed the survey also completed some, or all, of the demographic monitoring questions included in NCC online surveys.

The remaining demographic monitoring questions in this section are generally straightforward questions, covering respondents' protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g. gender, age, sexuality, gender identity/reassignment, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, disability, religion, and ethnicity/ethnic origin). Responses to each of these questions are shown graphically (**Figures 2 – 11**, below) without commentary.

12.1 Gender

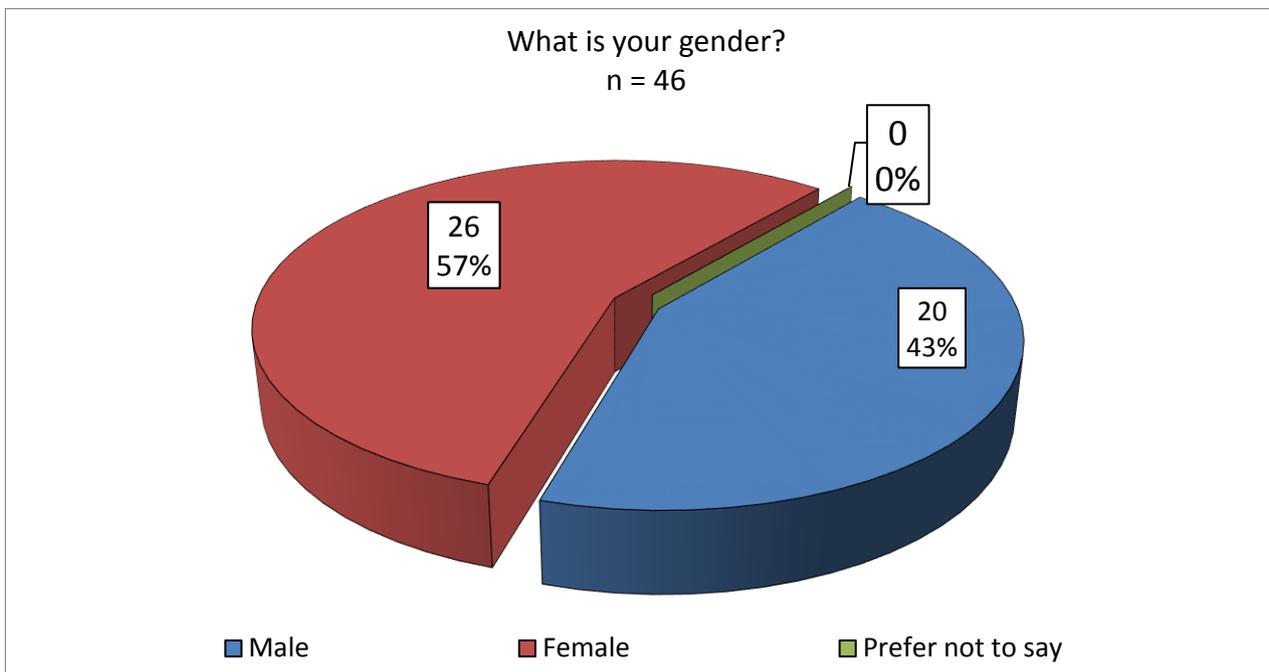


Figure 2: Gender breakdown of respondents completing survey. 46 respondents answered this question, with 94 skipping the question. No respondents chose 'prefer not to say'.

12.2 Age of respondents

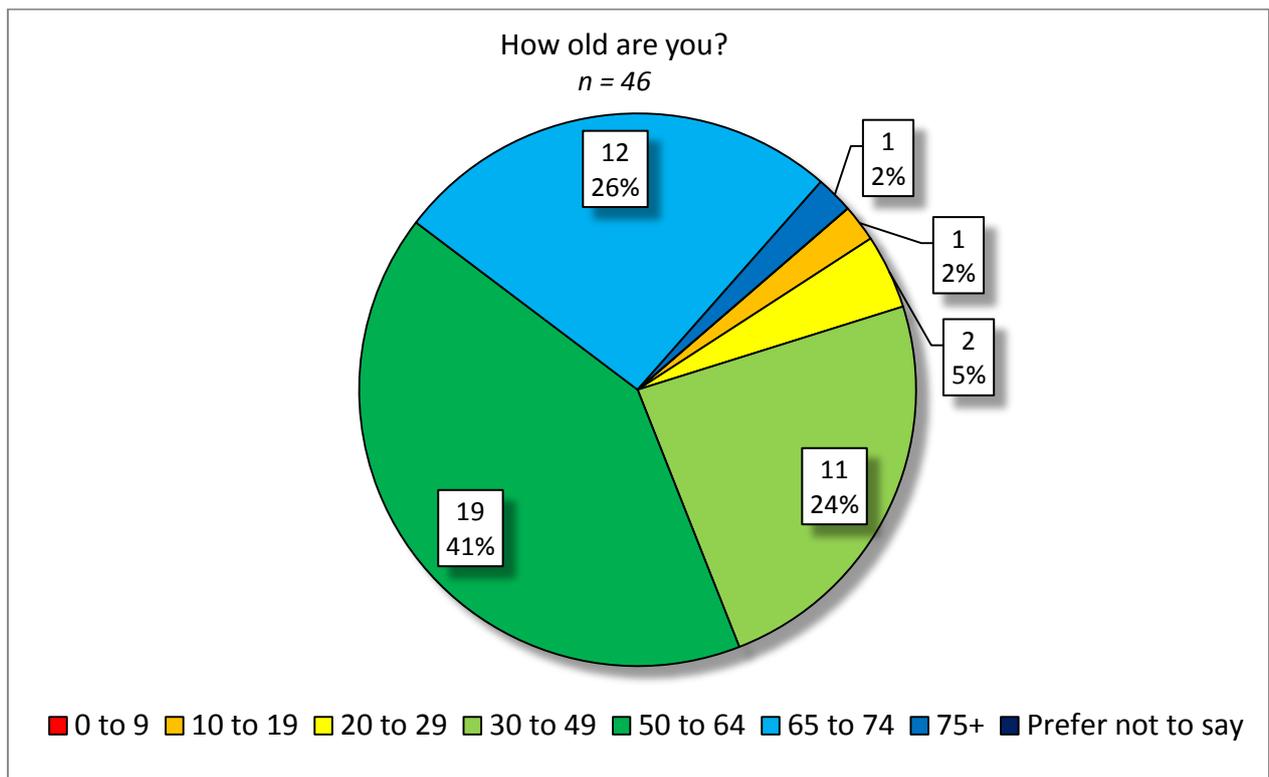


Figure 3: Age(s) of respondents completing survey. 46 respondents answered this question, with 94 skipping. No respondents opted for 'prefer not to say'.

12.3 Sexuality

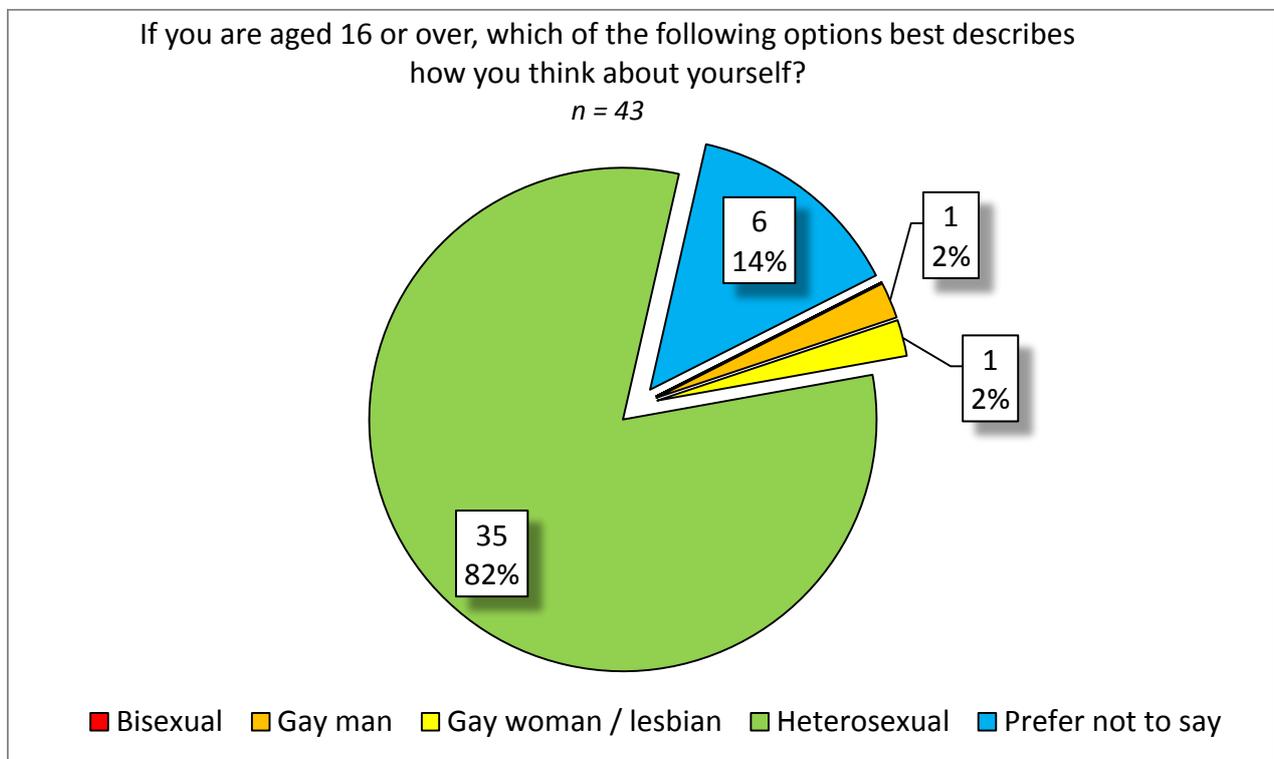


Figure 4: Sexuality of respondents completing survey. 43 respondents answered this question, with 97 skipping.

12.4 Gender identity/reassignment

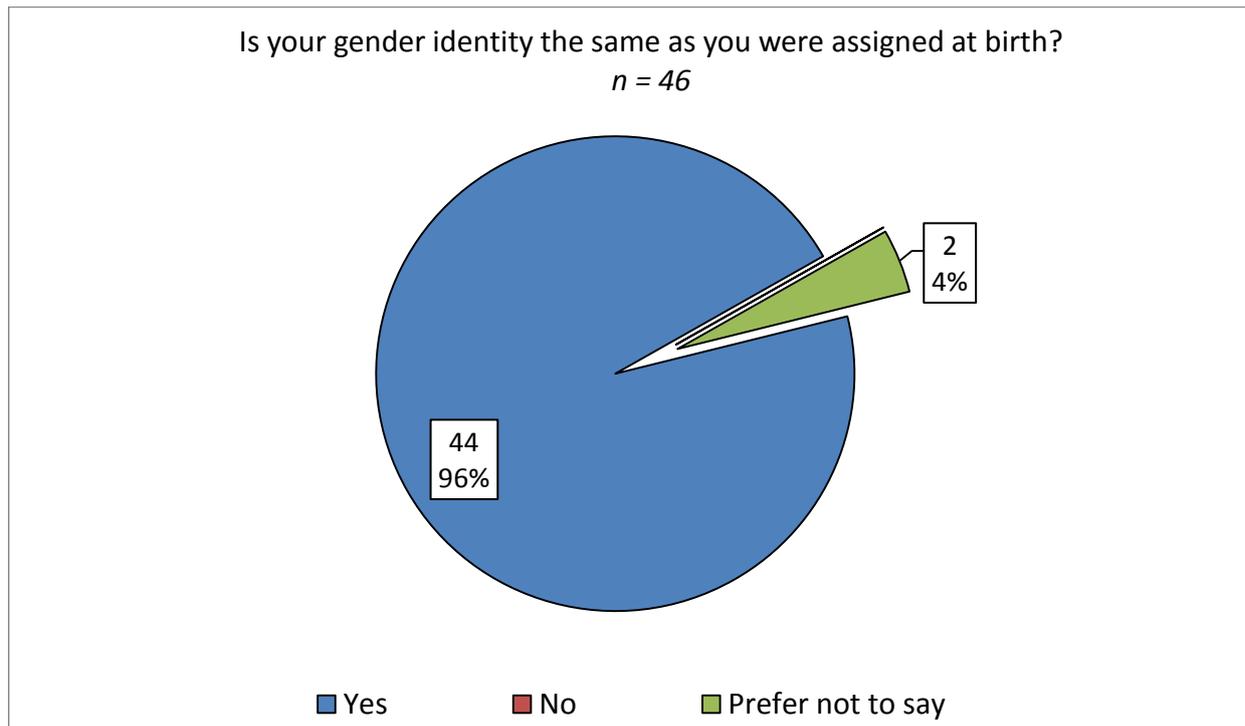


Figure 5: Gender identity of respondents completing survey. 46 respondents answered this question, with 94 skipping. No respondents answered that their gender identity was not the same as assigned at birth.

12.5 Marital status

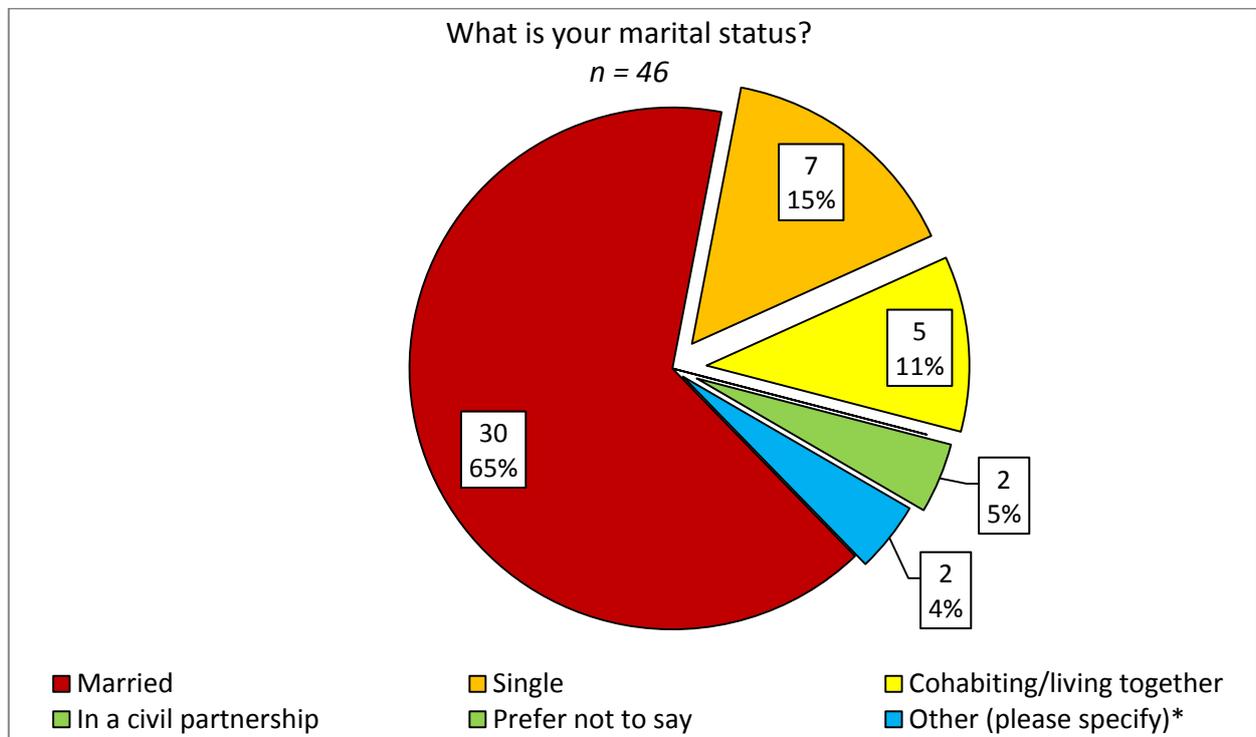


Figure 6 Marital status of respondents completing survey. 46 respondents answered this question, with 94 skipping. No respondents indicated that they were in a civil partnership.

12.6 Pregnancy/maternity

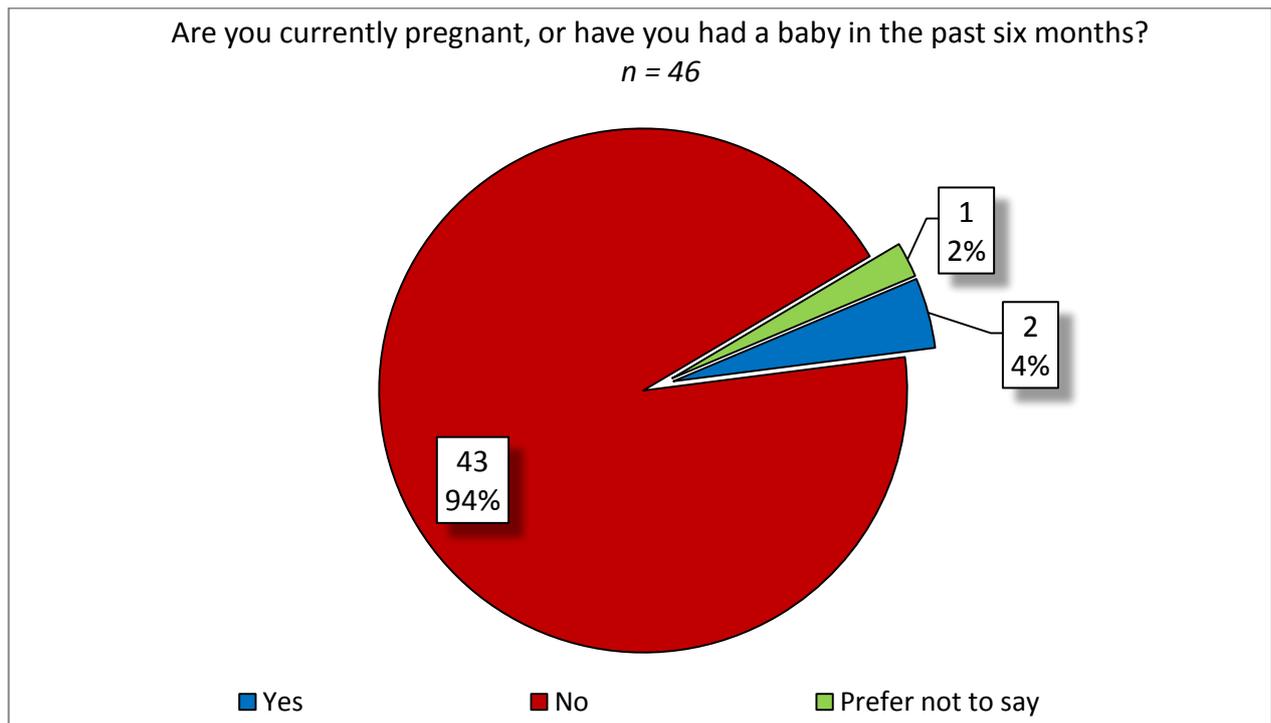


Figure 7: Pregnancy/maternity of respondents completing survey. 46 respondents answered this question, with 94 skipping.

12.7 Disability

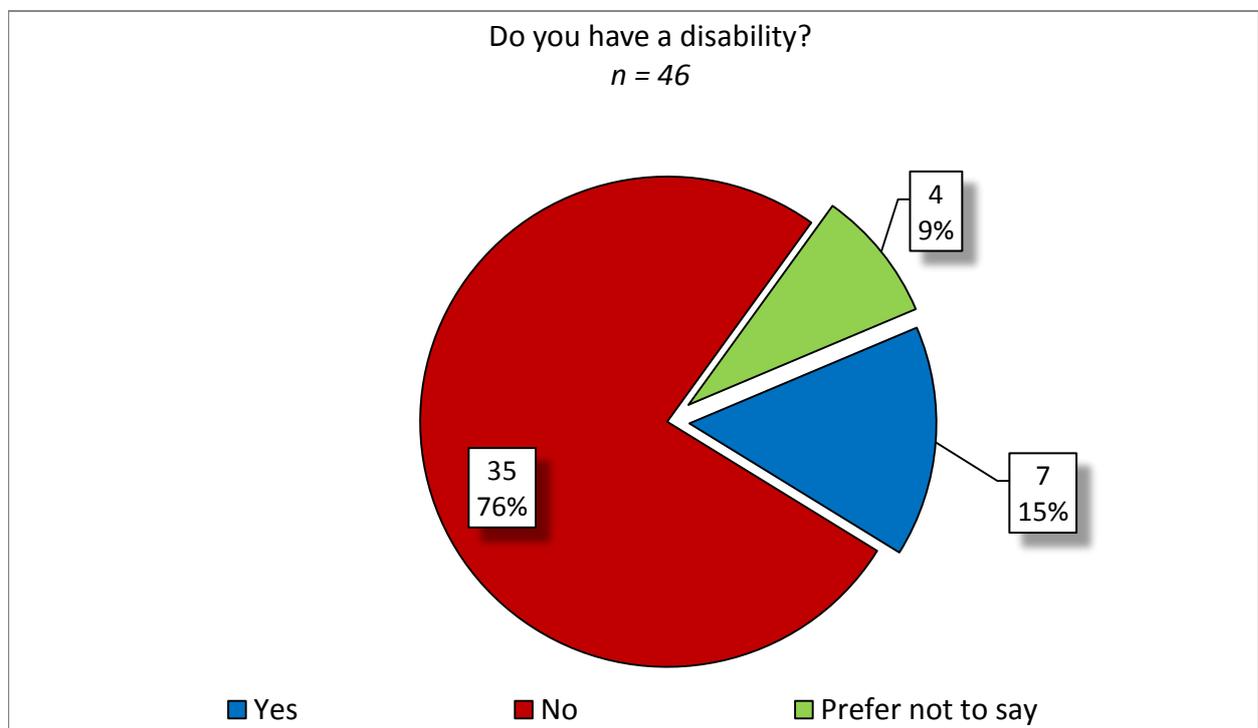


Figure 8: Number/percentage of respondents with a disability. 46 respondents answered this question, with 94 skipping.

12.8 Disability (II) – if disabled, please specify the nature of your disability.



Figure 9: Respondents with a disability, by type. 7 respondents answered this question (all respondents who had previously answered the first disabilities question). No respondents indicated that they had a hearing or sight impairment.

***Other** (self-classified) = Diabetes (1), Ankylosing Spondylitis (1).

12.9 Religion

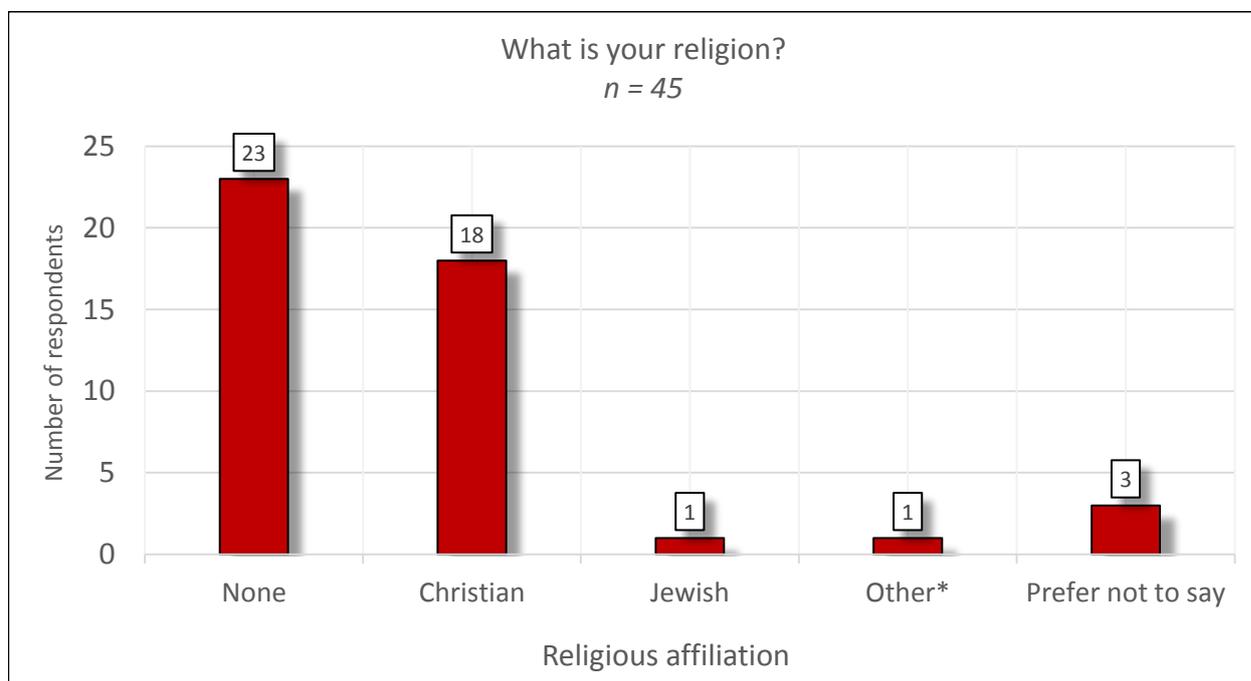


Figure 10: Respondents' religion (where stated).

45 respondents answered this question, with 95 skipping this question. No respondents identified their faith as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. ***Other** (1) stated, but not specified by respondent.

12.10 Ethnicity/ethnic origin

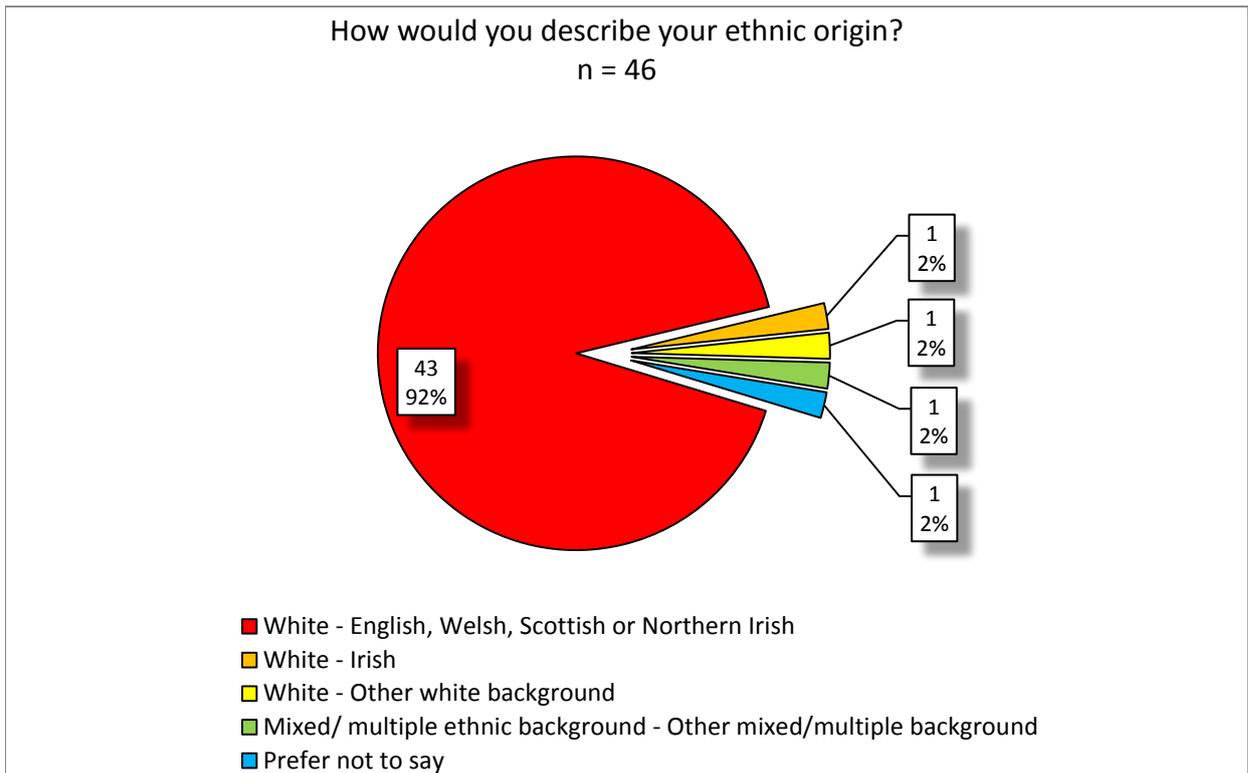


Figure 11: Respondents' ethnicity
46 respondents answered this question with 94 respondents skipping the question.

13. How will this feedback be used?

Throughout the consultation period, weekly reports have been produced to provide decision-makers with a summary and overview of all consultation feedback received.

This report, and two separate appendices (consultation responses received from organisations, and consultation responses received from individuals) has been used to provide a summary and overview of all consultation feedback received.

Results from the consultation process will be used to inform recommendations made within the Budget and Council Plan Cabinet Report, and will also support the final Full Council decision on 23rd February 2017. Relevant findings from the consultation will also be used to update the Draft Budget Consultation Equality Impact Assessment¹¹.

Comments received on the consultation process itself will be used to review and improve the way in which consultation on the draft budget is undertaken in future.

14. Will there be further consultation?

Further consultation will take place as Draft Budget proposals are developed and/or implemented. This relates to:

¹¹ For Draft Budget Consultation EqIA, please see:

http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Council/equalities/Documents/PDF%20Documents/Budget%20EqIAs%202017-18/Budget%20Consultation%202017-18_EqIA.pdf

- Specific proposals for service changes will be the subject of separate, detailed consultations as the proposals themselves are developed and refined.
- Where there are proposals affecting employment and working arrangements, there will be ongoing consultation with trade unions and other staff representatives.

15. Partner agencies and local organisations who responded to the consultation

Cherwell and South Northamptonshire District Council

Daventry District Council

East Northamptonshire District Council

Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Home Start (Northamptonshire)

Irchester Parish Council

Kettering Borough Council

The Lowdown (Northampton)

(The) National Deaf Children's Society

Northampton Borough Council

Northamptonshire Breastfeeding Alliance

The Borough Council of Wellingborough