

**Let's talk Newcastle**  
Medium-Term Financial  
Plan 2025 – 2026  
Consultation Report



# Index

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. How many people and organisations took part?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. The Newcastle People’s Budget</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Feedback on Service-Specific Proposals</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Other Proposals</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. General</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7. Appendix 1: Detailed feedback on Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)</b>	<b>See appendix</b>
<b>8. Appendix 2: How we engaged with residents, organisations, and other stakeholders – and who took part</b>	<b>See appendix</b>

# 1. Introduction

This report summarises the main messages from our consultation on our budget proposals as set out in our medium-term financial plan 2025-2026. The public consultation period ran from 26 November 2024 to 14 January 2025. As in previous years, there were several different ways in which people and stakeholder organisations could take part. A ‘stakeholder organisation’ is an organisation which has a particular interest in commenting on our proposals – for example, a group which supports carers has an interest in commenting on proposals about how we deliver social care services – or which represents a particular group or community within Newcastle, such as carers, older people, disabled people, voluntary and community sector organisations, and so on.

One way to take part was through the online People’s Budget. This is an interactive tool ([www.letstalkbudget.org.uk](http://www.letstalkbudget.org.uk)) that enables people to understand more about what services we provide, how we propose to spend our budget in future, and influence the Council’s decision by generating, submitting and sharing their own budget proposal.

Another way is to comment on our specific proposals for delivering services in future as set out in our IIAs (Integrated Impact Assessments). We asked residents, stakeholder organisations and businesses for any comments they might have about the different proposals, the cumulative impact of all of them taken together, their ideas for saving money and generating income, and any general comments they wanted to make.

Please note that this report presents the views of individuals and organisations gathered through the consultation. These have been used by staff to update Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs). Given that this report considers only upon the views expressed by residents and key stakeholders, to understand the full implications of our proposals the findings outlined here need to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Our medium-term financial plan 2025-2026
- Appendix 1 - Summary of 2025-2026 proposals
- Appendix 6 - Summary of directorate budgets
- Appendix 10 – Consultation and communication plan

This report has two appendices. Appendix 1 provides more detailed feedback on what people said about the service-specific proposals (IIAs). Appendix 2 provides more information about who took part and how.

## 2. How many people and organisations took part?

We received 16 People’s Budgets and, to the best of our knowledge, 198 more individuals and organisations have taken part, giving us a total of **217 responses** (compared to 510 for the previous year’s consultation).

Please note that it is possible for an individual to take part in the consultation through several channels – for example, they might complete a People’s Budget, and later complete a Let’s talk Newcastle online survey. We would not be aware of this unless they chose to tell us, so we can only give our best estimate the number of individual people and organisations who have taken part. (Similarly, one ‘response’ in the form of a feedback letter written following an online discussion might represent the views of several organisations who sent representatives.)

The table below shows how many people and organisations commented on each aspect of the consultation. The service-specific proposal with the highest number of people and organisations commenting on it (24) was on school meals.

Budget Proposals	No of people / organisations
The <b>People’s Budget</b> – submitted	16
The <b>People’s Budget</b> – gave up	3
School Meals	24
Reablement	17
Council Tax	16
General comments – including feedback on proposals which do not have an Integrated Impact Assessment, such as funding for the EPiC project.	150

Please note that the number of responses and individuals or organisations shown in the table below adds up to more than 217 individual responses, as many of those responding commented on more than one proposal.

We promoted the consultation widely online, using videos and posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, X/Twitter, and our website. We also used non-digital communication channels, such as our residents’ magazine, Citylife (we produced a winter 2024 edition available online and with printed copies in libraries), email, and providing a Freepost address for people to reply via letter if they chose to do this (we did not receive any responses by letter this year). Where possible, we involved voluntary organisations representing communities of interest such as disabled people, older people and carers, such as the Elders Council, Skills for People and Newcastle Advisory Group, Connected Voice & Healthwatch Newcastle. We also received responses from organisations including the North East Chamber of Commerce, Carers Newcastle, Citizens Advice Newcastle, North East Child Poverty Commission, and Healthworks Newcastle. Connected Voice shared details of the consultation on their social media and bulletin, which goes out to over 1500 people, contacted key local voluntary and community sector organisations to encourage them to respond, and holding a consultation session which was attended by 20 representatives from 14 different organisations.

The social media post receiving the highest response (8,556 impressions, 137 clicks, and 11 shares) was our Facebook post on 30 December 2025 about the School Meals Service proposal.

We have limited information about how people took part, and who took part, but the biggest number of responses (63%) were received via social media, and of those for whom we have information about their sex, just over half were male. We do not have reliable demographic information for other characteristics, such as age groups.

Full information on our social media reach and engagement, and on the demographics of participants, can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

## 3. The People’s Budget

On 26 November 2024 we relaunched our People’s Budget simulator, which invites members of the public to consider how they would set the council’s budget for the coming year. It can be viewed online at: [www.letstalkbudget.org.uk](http://www.letstalkbudget.org.uk). We asked people to make savings of £28m from our existing budget by either cutting spending on service areas, putting up council tax, increasing income generation from various sources, or a combination of all of these. We provide context with pop-up notifications indicating the consequences of cutting spending in various service areas: for example, cutting the spending on Children’s Social Care by up to £3.0m provides the update: “There is a risk that demand for services may increase, with more children coming into care and there would be fewer places available to keep them safe.” The People’s Budget closed on 15 January 2025.

### The People’s Budget

The People’s Budget simulator tool aggregates responses into a single “People’s Budget”, based on what everyone has told us. In total, 287 people started the People’s Budget Challenge, with 16 submitting budgets, compared to 77 in 2024-25, and three clicking the official ‘give up’ button. (The ‘missing’ 268 people simply stopped completing their budget without clicking the ‘give up’ button.) People took around 9 minutes on average to complete their budget.

Responses to it indicate that people taking part preferred to raise funds through a combination of a 4.9% rise in Council Tax (£6.3 million), and generating a total of £2.0 million of income from fees & charges. They preferred to make smaller cuts to spending on Children’s’ Social Care, Maintaining Neighbourhoods, and Enforcement & Regulation, and larger spending cuts to Culture, Leisure & Libraries, Enabling & Business Functions, and Planning & Development. This is generally consistent with the approach people have taken in previous years.

The most common theme in comments from people who took part was that cuts should be balanced across services. When asked for ‘bright ideas’ on how the council could save money or generate income, people wanted us to “involve communities more in neighbourhood maintenance” . The most common themes in comments left by people who gave up was that these were very difficult decisions, and that they thought that residents needed to take some responsibility for maintaining local neighbourhoods.

The **2025-2026 People’s Budget**, based on 16 budgets, is as follows:

- Total **savings**: £28 million
- **Council tax** increase: 4.9%, so £6.3 million
- **Income generation**: £2.0 million in total
- When combined, this meets the **savings target** of £28m as follows:
  - £19.7 million in cuts to service spending
  - £8.3 million from an increase in Council Tax and other sources
- **Total = £28.0 million.**
- When the actual spend amounts in service areas (following the cuts people have made in the People’s Budget 2025-2026) are expressed as **percentages** of the initial spend, we can see that people prefer to make:
  - **Smaller** cuts to spending on Children’s Social Care, Maintaining Neighbourhoods, and Enforcement & Regulation.
  - **Larger** cuts to spending on Culture Leisure & Libraries, Enabling & Business Functions, and Planning & Development.
- The Children’s Social Care, Early Years and Education, Maintaining Neighbourhoods, Planning & Development, Business & Economic Development, Enforcement & Regulation, and Enabling & Business Functions service areas are at **low risk**.
- The Adult Social Care, Culture Leisure & Libraries, and Maintaining Highways services are at **medium risk**.
- The Refuse, Waste Collection and Disposal service is at **high risk**.
- Looking at **income generation** in the People’s Budget, those who took part suggested that we should not aim to generate funds from Parking Services, but instead generate £2.0 million from other fees & charges such as registrar’s services, bereavement services, school meals, and others. Note that we can only increase car parking charges to address traffic flows through, and in, the Newcastle area, and that income from car parking charges cannot be used for any purposes other than providing parking.

**287** people started the challenge, **16** submitted a budget, and **3** clicked the official “give up” button. (The ‘missing’ 268 people simply closed the People’s Budget tool without completing a budget or clicking the ‘give up’ button). On average people took 9 minutes to complete a budget. One people shared their budget on social media. Those who commented expressed a mixture of opinions; some wanting taxes to go even higher than 4.99% to pay for more services, others thinking they should be lower to help low-income households. Some people wanted to reduce social care and waste collection costs, others wanted to prioritise children’s social care and universal services such as parks and waste collection, and one person commented that they just wanted to better understand the Council’s budget.

Social care services and waste collection were also mentioned in the ‘bright ideas’ comments, with some people wondering about whether it is necessary to bring SEND transport back in-house, or even ‘go back to basics’ and redesign how social care services are provided. Ensuring that all taxes are being collected and fining people for fly-tipping in back lanes were also mentioned. The most common suggestion was to involve communities more in neighbourhood maintenance such as litter picking and gardening.



## 4. Feedback on Service-Specific Proposals

We would note that many of the stakeholder organisations' responses were highly detailed and considered both the cumulative impact of the cuts, and possible ways in which local service delivery might be transformed in future. This report and Appendix 1, which covers this in has tried to do them justice, but we would advise reading them in full. The key findings from the consultation are as follows.

### Finances – Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept

The proposal is as follows: “To set a balanced budget in 2025-2026, we need to increase the amount of income raised through Council Tax. We propose to increase core Council Tax by 2.99%, which will increase income by £4.2 million (apart from any changes to the Council Tax base), and to use this income to avoid the need to make further reductions to the services we provide beyond those set out in the full budget report.

We also propose to apply the government's 2% Council Tax Precept for Adult Social Care to help fund the increasing demand for and cost of adult social care. This will generate an additional £2.8 million of Council Tax income (again, excluding any changes to the Council Tax base).”

The 'Council Tax Base' is a way of calculating the amount of council tax that a local authority can expect to collect during the financial year. It is worked out by adding together the 'relevant amounts' (the number of dwellings) for each Council Tax valuation band (Band A, Band D, and so on), then multiplying the result by the Council's estimate of its collection rate for the year.

15 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including two responses from stakeholder organisations – Healthworks, the Elders Council of Newcastle, Healthwatch Newcastle, and Citizens Advice Newcastle – 1 response via Let's talk Newcastle Online, and 10 via social media comments.

One person responding via Let's talk Newcastle Online agreed that the proposals were clear, and that there would be problems due to the proposal. Healthwatch Newcastle expressed concern at the potential negative impact on people on low incomes. One suggestion to minimise the impact of the proposals was to lobby central government to make changes to adult social care funding, to resolve the situation where local authorities spend increasing amounts of funds to provide social care; the respondent agreed that the proposal was fair and reasonable “in the circumstances”.

The Elders Council and Connected Voice commented that there needed to be financial support provided for people who cannot afford to pay more, in order to avoid court orders where possible. Another suggestion to save money was to take action to promote healthy lifestyles, to improve quality of life and reduce the amount of spending needed on public health and social care services.

There were a wide range of themes in people's general comments, mostly about the nature of funding social care, and people's feelings that this is not a small increase (two people said this). Healthworks Newcastle did not comment on domestic Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept, but asked that the council consider offering “full discretionary Business Rates relief to charities who have premises in the city, arguing that this would save money in the long-term as it would support voluntary and community sector organisations to continue to provide necessary services and support to people in Newcastle. Citizens Advice Newcastle made similar comments.

## Social Care IIA – Reablement Service

The proposal is as follows: “The Reablement Service is a preventative service which aims to address people’s immediate care and support needs and prevent crises. It involves occupational therapists and other support to help people maintain or increase their independence in managing day-to-day tasks such as personal care, cleaning and cooking. We propose several changes to the service, including:

- Implementing a preventative approach at every point at which people come into contact with this service. This could be the first point of contact, or when we review the service they are getting.
- Increasing service capacity to respond to new contacts and requests for support, and providing an enhanced therapy service.
- Looking at how equipment and technology can support people to stay independent at home.
- Improving our short-term response to crisis and hospital admissions to reduce people’s need for additional support by helping them to recover from crises, and remain independent at home.
- Supporting people who need two care workers to help them move about through the work of Moving and Handling Co-ordinators to see if hoists, equipment and other support can improve their independence.
- Reviewing care packages in a timely manner to ensure that people are receiving appropriate support.

We estimate that this will save £4.75million. For reference, the net budget for the service is £58million.”

16 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including five responses from stakeholder organisations – Newcastle Carers, the Elders Council of Newcastle, Skills for People and Newcastle Advisory Group (combined response), Healthwatch Newcastle, and Citizens Advice Newcastle – 4 responses via Let’s talk Newcastle Online, 1 response via email, and six via social media comments. Stakeholder organisations provided very detailed feedback, and we would recommend reading through their responses in full.

Two people felt the proposals were clear; one was not sure about proposals around Direct Payments. Citizens Advice Newcastle wanted more information about how the proposed redesign of the service would result in savings. Newcastle Advisory Group and Skills for People asked for greater clarity around whether there would be reductions in full-time employee posts, whether service users would experience reductions in services, and about how people are recruited to the Shared Lives care scheme. The Elders Council commented that it was important to be extremely clear about terminology, for the benefit of staff in other organisations as well as service users and carers.

Three people felt there would be negative impacts, expressing concern about people “falling through the net”, but another felt the proposals could result in people being better trained. Concerns were raised about whether Shared Lives care was suitable for all people in need. Newcastle Carers were concerned that changes to services could result in more demands on unpaid carers, and that there is a risk of demanding too much from voluntary and community sector organisations whose resources are already stretched. They suggested that they should be based in the Adult Social Care Point for half a day each week, to facilitate closer working between themselves and social care services. Skills for People also raised concerns about demands on voluntary and community sector organisations, although they expressed support for a preventative approach and



addressing “social determinants” of health. The Elders Council commented that they had received very positive feedback from their members about the reablement service, but they were concerned about whether there were adequate resources available to provide the services necessary for this.

Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice supported our commitment to improving reablement services and promoting independence, and in particular the use of a multiple-disciplinary team to provide support to independence.

One person suggested that a way to minimise impact would be to both ensure the Connie Lewcock Resource Centre remains open, and to open more units like it. Another wanted to see the council lobby central government for better national funding of adult social care services. The Elders Council stressed the importance of continuing support for voluntary and community sector organisations.

Two people felt the proposals were fair and reasonable, but others felt that it was unfair that services used by a “small group of vulnerable people” were affected, and that Newcastle council tax payers were having to pay disproportionately to meet a funding gap caused by inadequate national provision of funds for social care. The Elders Council were concerned about whether all users – both older people, and younger disabled adults – would receive enough support if all social care services for adults are “under the same umbrella”.

Suggestions for saving money included reducing spending on Council pensions, efficiency savings such as reducing management posts, and reducing senior staff pay. One person made several care service- specific suggestions, including regular reviews of care packages for people with learning disabilities and autism to make small changes that could save money whilst still meeting people’s needs, reducing everyone’s care package by one hour per week, and asking service providers to save small amounts each year to see what ideas they would come up with.

General comments included feedback from six people who had used reablement services and were happy with them, three people who did not want to see any cuts to the service, and general concerns that social care should continue to be provided to everyone in Newcastle who needs it. The Elders Council wanted occupational therapists and social workers to be involved in providing housing in Newcastle, to draw on their experience of “trying to overcome the challenges of unsuitable housing”.

## Education IIA – School Meals

The proposal is as follows: “We currently charge different prices per meal for different types of school meals, such as nursery, primary school, and secondary. The price is also affected by whether the meal is paid-for (by parents or carers) or free. Prices range from between £2.10 to £3.25 per meal.

In future, we propose to move to a standard pricing model, where one fixed price per meal is charged for all meals. Schools would pay for each meal taken, as they do now, but they would be free to decide what charge per meal is passed onto 'paying parents and carers', whose children are not eligible for free school meals. There would be an increase in the payment each year to reflect increased costs for employees and food due to inflation, and to reduce the cost to Newcastle City Council of subsidising the service.”

24 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including a response from the North East Child Poverty Commission.

15 people said the proposals were clear, and six felt they were not.

23 people commented on possible consequences and impact, mostly expressing concern at potential negative impacts. Six people said they were concerned at a potential negative impact on those on low incomes who do not qualify for free school meals, and three said they felt that working parents were being unfairly penalised.

19 people commented on how potential negative impacts might be mitigated. Three did not want to see the proposals implemented at all, two wanted to see a cap on the maximum allowable charge for school meals, and another two said it was necessary to have transparency over pricing. Another suggestion from the North East Child Poverty Commission was to use funds from the Household Support Fund to support lower-income families who do not qualify for free school meals.

21 people commented on whether the proposals were fair and reasonable, with seven saying that the proposals were fair, one saying “not sure”, and 13 thought they were not fair. Many commented on why they thought this, such as being concerned about potential increased use of food banks, poorer meal quality, and impacts upon working parents – or, from those who thought the proposals are fair, commenting on the challenges the Council faces.

13 people commented on other ways to save money or generate income; suggestions for this included reducing senior staff salaries, making school meals simpler with fewer daily options, and spending less on traffic schemes.

Finally, 13 people left more general comments, with the most common theme – expressed by three people – being that people would ideally like to see free school meals for all.

## 5. Other proposals

We received some feedback on other parts of our budget proposals which did not have IIAs, mostly from stakeholder organisations, and this feedback is summarised here.

- **Business Rates:** HealthWorks Newcastle commented that they would like the council to consider offering “full discretionary Business Rates” to charities with premises in the city. The North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) said that they will respond to government proposals to co-design a fairer business rates system.
- **Real Living Wage:** The NECC and Healthworks Newcastle supported the council’s commitment to being an accredited Real Living Wage employer as part of tackling the issue of in-work poverty. Healthworks and Citizens Advice Newcastle asked if the council could make Real Living Wage accreditation a condition of supplying goods and services in its procurement process.
- **National Insurance Contributions:** NECC, Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice commented on the impact of NIC increases on local businesses and voluntary and community sector organisations, and their capacity to deliver services.
- **Vacant Posts:** Citizens Advice Newcastle and Connected Voice were concerned that deleting vacant posts in community support and similar services could increase the burden on other services and organisations providing them.
- **Grass cutting services:** Citizens Advice Newcastle suggested reducing the grass cutting budget to free up resources to spend on other services.
- **Mainstreaming the Community Connector Model:** Newcastle Carers would like to create a framework for using this approach. Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice also supported it, but were concerned that this could have an impact on voluntary and community sector organisations if demand for services increases.
- **Promoting independence in supported living:** Healthwatch Newcastle and Newcastle Carers supported this approach, although Newcastle Carers wondered if it could ultimately increase demand at the Adult Social Care Point.
- **Direct Payment reviews:** Newcastle Carers, Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice supported this proposal.
- **Increasing Adult Social Care Fees and Charges:** Healthwatch Newcastle commented that this proposal will be challenging and that they intended to monitor service quality and user experience.
- **Arts, Music and Culture:** Healthwatch Newcastle said that they understood the need to make savings but that the council needed to consider what free activities and venues were still available to the public as part of tackling poverty.
- **Bikeability:** Newcastle Carers and Connected Voice said that they thought the proposals around Bikeability disappointing in the context of needing to climate change and encourage children and young people to use active travel.

## 6. General

We also ask people for their opinions on our budget proposals as a whole, and any general comments they have about public services and quality of life in Newcastle. This section presents their views.

### Are the proposals clear and easy to understand?

Twenty people commented on this via Let's talk Newcastle Online. Eleven people said they did not think the proposals were clear, but nine people said they thought they were. Comments included: 'Yes, the proposal is clear in outlining the financial challenges Newcastle City Council is facing ...however, there could be more explanation about how capital investments might alleviate some long-term financial pressures or generate revenue in the future' and 'not really, it doesn't explain the reasoning behind certain decisions.'

### Consequences and impact

Nineteen people made comments about the possible consequences and impacts of the proposals. The most common themes, mentioned by four people each, were: 'a council tax increase will have a negative impact on households and businesses' and 'services will get worse'.

### Minimising impact

11 people commented on how they thought the impact of the proposals could be minimised, with the most comment themes in comments being 'do not raise council tax' and 'proposals need to be clearer so that people can make better judgements about their impact'.

### Fair and reasonable?

11 people commented on how they thought the impact of the proposals could be minimised, with the most comment themes in comments being 'do not raise council tax' and 'proposals need to be clearer so that people can make better judgements about their impact'.

### Other ways to save and generate income

19 people answered the question about whether they thought there were other ways to make savings or generate income. The most common themes were: 'cut senior staff salaries' (four people said this), 'collaborate with other councils to jointly deliver services', 'councillors expenses should be lower', 'learn from best practice elsewhere', 'lobby national government for more funding' and 'unhappy with spending on cycle lanes' (two people each mentioned these themes).

### General comments

139 members of the public made general comments about the budget proposals, public services, and life in Newcastle upon Tyne, via emails, Let's talk Newcastle Online, and social media. The most common themes were: 'cut senior staff pay' (15 people said this), 'unhappy with the council' (12 people said this), and 'unhappy with councillors' expenses' (eight people said this).

## General comments from stakeholder organisations

As in previous years, the North East Chamber of Commerce were keen to work with us to advocate for the reform of local government finance. Newcastle Carers asked about whether there is any sign that there will be changes to how adult social care services are funded, including greater stability, and commented on the negative impacts of “long and enduring” cuts in funding.

Healthwatch Newcastle commented that they generally supported our proposals for adopting a more preventative approach to social care services, but were concerned about the challenge of delivering this given increasing demand for these services. Along with Connected Voice, they welcomed the “percentage of influenceable spend coming into the VCSE sector”, and emphasised the importance of sustaining services provided by voluntary and community sector organisations.

Connected Voice also commented on the negative impact of years of funding reductions from central government on service provision, and increased demand for services due to an aging population and a greater proportion of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and expressed support for our work to transform the provision of adult social care services. However, they commented that the voluntary and community sector is struggling with decreasing resources, increased demand for services, low volunteer capacity, and an increased frequency of mental health issues among staff and volunteers.





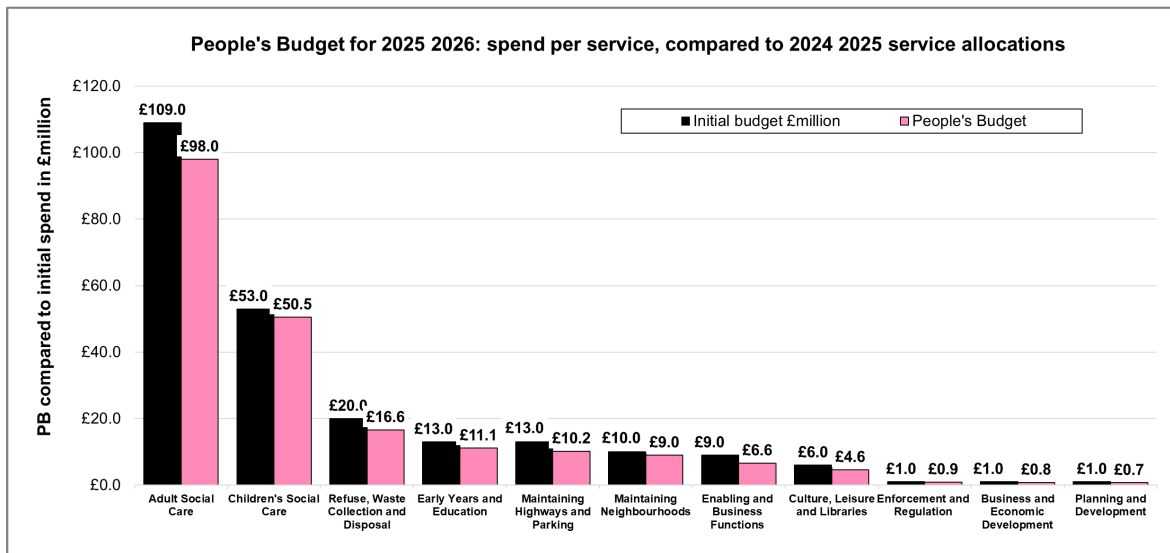
**Let's talk Newcastle  
Budget 2025 – 2026  
consultation report  
Appendix 1: Detailed  
feedback on Integrated  
Impact Assessments (IIAs)  
and the general impact of  
proposals**



# Appendix 1: Detailed feedback on the People’s Budget and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

## The People’s Budget

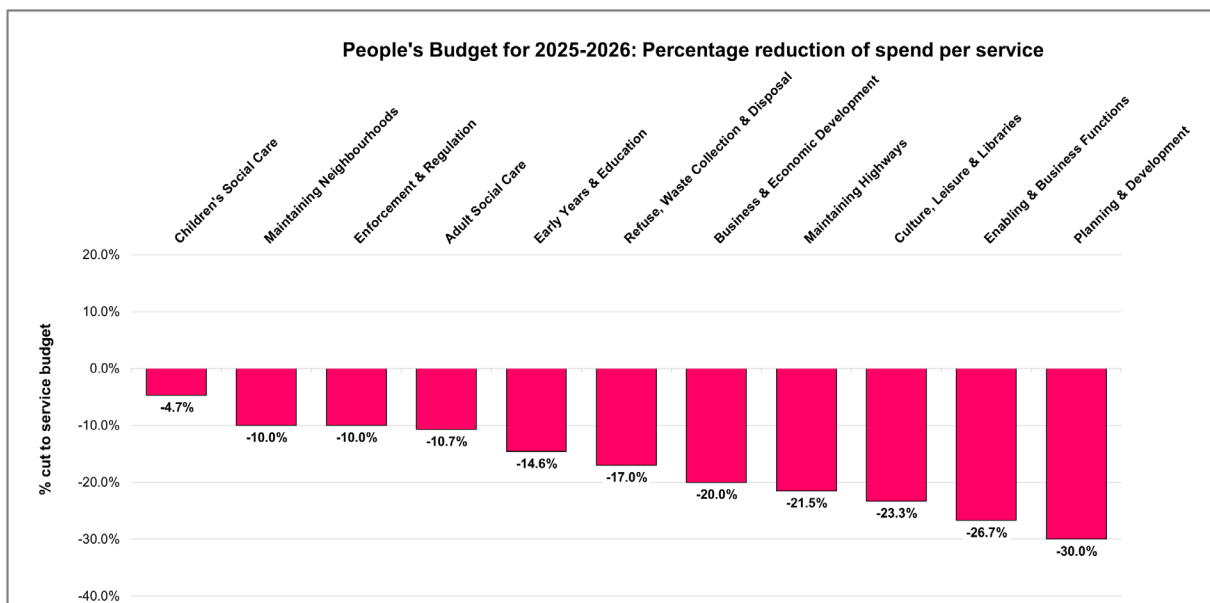
The chart below shows the levels of spending which people have selected in the People’s Budget for 2025-2026, compared to the actual spend on each service area as of 2024-2025.



(Please note that the Public Health and Capital Spending budgets do not appear in the charts and tables in this report, because they cannot be changed.)

## Percentage spending on services

The chart below shows proposed cuts to spending on services from the People’s Budget 2025-2026 as a percentage of the initial allocated spend. People prefer to make smaller cuts to children’s and adult’s social care, which is consistent with previous years, although in the previous People’s Budget for 2024-2025, they preferred smaller cuts to refuse, waste collection & disposal services (-17.0% in 2024-2025, compared to -9.5% in 2023-



2024). Enabling & business functions and planning & development received higher cuts (compared to other services) in both years' People's Budgets.

### Risk levels incurred by services

The risk levels incurred by this People's Budget are shown in the table below, where one service area is at high risk: Refuse, Waste Collection & Disposal, and three are at medium risk: Adult Social Care, Culture Leisure & Libraries, and Maintaining Highways:

Spending area	Initial budget spend £million	PB 'actual spend': £million at 15 January 2025	Percentage change: actual / initial spend	Spending area risk
Refuse, Waste Collection & Disposal	£20.0	£16.6	-17.0	High
Adult Social Care	£109.0	£98.0	-10.7	Medium
Maintaining Highways	£13.0	£10.2	-21.5	Medium
Culture, Leisure & Libraries	£6.0	£4.6	-23.3	Medium
Children's Social Care	£53.0	£50.5	-4.7	Low
Enforcement & Regulation	£1.0	£0.9	-10.0	Low
Maintaining Neighbourhoods	£10.0	£9.0	-10.0	
Early Years & Education	£13.0	£11.1	-14.6	Low
Business & Economic Development	£1.0	£0.8	-20.0	Low
Enabling & Business Functions	£9.0	£6.6	-26.7	Low
Planning & Development	£1.0	£0.7	-30.0	Low
<b>Total</b>	<b>£236.0</b>	<b>£209.0</b>	-	-

(The Public Health and Capital Spending budgets do not appear in this table, because they cannot be changed.)

### Income generation

Looking at **income generation** in the People's Budget, those who took part suggested that we should not aim to generate any funds from parking services, but instead generate £2.0 million from other fees and charges for services such as registrars, school meals, bereavement services, planning & building control and providing advice and support to other organisations such as financial and legal advice.

Please note that we can only increase car parking charges as part of how we address traffic flows through, and in, the Newcastle area. Income from car parking charges cannot be used for any purposes outside the objectives of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA 1984), which means that we cannot use these funds for any services other than providing parking.

## **What people told us about why they had set the budgets they set**

The most common theme in the ten comments received through the People's Budget were that people aimed to distribute cuts evenly between different services, for example: "I attempted to balance savings". Themes which were mentioned by one person each were:

- Children's social care is more important than adult social care.
- Council Tax should be lower.
- I think SEND transport costs are too high.
- I wanted to better understand the Council's budget.
- Taxes should be higher, to pay for services.
- The People's Budget should allow bigger savings.
- We need to reduce social care service costs.
- We should cut waste collection costs.
- We should focus on providing universal services such as waste and parks.

## **'Bright ideas' suggested by People's Budget participants**

Eleven people gave us their bright ideas for saving money and generating income. The most common theme in these comments, mentioned by two people, was to "involve communities more in neighbourhood maintenance", for example: "Reducing maintenance to the neighbourhood would reduce the cleanliness of the city; however, empowering volunteer groups such as volunteer gardeners and litter pickers can help fill this gap". Other bright ideas mentioned by one person each were:

- Bring SEND transport provision back in-house.
- Check that AirBNB landlords are paying the correct tax rates.
- Do not increase council tax.
- Encourage use of public transport to reduce highway maintenance costs.
- Enforce fines for dumping rubbish in back lanes.
- Feel that the People's Budget is too negative.
- Happy with the People's Budget.
- Reduce frequency of green bin collections to improve recycling rates.
- Rethink social care provision, starting from scratch.

## **What people told us about why they gave up trying to set a “People’s Budget”**

We asked people who chose the ‘Give Up’ option to leave comments about why they did this, and received three comments, as follows (edited for length):

- “I think residents themselves have a responsibility to take on some of these responsibilities themselves instead of putting all of the responsibility on the council. Things like keeping streets and back lanes clean, reducing the amount of rubbish we create, looking after adult relatives and elderly neighbours when we can.”
- “It’s horrible.”
- “Each aspect has significance and importance, it’s very difficult to take [funds] away from any area when they all need a boost in funding.”

## **Who took part**

We know the following facts about people who took part in the People’s Budget:

- Eight were male, one was female, one was non-binary, and six did not give any information about their sex.
- Seven were aged 26-40, two aged 16-25, two aged 41-65, and five did not give their age range.
- Eight did not give their postcodes. Of those who did, two lived in Monument ward, and four others lived in Ouseburn, Dene & South Gosforth, Kenton, and Fawdon & West Gosforth. Two lived outside the Newcastle City Council area, in Gateshead.

## **Finance IIA – Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept**

The proposal is: “To set a balanced budget in 2025-2026, we need to increase the amount of income raised through Council Tax. We propose to increase core Council Tax by 2.99%, which will increase income by £4.2 million (apart from any changes to the Council Tax base), and to use this income to avoid the need to make further reductions to the services we provide beyond those set out in the full budget report.

We also propose to apply the government’s 2% Council Tax Precept for Adult Social Care to help fund the increasing demand for and cost of adult social care. This will generate an additional £2.8 million of Council Tax income (again, excluding any changes to the Council Tax base).”

The 'Council Tax Base' is a way of calculating the amount of council tax that an local authority can expect to collect during the financial year. It is worked out by adding together the 'relevant amounts' (the number of dwellings) for each Council Tax valuation band (Band A, Band D, and so on), then multiplying the result by the Council's estimate of its collection rate for the year.

15 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including two responses from stakeholder organisations – Healthworks, the Elders Council of Newcastle, Healthwatch Newcastle, and Citizens Advice Newcastle – 1 response via Let’s talk Newcastle Online, and 10 via social media comments.

### **Are the proposals clear?**

One person responding via Let’s talk Newcastle Online agreed that the proposals were clear.

### **Consequences and impact**

One person responding via Let’s talk Newcastle Online said that there would be problems due to the proposal. Healthwatch Newcastle expressed concern at the potential negative impact on people on low incomes.

### **Minimising impact**

One suggestion was to lobby central government to make changes to adult social care funding, to resolve the situation where local authorities spend increasing amounts of funds to provide social care. The Elders Council and Connected Voice commented that there needed to be financial support provided for people who cannot afford to pay more, in order to avoid court orders where possible.

### **Fair and reasonable?**

One person agreed that the proposal was fair and reasonable “in the circumstances”. The Elders Council comments: “Whilst none of us welcome increases in Council Tax, we understand the need for the Council to raise funds ...in order to balance the budget.” Healthwatch Newcastle were concerned that this could have a disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics and those experiencing in-work poverty.

### **Other ways to save or generate income**

One suggestion was to take action to promote healthy lifestyles, to improve quality of life and reduce the amount of spending needed on public health and social care services.



## General comments

The most common themes in people’s general comments about this are as shown below.

General comments	Number of mentions	Example comment (and number of mentions in 2024-2025)
Feel that this is not a small increase.	2	“How is a 2.99% increase small? I got a 2% pay rise in December, so your increase outweighs my pay rise.”
Comment that cycle lane spending is paid for by central government grants, not council tax	1	“Cycle lanes are funded by government grants, the money is ring-fenced.”
Do not see what people are getting in return for paying Council Tax	1	“I don't see where any of it goes to be honest.” (5 mentions in 2024-2025)
Feel that adult social care should be funded on a national, not local, basis	1	“There is no adult social care solution in this country.”
Misunderstanding that social care services are paid for by national taxes	1	“We already pay for this in our national insurance.”
Feel that the public keep having to pay more via tax and service charge increases	1	“Our heating allowance has been stopped, we now pay income tax on our state pension, we now have to pay for garden waste. Where is this going to stop!”
Feel that vulnerable people are not properly safeguarded.	1	-
Feel the council is being "greedy"	1	-
Feel the Council is out of touch	1	-
People cannot afford an increase in Council Tax	1	-
Unhappy with council priorities	1	-
Unhappy with increase in councillors' expenses	1	-

General comments	Number of mentions	Example comment (and number of mentions in 2024-2025)
Unhappy with loan to the Crowne Plaza Hotel	1	(2 mentions in 2024-2025)
Unhappy with loss of the winter fuel allowance	1	-
Unhappy with paying Council Tax	1	-
Unhappy with spending on cycle lanes	1	(2 mentions in 2024-2025)
Unhappy with the state of adult social care provision	1	-
Unhappy with year on year increases in Council Tax	1	-

A full list of themes in comments is available on request.

Healthworks Newcastle did not comment on domestic Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept, but asked that the council consider offering “full discretionary Business Rates relief to charities who have premises in the city”, arguing that this would save money in the long-term as it would support voluntary and community sector organisations to continue to provide necessary services and support to people in Newcastle.

## Social Care IIA – Reablement Service

The proposal is: “The Reablement Service is a preventative service which aims to address people's immediate care and support needs and prevent crises. It involves occupational therapists and other support to help people maintain or increase their independence in managing day-to-day tasks such as personal care, cleaning and cooking. We propose several changes to the service, including:

- Implementing a preventative approach at every point at which people come into contact with this service. This could be the first point of contact, or when we review the service they are getting.
- Increasing service capacity to respond to new contacts and requests for support, and providing an enhanced therapy service.
- Looking at how equipment and technology can support people to stay independent at home.
- Improving our short-term response to crisis and hospital admissions to reduce people's need for additional support by helping them to recover from crises, and remain independent at home.
- Supporting people who need two care workers to help them move about through the work of Moving and Handling Co-ordinators to see if hoists, equipment and other support can improve their independence.
- Reviewing care packages in a timely manner to ensure that people are receiving appropriate support.

We estimate that this will save £4.75million. For reference, the net budget for the service is £58million.”

16 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including five responses from stakeholder organisations – Newcastle Carers, the Elders Council of Newcastle, Skills for People and Newcastle Advisory Group (combined response), Healthwatch Newcastle, and Citizens Advice Newcastle – 4 responses via Let’s talk Newcastle Online, 1 response via email, and six via social media comments. Stakeholder organisations provided very detailed feedback, and we would recommend reading through their responses in full.

### Are the proposals clear?

Two people responding via Let’s talk Newcastle Online agreed that the proposals were clear. Citizens Advice Newcastle said that they were not certain how the proposed expansion and redesign of the service would result in savings; whether this would be the result of reductions in long-term care costs, or cuts to other aspects of adult social care services. One person commented that it was not clear to them how reviewing Direct Payments would save money.

Newcastle Advisory Group and Skills for People asked for greater clarity around whether there would be reductions in full-time employee posts, whether service users would experience reductions in services, and whether savings were compounded savings. Newcastle Advisory Group also commented that they wanted more detail about how people are recruited to the Shared Lives scheme, and how we ensure that they are doing this for “the right reasons”. A member of the public also raised this concern.

The Elders Council commented that it was important to be extremely clear about terminology, for the benefit of staff in other organisations as well as service users and carers. They asked whether “reablement” referred to a service provided for up to six weeks

to avoid hospital admission or recover after discharge, to a shorter-term response of between two-four weeks, or both. They also wanted to understand more about the 'Home First' process.

## **Consequences and impact**

Three people felt there would be negative impacts, expressing concern about the impact on people's well-being, that reducing services to learning disabled people and those with severe autism could result in more people in crisis, and that only those with the most severe needs would receive services, with others "falling through the net". However, another person felt that it could result in staff being better trained. One person was concerned at proposals relating to care provided through the Shared Lives scheme, asking whether there was a risk that people for whom it would not be suitable would be "pushed into" it, and that if people achieve more independence, Shared Lives carers would lose their income.

Citizens Advice Newcastle were concerned that too much focus on preventative long-term support could result in less long-term 'one-to-one' care being provided by care workers, meaning unpaid carers (family and friends) would have to provide more care. They were also concerned that plans to work with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to deliver certain aspects of reablement support would encounter difficulties due to existing high demand for VCS services at a time of decreasing resources.

Newcastle Carers provided detailed feedback on all proposed changes to the adult social care offer. Commenting specifically on aspects of the reablement offer such as promoting independence through the use of equipment and assistive technology, and taking a preventative approach, they raised the opportunity of Newcastle Carers being sited in the Adult Social Care Point for half a day per week, to ensure that carers also get the support and services they need. They also commented that taking a preventative approach is "friendlier", but that it could increase demand at the Adult Social Care Point, and that the preventative approach also needs to apply to carers, to prevent them reaching crisis point.

Skills for People commented that they generally supported a preventative approach and partnership working with voluntary and community sector organisations, observing that mental health issues are often driven by 'social determinants' (non-medical factors that affect a person's health, such as their housing or access to transport). However, they felt that voluntary and community sector organisations are continually being asked to provide more services for the same amount of funding.

The Elders Council commented that they had received very positive feedback from their members about the reablement service, and they supported the goal of maintaining independence, but questioned whether there were adequate resources available to provide the services necessary for this. They also asked whether increased use of Assistive Technology could result in more data being produced, and therefore more human resources being needed to respond to it.

Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice supported our commitment to improving reablement services and promoting independence, and in particular the use of a multiple-disciplinary team to provide support to independence.

## **Minimising impact**

One suggestion was to make sure the Connie Lewcock Resource Centre remains open and to open new units to work together with the reablement service in future. Another person felt that there should be no changes to the service, and that the council should

lobby central government for better social care funding to be able to maintain existing service levels. The Elders Council stressed the importance of continuing support for voluntary and community sector organisations, who are a vital part of providing support services in local neighbourhoods.

### Fair and reasonable?

Two people felt the proposals were fair and reasonable, with one qualifying this with a comment that resource centres needed to be preserved to provide the necessary support for service users. However, another person felt it was unfair that council tax payers in Newcastle were having to pay more to meet local demand for these services during a cost of living crisis, and that the national government should find funding for this. Another response was that it was not fair to try to make savings to these services given that they are used by “a small group of vulnerable people”.

The Elders Council were concerned about whether all users – both older people, and younger disabled adults – would receive enough support if all social care services for adults are “under the same umbrella”, noting that “less money was spent on older people in the last Adult Social Care report compared with learning disability and autism”.

### Other ways to save or generate income

Suggestions for this included reducing spending on Council pensions, efficiency savings such as reducing management posts, reducing senior staff pay, and for all North East councils to group together and lobby central government for better social care funding arrangements. One person made several suggestions, including regular reviews of care packages for people with learning disabilities and autism to make small changes that could save money whilst still meeting people’s needs, reducing everyone’s care package by one hour per week, and asking service providers to save small amounts each year to see what ideas they would come up with.

### General comments

Six people said they were happy with the existing service, and three people said they did not want to see any cuts to the service.

Themes	No. of mentions	General
Happy with the existing service	6	“My mother had the service in 2016 after an operation and I was so grateful, we both were. The staff were professional, well-trained, polite, organised, well-managed and above all so very caring.”
Do not want to see any cuts to the service	3	“You’re dealing with people, not cans of beans.”
Ensure service provision is fair	1	“This service needs to be fair to everyone.”
Ensure that crisis accommodation continues to be provided	1	“I would not want to see the crisis accommodation element removed and only home support provided only just to save money.”

Themes	No. of mentions	General
Feel that a preventative approach will not work for people with severe learning disabilities or autism.	1	“Prevention is always a good idea, but realistically the group of people who are expensive to adult social care are in all honesty unlikely to ever be independent.”
Feel that the reablement service should be extended across Newcastle	1	“Both services were excellent and I would like to see more of both of this type of services rolled out throughout Newcastle.”
Feel the service is not dementia-friendly	1	“This service does not understand what the needs of someone with dementia is.”
Lobby central government for better adult social care funding	1	“Go back to the government and tell them you refuse to make the cuts.”
Make sure services are targeted to those in most need.	1	“The council needs to ensure a targeted approach that reaches those in real need.”
Making services crisis-only will result in more demand for services in future	1	“Don't make services emergency-response only, it doesn't save money, in fact it will cost more.”

The Elders Council wanted occupational therapists and social workers to be involved in providing housing in Newcastle, to draw on their experience of “trying to overcome the challenges of unsuitable housing”. They also commented that the Newcastle approach to a ‘Home First’ service differed from that provided elsewhere, as it is an in-house Council service, not provided by the voluntary and community sector.



## Education IIA – School Meals

The proposal is as follows: “We currently charge different prices per meal for different types of school meals, such as nursery, primary school, and secondary. The price is also affected by whether the meal is paid-for (by parents or carers) or free. Prices range from between £2.10 to £3.25 per meal.

In future, we propose to move to a standard pricing model, where one fixed price per meal is charged for all meals. Schools would pay for each meal taken, as they do now, but they would be free to decide what charge per meal is passed onto 'paying parents and carers', whose children are not eligible for free school meals. There would be an increase in the payment each year to reflect increased costs for employees and food due to inflation, and to reduce the cost to Newcastle City Council of subsidising the service.”

24 people and organisations gave us their views on this proposal, including a response from the North East Child Poverty Commission.

### Are the proposals clear?

15 people said the proposals were clear, although one commented: “as a paying parent, I'd like to know what my child's school is proposing to charge for a school meal”. Six people said they were not clear, with comments including: “it can vary school to school”, “it should include specifics as to how much will be expected to be paid per meal”, and “I had to read different pages and PDFs to get the full picture”.

### Consequences and impact

23 people commented on this, mostly expressing concern at potential negative impacts. The most common themes are shown below (many people’s comments contained more than one theme), with six people saying they were concerned at a potential negative impact on children from families on low incomes who do not qualify for free school meals, and three saying they felt that working parents were unfairly penalised. Comments included:

- “Children of families who aren't eligible for free school meals but who are struggling with money will be financially hit, and having to rely increasingly on food banks.”
- “I will be paying more for school dinners while my wages don't go up.”

Consequences and impacts	Number of mentions
Negative impact on those on low incomes who do not qualify for free school meals	6
Feel that working parents are unfairly penalised	3
Concerned this may lead to more children having packed lunches with poor nutritional value	2
Do not feel parents have enough information	2
I cannot afford to pay more for school meals	2
More children will go hungry	2

## Minimising impact

19 people commented on this with a wide range of suggestions, as did the North East Child Poverty Commission. Three did not want to see the proposals implemented at all, two wanted to see a cap on the maximum allowable charge for school meals, and another two said it was necessary to have transparency over pricing. Comments included:

- “Keep it as it is, Newcastle city council are spending money elsewhere on other areas which could see a cutback rather than children's school meals.”
- “Do not allow the prices to fluctuate or in the worst case, have a low percentage cap on the maximum pricing allowed.”
- “We need clarity regarding the cost being looked at.”

Both a resident and the North East Child Poverty Commission suggested that perhaps resources from the Household Support Fund could be used to provide primary schools with a funding pot to be ringfenced to help lower-income families who are not eligible for free school meals afford to pay, an approach which is currently being tried by South Tyneside Council.

<b>Minimising impact</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>
Do not implement the proposal	3
Use resources from the Household Support Fund to help pay for school meals	2
Cap the maximum allowable charge	2
Need transparency over pricing	2
All schools need to agree a response to prevent a backlash against some of them	1
Book food in advance to minimise waste	1
Do not allow the prices to fluctuate	1
Ensure that working parents are not penalised	1
Extra funding from central government is needed	1
Increase the threshold for free school meals so that more children benefit from them	1
Introduce increased charges gradually	1
Make all meals gluten-free	1
Make food simpler	1
Make sure the service is well-marketed to parents	1
Parents should be able to set a limit on how much children can spend	1
Provide healthier lunches	1
Provide information about the importance of good nutrition for children	1
Review the criteria for free school meals	1

## Fair and reasonable?

21 people commented on this. Seven said that the proposals were fair, one was not sure, and 13 thought they were not fair. Many commented on why they thought this, such as being concerned about potential increased use of food banks, poorer meal quality, and impacts upon working parents – or, for those who thought the proposals are fair, commenting on the challenges the Council faces. Comments included:

- “No, the council should be investing in children, who are our future.”
- “Yes, I think it is a budget set under very challenging circumstances.”

<b>Fair and reasonable</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>
<b>No</b> , it is not fair	5
<b>No</b> , it is not fair and will result in increased food bank usage.	1
<b>No</b> , it is not fair because it is a low level of savings with a high impact on children	1
<b>No</b> , it is not fair and meals could be better quality	1
<b>No</b> , it is not fair because it will result in poorer-quality meals	1
<b>No</b> , it is not fair to working parents on low income	1
<b>No</b> , it is not fair because parents will have little choice but to comply	1
<b>No</b> , it is not fair because savings should be made to other services	1
<b>No</b> , we should invest in children.	1
<b>Not sure</b>	1
<b>Yes</b> , it is fair	4
<b>Yes</b> , it is fair given the challenging circumstances	1
<b>Yes</b> , it is fair given that councils now have less funding from central government	1
<b>Yes</b> , it is fair if the quality of meals stays the same	1

## Other ways to save or generate income

13 people commented on this. Suggestions for this included reducing senior staff salaries, making school meals simpler with fewer daily options, and spending less on traffic schemes. Comments included:

- “Make savings at the top, not from the bottom.”
- “Allow school kitchens to provide a smaller menu so there is less waste, four options per day is unnecessary. One option per day plus the option of a packed lunch is perfectly adequate for a school meal.”

<b>Other ways to save</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>
Cut salaries for senior staff	4
Make school meals simpler with fewer daily options	2
Unhappy with spending on traffic schemes	2
Ask service users what they need at an early stage	1
Can more support be provided in early years to promote children's development?	1
Feel the council wastes money	1
Give people more information about how the council sets its budget	1
Is it possible to generate income through school catering services?	1
Look at employment as a whole	1
Look at pre-packed foods and compare the cost of making the food in-house	1
Look at providing free school meals for all	1
Make all meals gluten-free	1
Make efficiency savings	1
Make meals low-cost but still healthy	1

## General comments

13 people commented on this, with three people saying that they would ideally like to see free school meals for all. Comments included:

- “There are parents who can afford to pay for nutritious meals for their children, and perhaps we need to move to a model where those that can pay a little more than the true cost, to subsidise those who cannot afford it. A publicity campaign across the city [is needed] to educate parents and other adults about the impact of poverty on children, and how it is not the child's fault.”
- “Please just listen to your constituents. The pressure households are already under is far too high. The council should look at their own spending habits.”

General comments	Number of mentions
Provide free school meals for all	3
Can parents who can afford it pay more to subsidise those on lower incomes?	1
Concerned that nutrition for children on low incomes will suffer	1
Council has a thankless task	1
Do not think the council listens	1
Feel that this will be unfair to working parents	1
Hopefully this will mean a more sustainable school meals service	1
Households are under too much pressure	1
Meals need to be free of allergens	1
Need to educate people about the impact of poverty on children	1
Savings must be made somehow	1
Schools need to agree a city-wide approach	1
The proposal is too short-sighted	1
This will be different for academy school pupils	1

## **5. Other proposals**

We received some feedback on other parts of our budget proposals which did not have IIAs, mostly from stakeholder organisations, which is summarised here.

### **Business Rates**

Healthworks Newcastle commented that they would like the council to consider offering “full discretionary Business Rates” to charities with premises in the city, to help them cope with current financial pressures, and continue to provide services. The North East Chamber of Commerce confirmed that they will respond to the government’s proposals to co-design a fairer business rates system.

### **Real Living Wage and National Insurance Contributions**

Healthworks Newcastle supported the council’s commitment to being an accredited Real Living Wage employer as part of tackling the issue of in-work poverty. They asked that the council make Real Living Wage accreditation a condition of supplying goods and services in its procurement process (unless there is a compelling reason not to), as this would support them to become accredited as well.

The North East Chamber of Commerce also supported the council’s commitment to the Real Living Wage, but commented on the impact on their members of the recent increase in National Insurance Contributions, and the knock-on effects for the council in terms of increased costs for service providers, for example in social care. Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice also commented on the likely impact of these changes on voluntary and community sector organisations and their capacity to deliver services.

### **Vacant Posts**

Citizens Advice Newcastle and Connected Voice were concerned that deleting vacant posts in community support, revenues and benefits, and transport, rather than filling them, could increase the burden on other support services and the organisations which provide them.

### **Grass cutting services**

Citizens Advice Newcastle suggested reducing the grass cutting budget, and having more wildflower areas, to free up resources to spend on other services and support wildlife.

### **Mainstreaming the Community Connector Model**

Newcastle Carers have said they are “informal community connectors for carers”. They want to increase the number of carers they work with and create a framework for this approach, with further interest in how this ties into social prescribing. Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice also supported this approach, but were concerned that this could have an impact on voluntary and community sector organisations with limited resources if it increases demand for their services, and that this could then increase pressure on unpaid carers.

### **Promoting independence in supported living**

Newcastle Carers said that this approach is ‘friendlier’, but wondered if it could ultimately increase demand at the Adult Social Care Point? They also wanted to identify earlier opportunities to intervene with support for carers and the people they support before they reach crisis point. Healthwatch Newcastle also supported this proposal.



### **Direct Payment reviews**

Newcastle Carers commented that “it will be interesting [to see] how people come through the review process”. Healthwatch Newcastle and Connected Voice also supported this proposal, with Connected Voice commented that “this will rely on signposting into VCSE sector services, and those services should be properly resourced”.

### **Adult Social Care Fees and Charges**

Healthwatch Newcastle commented that proposals to increase adult social care fees and charges will be challenging and that they intended to monitor service quality and user experience as this is implemented.

### **Arts, Music and Culture**

Healthwatch Newcastle said that they understood the need to make savings by reducing library opening hours, but that the council needed to consider what free activities and venues were still available to the public as part of tackling poverty.

### **Bikeability**

Newcastle Carers and Connected Voice said that they thought the proposals around Bikeability disappointing in the context of needing to tackle climate change, and Connected Voice were especially concerned at the potential impact on children and young people taking up cycling.

## 6. General

We also ask people for their opinions on our budget proposals as a whole, and any general comments they have about public services and quality of life in Newcastle. This section presents their views.

### Are the proposals clear and easy to understand?

Twenty people commented on this via Let’s talk Newcastle Online. Eleven people said they did not think the proposals were clear. Three people made comments about this, as follows:

‘No, what does this actually mean? “We will be more efficient and agile at delivering services through continuous improvement and aligning our resources effectively”.’

‘No, it is not clear at all. The words alongside the figures are for the most part incomprehensible for people who do not have knowledge of the inner workings of the Council.’

‘Not really. It doesn’t explain the reasoning behind certain decisions.’

Nine people said the proposals were clear, with comments as follows:

‘They are mostly clear.’

‘On some areas, yes.’

‘Yes, the proposal is clear in outlining the financial challenges Newcastle City Council is facing, the measures being proposed, and the areas that will be impacted. However, there could be more explanation about how capital investments might alleviate some long-term financial pressures or generate revenue in the future.’

### Consequences and impact

Nineteen people made comments about the possible consequences and impacts of the proposals. Most were concerned about potential negative impact on local households and businesses. The table below shows the most common themes, and some examples of comments.

Theme	Mentions	Sample quote
A council tax increase will have a negative impact on households and businesses	4	‘Increased council tax and service fees may strain households already struggling with inflation.’
Services will get worse	4	‘Services will be impacted in many areas of the council.’
I do not have enough information to be sure	2	‘Unknown, as the proposals are unclear.’
Increase in poverty	2	‘People will be plunged further into poverty and despair.’

## Minimising impact

11 people commented on how they thought the impact of the proposals could be minimised, with the most comment themes in comments being ‘do not raise council tax’ and ‘proposals need to be clearer so that people can make better judgements about their impact’.

Minimising impacts	Mentions	Sample quote
Do not raise council tax	2	‘Do not raise council tax.’
Proposals need to be clearer so that people can make better judgements about their impact.	2	‘Describe your budget lines so that we can truly understand what you are intending spending on...’
Do not charge the adult social care precept	1	‘Remove social care precept.’
Do not think councillors are value for money as we do not see them	1	‘There are no longer ward meetings... [there is] no connection between the council and the residents of this city.’
Lobby central government for more funding	1	‘Ask the government to reconsider these cuts.’
Need new ideas instead of doing the same things each year	1	‘Some wit and vision from councillors rather than doing the same things endlessly.’
People cannot afford higher prices for school meals	1	‘Do not raise the price of school meals, families are already struggling.’
Provide more financial and management support to the voluntary sector	1	‘Provide more financial and management support to the voluntary sector.’
Provide more support to disabled and mentally ill people	1	‘Do not abandon the disabled and mentally unwell.’
Restrict the number of HMOs	1	‘Restrictions on HMOs must be in place.’
Support local people to find affordable housing	1	‘Tackle the increase in rents and HMOs ...it is destroying both the North East and wider North.’
Tackle increased rent costs to help address the cost of living crisis	1	‘It is impossible to find an affordable place to rent whilst affording everything else, such as a Metro pass.’

## Fair and reasonable?

16 people answered the question about whether the proposals were generally ‘fair and reasonable’. Nine said that they were not fair and reasonable, six said that they were, and one person replied ‘don’t know’. Themes from respondents’ comments are shown below.

Fair and reasonable	Mentions	Sample quote
No	2	‘No, not fair.’
No, people pay more every year for less	2	‘No. For the last 10 years we are told of cuts after cuts resulting in services being lost, yet council taxes go up...’
Yes, mostly	2	‘Sort of, yes.’
Don't know	1	‘Unknown.’
No, because it is not clearly explained	1	‘No, I do not think it is fair because you have not clearly explained each of your budget lines.’
No, communities are already at breaking point	1	‘No, stop plugging gaps with cuts that hurt our communities which are already at breaking point.’
No, feel that those can afford the least pay more	1	‘No, yet again [you] pass the burden to those who can least afford to pay more.’
No, high business rates are causing local businesses to struggle	1	‘Business tax rates are high, putting many small businesses out of business.’
No, need to lobby central government	1	‘We have a Labour government, why is a Labour council not able to secure more money from government?’
No, the council has too much unnecessary capital expenditure	1	‘Not fair in relation to other work the council is seeking funding for, much of which appears to be unnecessary e.g. cycle lanes.’
No, unhappy with councillors' expenses	1	‘No ...council taxes go up, and councillors' pay increases are high, expense claims are high.’
No, unhappy with senior staff salaries	1	‘No, cut salaries and stupid spending.’

Fair and reasonable	Mentions	Sample quote
No, unhappy with income from bus lane fines	1	'No, because Newcastle has the highest bus lane profits in the UK.'
Yes	1	Yes
Yes, but it is short-term thinking	1	'It is a fair proposal, but it appears short-term in its outcomes.'
Yes, but longer-term planning is needed	1	'Increasing a charge here and there is all well and good, but more long-term thinking is needed.'
Yes, but the proposed savings target for social care is too high	1	'The changes being proposed in social care are really sensible but the savings target is too high.'
Yes, there is a need to balance protecting essential services and difficult financial constraints	1	'Yes, the proposal is reasonable in its attempt to balance difficult financial constraints with the need to protect essential services.'

### Other ways to make savings or generate income

19 people answered the question about whether they thought there were other ways to make savings or generate income. The most common themes were: 'cut senior staff salaries' (four people said this), 'collaborate with other councils to jointly deliver services', 'councillors expenses should be lower', 'learn from best practice elsewhere', 'lobby national government for more funding' and 'unhappy with spending on cycle lanes' (two people each mentioned these themes).

Other ways to save or generate income	Mentions	Sample quote
Cut senior staff salaries	4	'Reduce the salaries of the top council earners.'
Collaborate with other councils to jointly deliver services	2	'Work with Gateshead Council to pool resources such as street sweepers.'
Councillors' expenses should be lower	2	'Cut MPs' and councillors' wages.'
Learn from best practice elsewhere	2	'Listen and learn from efficiently-run councils.'
Lobby national government for more funding	2	'Tell central government to fund our society properly.'

<b>Other ways to save or generate income</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Unhappy with spending on cycle lanes	2	'Stop wasting money by adding in bike lanes in areas where people don't use bikes.'
Accelerate development of derelict and unused land	1	'There are patches of derelict land all over the city, get the land in the city centre that you own sold and developed.'
CAZ charges should apply to private cars	1	'Accelerate the pollution charging to private cars.'
Central government should set higher taxes for high earners and businesses	1	'Central government should tax the wealthy and corporations.'
Charge utility companies more for repairing roads	1	'Charge utility companies more for not repairing roads and pavements to their prior condition.'
Council needs to communicate better with communities	1	'Explain how increases in taxes and fees will be reinvested into the community to build trust and minimise resistance.'
Council tax should be lower	1	'Lower council tax, don't raise it.'
Create citizens assemblies to look at new ways to deliver services	1	'Engage the community more deeply in decision-making, such as by creating citizen panels to help identify innovative cost-saving ideas.'
Cut spending on Net Zero goals	1	'Scrap Net Zero.'
Encourage businesses to move to Newcastle	1	'Work harder to attract business to Newcastle.'
Enforce fines for shops selling counterfeit goods	1	'Make all these shops selling counterfeit goods, when caught, pay out a lot.'
Ensure vulnerable groups are not disproportionately affected by changes	1	'Fairness could be improved by ensuring vulnerable populations are not disproportionately impacted.'
Focus on regeneration and economic development to generate income	1	'There is not enough focus on the regeneration and business teams bringing in more revenue.'
Funds for cleaning chewing gum should be spent on social care	1	'Putting a proposal to keep cleaning chewing gum is not sensible in light of the ask from social care, this should be scrapped.'
Higher fees for HMO landlords	1	'Increase fees for HMO landlords.'

<b>Other ways to save or generate income</b>	<b>Mentions</b>	<b>Sample quote</b>
Invest in preventative measures	1	'Prioritise community-based programs that prevent issues in adult social care.'
Invest in tourism to bring in income	1	'Increase revenue by investing in cultural events, tourism campaigns, and public spaces.'
Look at creating a progressive council tax model	1	'Consider introducing a progressive council tax model where higher-value properties contribute a larger share.'
Look at partnerships with private companies for providing services	1	'Explore partnerships with private companies to co-fund projects.'
Make sure fines for littering and similar offences are collected	1	'Increase fines for things such as littering and graffiti ...make those who cause the problem pay more to fix it.'
Need more information to help identify areas for saving money	1	'I absolutely do think there will be ways ..but until you give us clear explanations we cannot identify them.'
Renegotiate long-term services	1	'Look into re-negotiating long-term contracts with external service providers to find cost savings.'
Support active travel to reduce road maintenance costs and improve health	1	'Invest in active travel infrastructure ...it saves money everywhere, the NHS, infrastructure, makes people healthier.'
Tackle benefit fraud	1	'Make sure you check who are the people receiving benefits, there are people really taking advantage.'
Takeaways and similar businesses should pay more for cleaning up the streets	1	'Legislate for food, alcohol and off-licence businesses to install ashtrays outside of their premises and make them tidy up their customers' litter and mess.'
Unhappy with changes to transport network	1	'Stop wasting money on changing traffic lights.'
Unhappy with spending on Outer West Leisure Centre	1	'Do not spend £26million on a swimming pool when you need to save £21 million.'
Use digital transformation to make efficiency savings	1	'Use technology to improve efficiency, such as digitising processes and utilising data to optimise service delivery.'
Use empty shops for pop-ups for mental and physical health services	1	'Make use of empty shops as pop-ups for Mind, the NHS, the Samaritans.'

Other ways to save or generate income	Mentions	Sample quote
Use pilot programmes to use new ways of delivering services	1	'Test new ways of delivering services before implementing citywide changes.'
Use volunteering programmes to maintain neighbourhoods	1	'Engage residents in maintaining public spaces or supporting social care to reduce pressure on paid staff.'
Use waste to energy programmes to generate income	1	'Implement waste-to-energy programs or charge higher fees for businesses generating excess waste.'

### General comments from the public

139 members of the public made general comments about the budget proposals, public services and life in Newcastle upon Tyne via emails, Let's talk Newcastle Online, and social media. The most common themes were: 'cut senior staff pay' (15 people said this), 'unhappy with the council' (12 people said this), and 'unhappy with councillors' expenses' (eight people said this).

General comments	Mentions	Sample quote
Cut senior staff pay	15	'Cut salaries and spending.'
Unhappy with the council	12	'Why don't you try running the town more efficiently?'
Unhappy with councillors' expenses	8	'What percentage of cuts have been made across councillors' wage bills?'
Unhappy with increase in council tax	6	'All I hear is that the council has to make savings and always has a shortfall ..the council tax paying- residents always end up getting charged more.'
Unhappy with loan to Crowne Plaza hotel	6	'Here's a thought, why not just ask the Crowne Plaza to pay back what they owe?'
Do not think the Council listens	5	'Is there any point to this, as Newcastle City Council just don't listen?'
Lobby national government for more funding	4	'I'd balance the books by demanding a restoration to 2013 levels of central funding: £118.7 million.'
Unhappy with spending on cycle lanes	4	'Reduce the amount of cycle lane projects costing millions, and spend that money repairing the road network we have.'



General comments	Mentions	Sample quote
Unhappy with spending on support for refugees and asylum seekers	4	‘How much money is Newcastle council spending on services for asylum seekers?’
Unhappy with street cleanliness and fly-tipping in some areas of the city	4	‘The streets outside of my business are a disgrace, I am out there every morning gloves on picking rubbish up.’

### General comments from stakeholder organisations

As in previous years, the North East Chamber of Commerce were keen to work with us to advocate for the reform of local government finance, in particular, long-term financial settlements.

Newcastle Carers asked about whether there is any sign that there will be changes to how adult social care services are funded, including greater stability, and commented on the negative impacts of “long and enduring” cuts in funding. They also asked about the foreseeable impact on commissioning, said that they welcomed the opportunity to invest in early intervention and streamline services in council and NUTH (Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), and that they welcome digital inclusion, the ability to find information when and where you need it, and getting data sharing right.

Healthwatch Newcastle commented that they generally supported our proposals to take a more preventative approach, but were concerned about the challenge of delivering this given increasing demand for these services. They wanted to see continued partnership working to plan and deliver services. Along with Connected Voice, they welcomed the “percentage of influenceable spend coming into the VCSE sector”, and emphasised the importance of sustaining services provided by voluntary and community sector organisations, for example by investing in local charities.

Connected Voice commented on the impact of years of funding reductions from central government on service, and increased demand for services due to an aging population and a greater proportion of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and expressed support for our work to transform the provision of adult social care services. However, they commented that the voluntary and community sector is struggling with decreasing resources, increased demand for services, low volunteer capacity, and an increased frequency of mental health issues among staff and volunteers. They wanted to see better information about the Newcastle Fund made available to voluntary and community sector organisations.

**let's talk  
Newcastle**

**Let's talk Newcastle  
Budget 2025 – 2026  
consultation report  
Appendix 2: How we  
engaged with residents,  
organisations, and other  
stakeholders – and who  
took part**

**let's talk  
Newcastle**

## Appendix 2: How we engaged with residents, organisations, and other stakeholders – and who took part

Residents, partners and other stakeholders have been able to have their say through various routes as described below. We have used many of the consultation tools that have been used in previous years, including offline consultation channels such as letters and in-person discussions with people affected by our proposals. This section summarises how many people used these channels, and provides some information about the people who took part, such as their gender, age, and if they are disabled.

### Accessibility and information

In this year, we have done the following to improve the accessibility of our budget information:

- Our budget documents have been produced in accordance with our accessibility guidelines, so that people with visual impairments using screen readers will not encounter problems accessing the information in them.
- We used feedback on videos from previous years to make our videos this year more accessible.
- We commissioned a BSL video introducing the consultation.
- We commissioned Easy Read information introducing the consultation.

### How did we publicise the consultation?

We promoted the consultation widely online, using videos, Facebook and LinkedIn posts, X (Twitter), and our website. We also used non-digital communication channels, such as our residents' magazine, Citylife (we produced a winter 2024 edition available online and with printed copies in libraries), and we used a FREEPOST address so that people could post responses to us if they preferred this.

### Offline engagement and working with communities of interest

We used non-digital communication channels such as our residents' magazine, Citylife; whilst we no longer produce a printed edition sent to individual households, we produced a special Winter 2024 edition which was available online and sent out by email, with printed copies in libraries. Where possible, we involved voluntary organisations representing communities of interest such as people with learning disabilities, older people, such as:

- **Carers Newcastle** – an independent charity supporting adults, children and young people who care for someone living in Newcastle upon Tyne.
- **Connected Voice** – an advocacy organisation providing, free advice and support to people and organisations, campaigning for health equality, and representing the charity, social enterprise and voluntary community nationally, regionally and locally. In addition to their social media and e-bulletin communications, they held a consultation session for VCSE organisations and Connected Voice / Haref members on 8 January, attended by 20 representatives

from 14 different organisations as well as senior representatives from Newcastle City Council.

- **Elders Council** – a local group of people who are interested in having a say about how to make Newcastle a great city in which to grow old.
- **Healthwatch Newcastle** – an independent, not-for-profit organisation who help people of all ages and from all backgrounds have their say about social care and health services in Newcastle upon Tyne.
- **Newcastle Advisory Group** – a group of people in Newcastle with a learning disability, autism, and their family carers who work with Newcastle City Council to improve services and opportunities available to adults in the local area.
- **Skills For People** – a voluntary sector organisation in Newcastle which works to make sure disabled people and their families are well supported, have good lives, are in control of their own lives, and are included in the communities of their choice. They also hosted a discussion

We also had three discussions with school representatives, and received feedback from schools, the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC), Connected Voice, Citizens Advice Newcastle, and the North East Child Poverty Commission. A full list of engagement events is available at the end of this appendix.

## Digital engagement

Our main digital channels were Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, to push the message out, get people engaged with the People’s Budget simulator tool, and get their comments on our service-specific proposals. We put out 27 social media posts in total - nine of each of these channels – three of which (on each channel) introduced a specific proposal, such as school meals, and others which were general introductions to the budget proposals, to the People’s Budget, and reminders to participate as the consultation fieldwork period neared the end.

Local organisations such as Connected Voice promoted the consultation through their own communications channels, including social media and email bulletins, and contacted their members directly to encourage them to participate. Below are the details of how our social media posts were received. As a summary:

- **Impressions** are “the number of times a piece of content is displayed to users on a social media platform” – the post with the highest number of impressions (8,586) was the Facebook post about the School Meals Service proposal on 30 December 2024.
- **Clicks** are “when a user interacts with a social media post, such as by clicking a link or button” – the post with the highest number of clicks (137) was the Facebook post about the School Meals Service proposal on 30 December 2024.
- **Likes** are “the number of affirmative or positive votes received on a piece of content across social media platforms” – the post with the highest number of likes (16) was the LinkedIn post on ‘The challenge we face in 2025-26’ on 15 December 2024.
- **Shares** are “the action of distributing, posting, or reposting content to someone’s own social media platform or other digital channels” – the post with the highest number of shares (11) was the Facebook post about the School Meals Service proposal on 30 December 2024.
- The **channel** which generally received the most interaction was Facebook.

## Statistics

Title	Channel	Date	Impressions	Clicks	Likes	Shares
1. The challenge we face in 2025-26	Facebook	15 December 2024	2,327	0	5	0
1. The challenge we face in 2025-26	LinkedIn	15 December 2024	1,507	0	16	1
1. The challenge we face in 2025-26	X (Twitter)	15 December 2024	2,748	0	1	2
2. Try the budget simulator!	Facebook	16 December 2024	5,117	45	2	2
2. Try the budget simulator!	LinkedIn	16 December 2024	649	0	5	0
2. Try the budget simulator!	X (Twitter)	16 December 2024	1,060	14	2	1
3. We're proposing changes to the Reablement Service	Facebook	29 December 2024	4,280	27	14	9
3. We're proposing changes to the Reablement Service	LinkedIn	29 December 2024	638	0	4	0
3. We're proposing changes to the Reablement Service	X (Twitter)	29 December 2024	1,724	19	2	2
4. We're proposing changes to the School Meals Service	Facebook	30 December 2024	8,586	137	7	11
4. We're proposing changes to the School Meals Service	LinkedIn	30 December 2024	1,558	0	4	0
4. We're proposing changes to the School Meals Service	X (Twitter)	30 December 2024	1,881	40	0	0
5. Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept	Facebook	7 January 2025	1,823	18	1	1
5. Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept	LinkedIn	7 January 2025	834	0	2	0
5. Council Tax and Adult Social Care Precept	X (Twitter)	7 January 2025	1,174	7	0	0
6. How would you balance the books?	Facebook	10 January 2025	1,124	35	6	2
6. How would you balance the books?	LinkedIn	10 January 2025	3,998	63	14	0
6. How would you balance the books?	X (Twitter)	10 January 2025	1,301	10	2	1

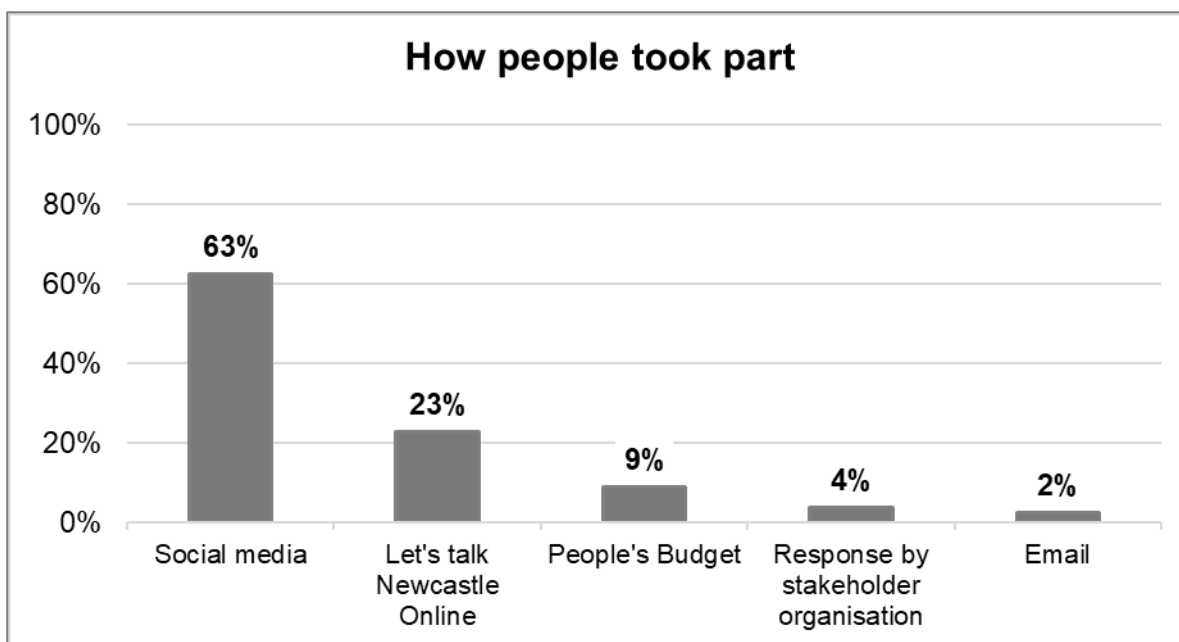
Title	Channel	Date	Impressions	Clicks	Likes	Shares
7. Our council budget supports the services that matter most	Facebook	13 January 2025	3,094	30	7	0
7. Our council budget supports the services that matter most	LinkedIn	13 January 2025	1,178	4	6	0
7. Our council budget supports the services that matter most	X (Twitter)	13 January 2025	823	12	0	0
8. Time is running out – have your say!	Facebook	13 January 2025	3,258	37	4	4
8. Time is running out – have your say!	LinkedIn	13 January 2025	671	10	5	0
8. Time is running out – have your say!	X (Twitter)	13 January 2025	788	20	0	0
9. Last chance to have your say!	Facebook	15 January 2025	1,353	8	1	0
9. Last chance to have your say!	LinkedIn	15 January 2025	819	9	3	1
9. Last chance to have your say!	X (Twitter)	15 January 2025	760	10	0	0

## About the respondents

### How people took part

Around 217 individuals and organisations sent in their responses via the People’s Budget, Let’s talk Newcastle Online, social media posts, formal responses from stakeholder organisations (including discussions at events), and emails. (We do not know the exact number of individual people who took part as we do not have any way of checking whether someone might have sent us several responses – for example, posting a comment on Facebook, then completing a survey on Let’s talk Newcastle Online.)

The chart on the next page shows the best information we have about what proportion of individuals took part using different methods. Whilst social media comments form a sizeable proportion of the number of individual responses, much of the detailed feedback we have received has been received via Let’s talk Newcastle Online (for individuals) and stakeholder organisations (for organisations such as service providers and community groups).



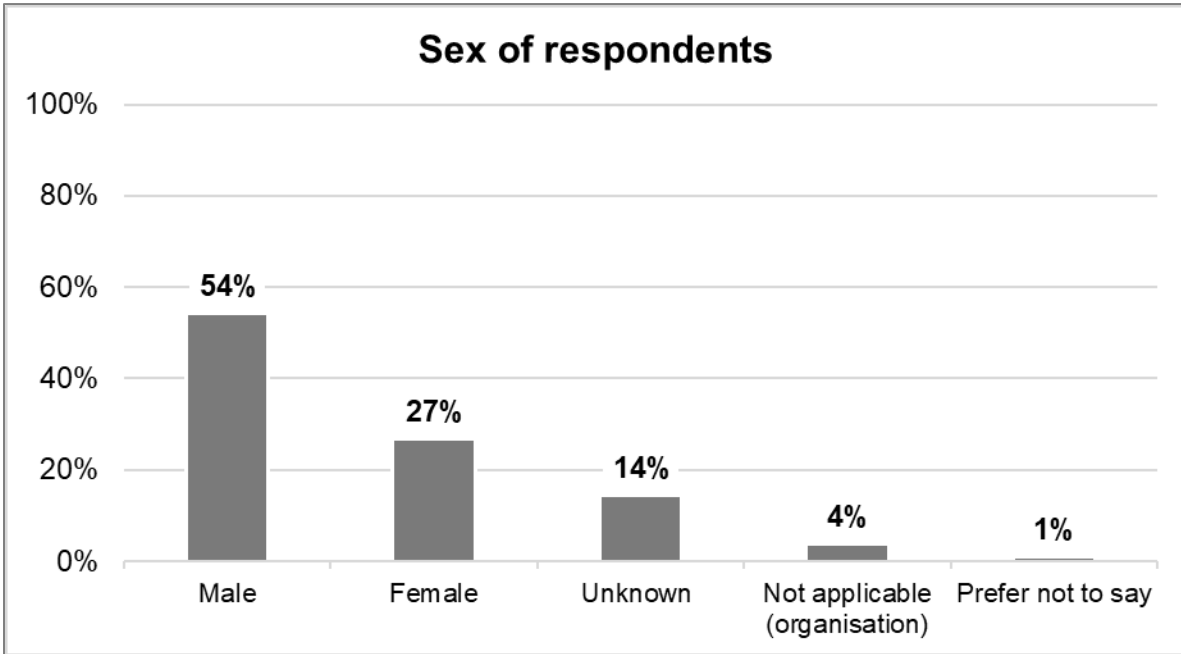
As shown, the majority of responses came by social media (63%).

Please note that because many responses came via social media, People’s Budget, or from stakeholder organisations, we do not have information about many respondents’ personal characteristics. This analysis presents what data we do have.

### Sex and gender

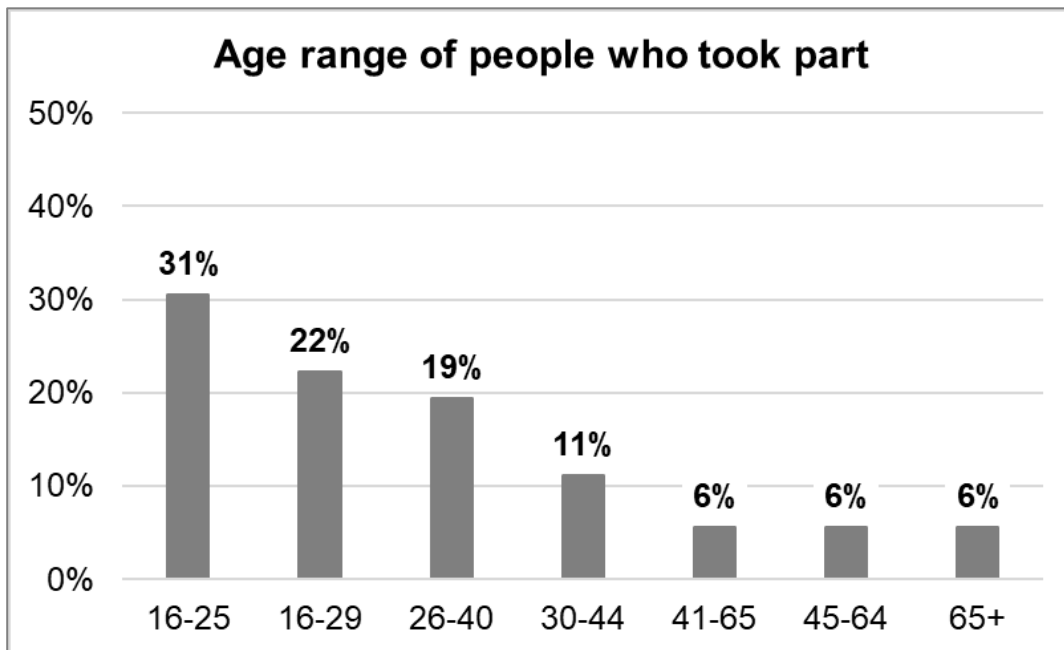
Of those for whom we have this information (217 people and organisations, including People’s Budget respondents), just over half of respondents were male. We asked separate questions about sex as assigned at birth, and gender identity in the Let’s talk Newcastle Online survey. 37 of the 49 respondents said that they identified as the sex they were assigned at birth, and no-one replied to say that they were transgender, or had another gender identity – the remaining 12 respondents left the question unanswered.





**Age**

For those for whom we have this information (36 people, who responded via Let’s talk Newcastle online and the People’s Budget and answered the question about their age), the largest single group of respondents gave their age group as 30-44 – 11 people. This was the same as in 2024-2025.



**Ethnicity**

Of the 17 people who provided this, all of whom took part via Let’s talk Newcastle Online, nearly all (15 people) described themselves as White or White British, with one replying ‘prefer not to say’ and another saying ‘other’.

### **Sexual orientation**

Of the 15 people who provided this information, all of whom took part via Let's talk Newcastle Online, the majority (11 people) described themselves as heterosexual, with two saying 'prefer not to say', one describing themselves as bisexual, and another as gay.

### **Disability**

Of the 17 people who provided this information, all of whom took part via Let's talk Newcastle Online, 13 said they were not disabled, one replied 'prefer not to say', and 3 said that they were disabled.

### **Religion and belief**

Of the 17 people who provided this information, all of whom took part via Let's talk Newcastle Online, 8 said they had no religion or belief, 7 said they were Christian, 1 was Buddhist, and 1 was Hindu.

## Ward

Of the 25 people who provided this information, the largest single number lived in Dene & South Gosforth, Gosforth and Parklands wards (3 people in each ward).

Ward	Number of people
Dene and South Gosforth	3
Gosforth	3
Parklands	3
Chapel	2
Kenton	2
Monument	2
Callerton & Throckley	1
Fawdon and West Gosforth	1
Heaton	1
Kingston Park South & Newbiggin Hall	1
Ouseburn	1
South Jesmond	1
West Fenham	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>North Tyneside</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Gateshead</i>	<i>2</i>

The table starting on the next page shows the different ways we engaged with the public and communities of interest throughout the consultation period.

## Our budget consultation for 2025-26 – how we engaged

This is our full record of communications, engagement and consultation activity related to our budget consultation for 2025-26.

<b>Who (who was communicated with / engaged?)</b>	<b>When (when it took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication / engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication / engagement)</b>	<b>How (method used)</b>
North East Chamber of Commerce	9 December 2024	Budget proposals 2025-2026.	To allow for the Chamber to provide formal feedback on the proposals. Encourage businesses to give feedback on proposal.	Online meeting via Teams
ICB (Integrated Care Board)	10 December 2024	Communicating budget consultation and engagement work to ICB.	Encourage the ICB to give feedback on the proposal.	In-person meeting
General public	11 December 2024	Launch the People’s Budget enabling people to try setting their own budget for the council	Raise awareness of complexity and get views on how people would allocate resources.	Press release, social media, People’s Budget tool going live, explainer video
Press and general public	11 December 2024	Publicising that we have published our draft proposals, summarising what they are, encouraging people to have their say, providing details of how to take part.	Engage local media.	Press release, explainer video on social media

<b>Who (who was communicated with / engaged?)</b>	<b>When (when it took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication / engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication / engagement)</b>	<b>How (method used)</b>
General public	11 December 2024	Launch Let's talk Newcastle Online surveys.	Gather feedback on both individual proposals, and the cumulative impact of the budget as a whole.	Press release, social media posts, Let's talk Newcastle online surveys going live
Let's talk Newcastle Online members invitation to take part	11 December 2024	Invitation to give views via the Let's talk Newcastle Online surveys.	Gather feedback on individual proposals, and on the cumulative impact of the budget as a whole.	Email sent out via the LTN online portal
General public	11 December 2024	Introduction to the budget challenges we face as a council by Cllr Karen Kilgour, Leader of the Council	Raise awareness of the consultation and encourage people to take part	Social media – video
Key stakeholders	11 December 2024	Advising that we had published our draft proposals, encourage them to have their say and provide details of how to do this.	To raise awareness and encourage people to have their say	Email to our stakeholder group contacts list.

<b>Who (who was communicated with / engaged?)</b>	<b>When (when it took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication / engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication / engagement)</b>	<b>How (method used)</b>
Newcastle City Council staff	11 December 2024, and throughout the fieldwork period	Article in the Council's Corporate Communications newsletter, also information sent to the Contact Centre.	Inform staff about the budget consultation so that they can answer queries about it from members of the public and service users.	Newsletter article
Connected Voice Bulletin to members	12 December 2024	Article in Connected Voice member e-newsletter.	Encourage local voluntary and community sector organisations to give feedback on proposal.	Newsletter article
Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	12 December 2024	Communicating budget consultation and engagement work to Newcastle Hospitals.	Encourage Newcastle Hospitals to give feedback on the proposal.	In-person meeting
Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)	16 December 2024	Communicating budget consultation and engagement work to CNTW.	Encourage CNTW to give feedback on the proposal.	In-person meeting
Organisations on the Neighbourhood Network event mailing list	18 December 2024	Communicating budget consultation and engagement work the voluntary and community sector in Newcastle.	Encourage people and voluntary & community sector organisations to give feedback on the proposal	Email sent out to the network mailing list

<b>Who (who was communicated with / engaged?)</b>	<b>When (when it took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication / engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication / engagement)</b>	<b>How (method used)</b>
General public	w/c 9 December 2024	Invitation to take part using the People's Budget tool.	Encourage people to take part in the People's Budget.	Social media
General public	w/c 9 December 2024	Explainer video about Reablement service proposal.	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media
General public	w/c 16 December 2024	Explainer video about School Meals proposal	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media
General public	w/c 31 December 2024	Explainer video about Council Tax proposal.	Encourage people to give feedback on proposal.	Social media
Schools	17 December 2024 7 January 2025 8 January 2025	Discussion.	Encourage schools to give feedback on proposal.	In-person meeting
General public including BSL users / D/deaf people	January 2025	BSL (British Sign Language) interpreted video: Publicising that we have published our draft proposals, summarise what they are, encourage people to have their say, provide details of how to take part.	Encourage Deaf people to give feedback on proposals and support BSL users / Deaf /deaf people to take part.	Explainer video on social media with BSL interpretation

<b>Who (who was communicated with / engaged?)</b>	<b>When (when it took place)</b>	<b>What (what the communication / engagement covered)</b>	<b>Why (purpose of the communication / engagement)</b>	<b>How (method used)</b>
Newcastle Carers	7 January 2025	Discussion.	Encourage carers to give feedback on proposals.	In-person meeting
Connected Voice / HAREF	8 January 2025	Discussion.	Encourage voluntary & community sector organisations to give feedback on proposal.	In-person meeting
CYP Partnership	9 January 2025	Discussion.	Encourage children and young people-related partners to give feedback on proposal.	In-person meeting
Newcastle Advisory Group	10 January 2025	Discussion with Newcastle Advisory Group.	Gather views on savings proposals and identify any specific impact or considerations for people who have a learning disability, autism or both.	In-person meeting
Skills for People	10 January 2025	Discussion with Skills for People.	Gather views on savings proposals and identify any specific impact or considerations for people who have a learning disability, autism or both.	In-person meeting
Elders Council and Healthwatch	12 January 2025	Discussion.	Encourage older people to give feedback on proposal.	In-person meeting
General public	w/c 6 January 2025	'Last chance to have your say' – reminder of the deadline approaching.	Encourage people to take part in the budget consultation.	Social media –



**let's talk  
Newcastle**