

Produced by the Cambridgeshire Research Group



Business Planning 2022/23: Summary Report of Survey Findings

V0.1

December 2021

The strategy for analysis of the consultation was as follows:

- An initial quality assurance review of the data was conducted and a review with the engagement team carried out to identify any issues or changes that occurred during the consultation process. For this consultation, there were no issues or changes.
- A set of frequencies were then produced and checks made against the total number of respondents for each question and the consultation overall. A basic sense check of the data was made at this point with issues such as checking for duplicate entries, data entry errors identified.

- **Duplicate Entries.** Measures were in place to avoid analysing duplicated entries. The online survey software collects the timestamp and IP address of entries so patterns of deliberate duplicate entries can be spotted and countered.

For this consultation, we identified and removed 1 duplicate entries.

- **Partial Entries.** The system records all partial entries as well as those that went through to completion (respondent hit submit). These are reviewed separately and in a few cases, where a substantial response has been made (as opposed to someone just clicking through) then these are added to the final set for analysis.

For this consultation, we identified and included no partial entries and removed no partial entries.

- Within the qualitative analysis a search for any unusual patterns within the responses was carried out, such as duplicate or 'cut and paste' views being expressed on proposals.







For this consultation, there were no unusual patterns identified.





- Free text questions were analysed using qualitative methods, namely through thematic analysis. These themes are identified using specialist software and then responses tagged with these themes (multiple tags can be given to the same response and the question phrasing means that responses can refer to the same theme in different ways). At this stage totals of tagged themes are created and sample quotes chosen for the final report that typify particular tagged themes. Comment themes are listed in order of the number of comments received, from most to least. In the reporting of themes 'most' represents where over 50% of respondents' comments were applicable, 'some' represents 25%-49%, and 'few' represents less than 25% of comments.

- The final report is then written to provide an objective view of the results of the consultation.

Demographics

There were 512 respondents. The demographics of these respondents are as follows:

1. Which Cambridgeshire district do you live in?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Cambridge City		7.42%	38
2	East Cambridgeshire		38.28%	196
3	Fenland		25.98%	133
4	Huntingdonshire		13.48%	69
5	South Cambridgeshire		12.50%	64
6	Prefer not to say		2.34%	12
			answered	512
			skipped	0

6. How would you describe your gender?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Female		49.11%	249
2	Male		43.39%	220
3	Other (please specify):		1.18%	6
4	Prefer not to say		6.31%	32
			answered	507
			skipped	5

7. What age band do you fall in?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 18 years old		0.00%	0
2	18- 24 years old	<div></div>	1.97%	10
3	25- 34 years old	<div></div>	12.60%	64
4	35- 44 years old	<div></div>	20.87%	106
5	45- 54 years old	<div></div>	24.41%	124
6	55- 64 years old	<div></div>	20.67%	105
7	65- 84 years old	<div></div>	15.35%	78
8	85+ years old	<div></div>	0.20%	1
9	Prefer not to say	<div></div>	3.94%	20
			answered	508
			skipped	4

Question 2: Investment

2. The County Council is considering investing more in some areas to deliver longer term benefits to people's lives and ultimately reduce costs. Please indicate how you feel about investments in the following areas:

[illegible]

Question 2b: Do you have any comments to explain your choices?

97 of the respondents left comments on question 2b, which asked why they had chosen their choices in response to areas considered to deliver longer term benefits to people's lives and reduce costs.

Summary of main themes

Answer Choice	Respondent comments
Projects and services which support people across Cambridgeshire to live their lives as independently as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice indicated that they felt that these projects and services were important. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents felt that savings could be made for the Council through projects and services of this type ○ A few of these respondents felt that these projects and services could improve quality of life for residents and reduce inequalities ○ A few of these respondents felt that these projects and services were preventative to help save resources in the longer term ○ A few of these respondents wanted to see robust monitoring and cost effectiveness of the projects or services against the aims ○ A few of these respondents felt that these projects and services were best delivered at a local level
More measures to tackle inequalities across Cambridgeshire, particularly those that have been made worse by the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice felt that there were inequalities that needed addressing, not just those that had been made worse by the pandemic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt there was an unequal spending of money in towns and cities across Cambridgeshire, with some respondents feeling that money was spent on Cambridge and that more rural parts of the Council area were 'forgotten' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A few of these respondents named Fenland and Wisbech as areas which were disproportionately affected ▪ A few of these respondents highlighted a need in investment for these rural areas, including; education, services, transport and businesses ▪ A few of these respondents felt that they were paying higher council tax

	costs compared to neighbouring Lincolnshire or Norfolk, for their money to be spent in cities and towns rather than more rural fringes
Initiatives which join up more closely with local partners, reducing duplication of effort and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice felt that reducing duplication would save time, money and resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents felt that working with partners ended up costing the council more ○ A few of these respondents commented that they would like to see less service outsourced ○ A few of these respondents questioned why initiatives to reduce duplication was not already happening in the council ○ A few of these respondents felt that the process of reducing duplication and resources should not require additional investment
Schemes which response to the environmental crisis and work towards the County Council's target of achieving net zero carbon by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice varied in their support for the environment crisis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt that the environmental crisis was important but that achieving net zero by 2030 was not achievable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A few of these respondents felt that more tax was needed to raise money to support the move away from carbon usage ▪ A few of these respondents felt more was needed locally to table carbon emissions. Discussions included solar panels on council properties ▪ A few of these respondents felt that central government should support local areas ○ Some of these respondents felt that the Council's work to help people should be the priority over environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A few felt that the cost of the environmental response was already hitting people hard, for example increase costs for fuel and were concerned about taking money away from services
Transport Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents also left comments on their answer choices which related to transport.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents were against congestion charging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A few of these respondents felt that it would have a negative impact on trades and those who did not live near public transport ▪ A few of these respondents wanted to see more done to increase public transport linkages ▪ A few were concerned that it would stop people visiting Cambridge or deter people from living in what was felt to be an expensive city already
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents also left comments which did not directly relate to answer choices. These included comments about council tax more widely and the questions or choices presented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt that Council tax should not rise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A few of these respondents felt that they did not get to see the difference previous rises had made ▪ A few of these respondents felt that the cost of council tax was already higher than in surrounding areas ▪ A few of these respondents felt that residents were already feeling the pressure of rises in the cost of other areas ▪ A few of these respondents felt more funding should come from central government ○ Some of these respondents felt that the questions were not clear, the proposals were too vague, broad or abstract

Question 3: Savings and Income

3. The County Council has identified some key areas where it could look to make additional savings, look for more cost-effective options or generate additional income which could then be used to support longer term improvements. If those on the lowest incomes, in receipt of certain benefits, or are less able, were protected, which areas would you most support the council to focus on:

Answer Choices	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know	Response Total
Generating further efficiencies and savings by working in new ways and making the most of digital innovations - e.g. more online self service	23.87% 122	37.77% 193	20.35% 104	12.13% 62	4.70% 24	1.17% 6	511
Increasing charges to deter and reduce non-sustainable methods of transport	15.13% 77	13.95% 71	12.77% 65	20.24% 103	36.54% 186	1.38% 7	509
Advertising and sponsorship from local suitable businesses, displaying banners, signs or logos on some council assets and products	18.40% 94	39.14% 200	22.90% 117	9.39% 48	8.81% 45	1.37% 7	511
Reviewing how the council awards and manages contracts	40.86% 208	42.24% 215	13.75% 70	0.59% 3	0.39% 2	2.16% 11	509
Reducing and/or delaying investment in Highway projects	9.23% 47	14.73% 75	17.68% 90	22.00% 112	34.97% 178	1.38% 7	509
						answered	512
						skipped	0

Question 3b: Do you have any comments to explain your choices?

171 of the respondents left comments on question 3b, which asked why they had chosen their choices in response to areas considered to make additional savings, look for more cost-effective options or generate additional income.

Summary of main themes







Answer Choice	Respondent comments
Reducing and/or delaying investment in Highway projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the respondents who discussed this answer choice indicated that the Highway projects were important

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most of these respondents felt ongoing maintenance of roads/paths was needed, noting existing issues such as potholes and other damage to road/path surfaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A few of these respondents queried if reducing and/or delaying investment in Highways projects meant creating new roads or maintaining existing ones, as they felt reducing/delaying maintenance would cost more in the long run ○ Some of these respondents felt reducing investment in Highway projects would disproportionately impact on rural parts of the county, where personal motorised vehicles were needed due to a lack of public transport and active travel options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some of these respondents named Fenland and Wisbech ○ Some of these respondents queried if reducing/delaying investment in Highway projects included improvements for active travel and public transport, as they felt these were important to reducing personal motorised vehicle usage ○ A few of these respondents felt that improving the Highways was needed to reduce congestion and the emissions resulting from it, particularly noting improvements needing to the A10 and A47 ○ A few of these respondents felt that Highways were important to the economy • A few of the respondents who discussed this answer felt that Highways projects should be delayed until the council was more financially stable or that these projects weren't concurrent with achieving net zero carbon by 2030
Increasing charges to deter and reduce non-sustainable methods of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice felt that increasing charges to deter and reduce non-sustainable methods of transport was unfair when there were not suitable sustainable transport methods available, particularly for those in rural areas outside Cambridge city <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents were concerned these charges would have a negative impact on those with lower incomes ○ Some of these respondents felt that improvements to the accessibility and cost of

	<p>sustainable transport across the county were needed before introducing any charges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents were concerned that it would stop people visiting Cambridge and negatively impact on trades
Generating further efficiencies and savings by working in new ways and making the most of digital innovations - e.g. more online self service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice felt that online services could risk putting off service users, as they were felt to be not as adaptive to individual needs or difficult to use, or risked excluding those without internet access or were not digitally literate
Reviewing how the council awards and manages contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer choice felt reviewing contracts was important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt that the council should make less use of contractors and do more 'in-house', as they felt contractors often didn't keep to service level agreements, needed to be held more accountable, and cost more in the long run ○ Some of these respondents felt that reviewing contracts should already be a part of 'business as usual', with some of these respondents querying how it would be done to ensure it was effective
Advertising and sponsorship from local suitable businesses, displaying banners, signs or logos on some council assets and products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this answer varied in their response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt that generating income from advertising/sponsorship from local businesses was a positive initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most of these respondents felt, however, the council needed to be cautious about who they received advertising/sponsorship from, ensuring the businesses' values align with the council and strict guidelines were followed ○ Some of these respondents were concerned about receiving income from businesses for advertising/sponsorship, stating that there had been issues with this in the past and that it could lead to a negative reputation for the council or give the general public or private sector the impression private businesses can influence council spending
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents also left comments which did not directly relate to answer choices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents felt that salaries should be reducing, particularly for councillors ○ A few of these respondents felt that more engagement was needed with local communities, particularly in more rural areas of the county ○ A few of these respondents felt they needed more information on these areas before they could provide an informed decision ○ A few of these respondents felt that more savings could be made on council properties and environmental impact could be reduced by encouraging more home working
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Question 4: Council Tax

4. Which of the above options do you support?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Option 1 - No increase to Council Tax (0% total increase)		33.79%	172
2	Option 2 - Increasing either general Council Tax by 2% or the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% but not both (2% total increase)		16.70%	85
3	Option 3 - Increasing the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% and the general Council Tax by 1% (3% total increase)		18.27%	93
4	Option 4 - Increasing the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% and the general Council Tax by 3% (5% total increase)		9.04%	46
5	Option 5 - Increasing the Adult Social Care Precept by 3% and the general Council Tax by more than 3% (6% or more in total)		16.90%	86
6	None of the above		5.30%	27
			answered	509
			skipped	3

Question 4b: Can you please tell us why you chose this option?

Respondents who chose “Option 1: - No increase to Council Tax (0% total increase)”

71 of the respondents who chose “Option 1” left comments on question 4b, which asked why they’d chosen that option.

Summary of main themes

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Current cost of Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme indicated they wished no further increase to Council Tax as they felt it was already too costly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt that the Council spent its money poorly which resulted in little benefit being seen for the increased costs, particularly in areas outside Cambridge ○ Some of these respondents indicated that other costs (such as fuel, heating, food) had increased significantly and income had not, so were concerned households could not afford an increase in Council Tax ○ Some of these respondents felt the cost of Council Tax was significantly higher than other areas of the country ○ Some of these respondents felt increasing Council Tax to pay for social care was “double-dipping” as National Insurance had been increased specifically for this reason
Poor spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the Council spent its money poorly which resulted in little benefit being seen for the increased costs, particularly in areas outside Cambridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt there was a poor cost/benefit ratio for the services offered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some of these respondents highlighted issues with poor services in their area or instances where they had had to pay for services they felt the Council should offer ○ Some of these respondents felt there were efficiency savings that could be made by the Council, particularly around larger project budgets, by reducing outsourcing, infrastructure costs (due to the need/ability for staff to work

	<p>from home), and salary costs in management/Councillors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents felt the Council could do more to generate income from other sources ○ A few of these respondents felt that information on the full costings across the Council should be available
Cost of living concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that paying increased Council Tax was unaffordable, particularly for poorer households, as the cost of living, particularly energy prices, had substantially increased while wages/income had not <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few of these respondents felt that Council Tax rates should be calculated differently. Suggestions included basing it on income or increasing Council Tax on second homes/holiday homes/commercial properties
Income from Central Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that Central Government should provide more funding for services the Council provides

Respondents who chose “Option 1: - Increasing either general Council Tax by 2% or the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% but not both (2% total increase)”

22 of the respondents who chose “Option 2” left comments on question 4b, which asked why they’d chosen that option.

Summary of main themes

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Current cost of Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that Council Tax was already too costly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents indicated that other costs (such as fuel, heating, food) had increased significantly and income had not, so were concerned households could not afford an increase in Council Tax
Cost of living concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that paying increased Council Tax was unaffordable, particularly for poorer households, as the cost of living, particularly energy prices, had substantially increased while wages/income had not increased enough to cover them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents indicated they felt a 2% increase was in line with state

	pension/wage/income increase and so was reasonable
Efficiency savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt there were efficiency savings that could be made by the Council
Need for Adult Social Care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme indicated that they felt a 2% increase for Adult Social Care was reasonable, as it was needed, and “Option 2” would provide this without too big an impact on households with lower incomes

Respondents who chose “Option 3: - Increasing the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% and the general Council Tax by 1% (3% total increase)”

35 of the respondents who chose “Option 3” left comments on question 4b, which asked why they’d chosen that option.

Summary of main themes

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Balance between services and household impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme indicated they felt “Option 3” struck the best balance between providing necessary services without too significant an impact on households, particularly those on lower incomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt the Council should also look into efficiency savings to plug any funding gaps
Cost of living concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this indicated they were concerned about the impact on poorer households, as the cost of living, particularly energy prices, had substantially increased while wages/income had not increased enough to cover them. These respondents felt, however, that some increase was needed to keep essential services
Income from Central Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that Central Government should provide more funding for services the Council provides
Poor spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the Council spent its money poorly which resulted in little benefit being seen for the increased costs

Respondents who chose “Option 4 - Increasing the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% and the general Council Tax by 3% (5% total increase)”

14 of the respondents who chose “Option 4” left comments on question 4b, which asked why they’d chosen that option.

Summary of main themes

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Need for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme indicated they felt “Option 4” was needed to ensure services remained funded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few of these respondents felt that the Council should demonstrate that this rise in funding was being well spent

Respondents who chose “Option 5 - Increasing the Adult Social Care Precept by 3% and the general Council Tax by more than 3% (6% or more in total)”

40 of the respondents who chose “Option 5” left comments on question 4b, which asked why they’d chosen that option.

Summary of main themes

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Need for services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme indicated they felt “Option 5” was needed to ensure services remained funded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of these respondents indicated they were concerned about services being cut, as they felt they already had been cut as far as they would go
Impact on lower incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme indicated they were concerned about the impact a Council Tax increase could have on households with lower income. These respondents felt these households should be protected
Income from Central Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme felt that Central Government should provide more funding for services the Council provides

Respondents who chose “None of the above”

21 of the respondents who chose “None of the above” left comments on question 4b, which asked why they’d chosen that option.

Summary of main themes

Comment Theme	Respondent comments
Alternative options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents who discussed this theme indicated they felt other Council Tax options should have been available. These included (in order of number of suggestions):

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3% on the Adult Social Care Precept and 2% on the general Council Tax ○ 2% on the Adult Social Care Precept and 2% on the general Council Tax ○ 2% on the Adult Social Care Precept and no increase on the general Council Tax ○ No increase on the Adult Social Care Precept and 1% on the general Council Tax
Poor spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the Council spent its money poorly which resulted in little benefit being seen for the increased costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of these respondents felt there were efficiency savings that could be made by the Council, particularly around larger project budgets, by reducing outsourcing, infrastructure costs (due to the need/ability for staff to work from home), and salary costs
Alternative Council Tax banding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents who discussed this theme felt that the banding for Council Tax levels should be based on income

1 respondent left a comment on question 4b but did not choose an option in question 4. This respondent felt individual opinions on Council Tax options were irrelevant and that the Council should be able to demonstrate how Council Tax was benefitting local areas.