Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2022/23

1. Purpose of report

   To report the results of the 2022/23 budget consultation exercise that took place during October, November and December 2021.

2. Background

   As with earlier budget consultation exercises, a web-based survey publicised through social media has been used to consult on the 2022/23 budget. This included no reference to any specific policy options but sought views on all Council services and indications of satisfaction, or otherwise, with these as well as the way in which they are provided and with the local area generally.

   Local people were asked for their preferred approach to balancing the Council's budget and to provide an indication as to which services they thought should have their funding increased, decreased or remain the same.

   Residents were asked how frequently they access Council services and how satisfied they were with the way in which this can be done. They were also asked how they prefer to conduct business with the Council and if they would they would consider accessing services in another way. A new question was added regarding the Council's approach to climate change. Finally, they were asked if they thought that the Council listened to them.

   Respondents were also asked to provide demographic data, including which area of the Borough they live in so that any correlation between location and satisfaction levels could be analysed.

   A total of 606 responses were received on the extended survey. This was higher than the 277 received in November 2020 and 407 received in 2019. The results are summarised in the appendix along with a summary of the demographic data for the respondents.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

Background papers
Nil

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

The analysis of ethnicity indicates a bias towards White British respondents (93%). A further 3% of respondents indicated they considered themselves to be White Irish or White Other. Only 22 responses (4%) were received from people who identified as being Asian or Chinese or Black or Mixed race and any other ethnic group categories. The sample of respondents was not considered to be wholly representative of the local communities in Broxtowe.

In terms of gender, 52% of the respondents were male and 45% were female whilst the majority of other respondents preferred not to stated their gender.

Over 84% of respondents identified as being over 45 years old with 26% being between 45 and 59 years, 14% between 60 and 64 years and 44% over 65. The number of younger respondents was lower than previously with only 16% of responders being under 45 compared.

Around 22% of responders identified themselves as being disabled or with long term health problems limiting daily activity.

In terms of geographical location, Beeston residents responded the most (24%). Residents in Stapleford accounted for 13% of respondents whilst Chilwell accounted for 11% of respondents. There was at least one respondent from every area.

A total of 581 responders confirmed that they were Council Taxpayers (96%).

A full breakdown of gender, age ranges, ethnicity, disability and location is included later in the appendix. As a proportion of the total population of Broxtowe, the number of respondents means that the results cannot be taken as statistically significant. It is advisable to only consider the results as indications of local views rather than attempt to draw strategic conclusions from the detailed responses.

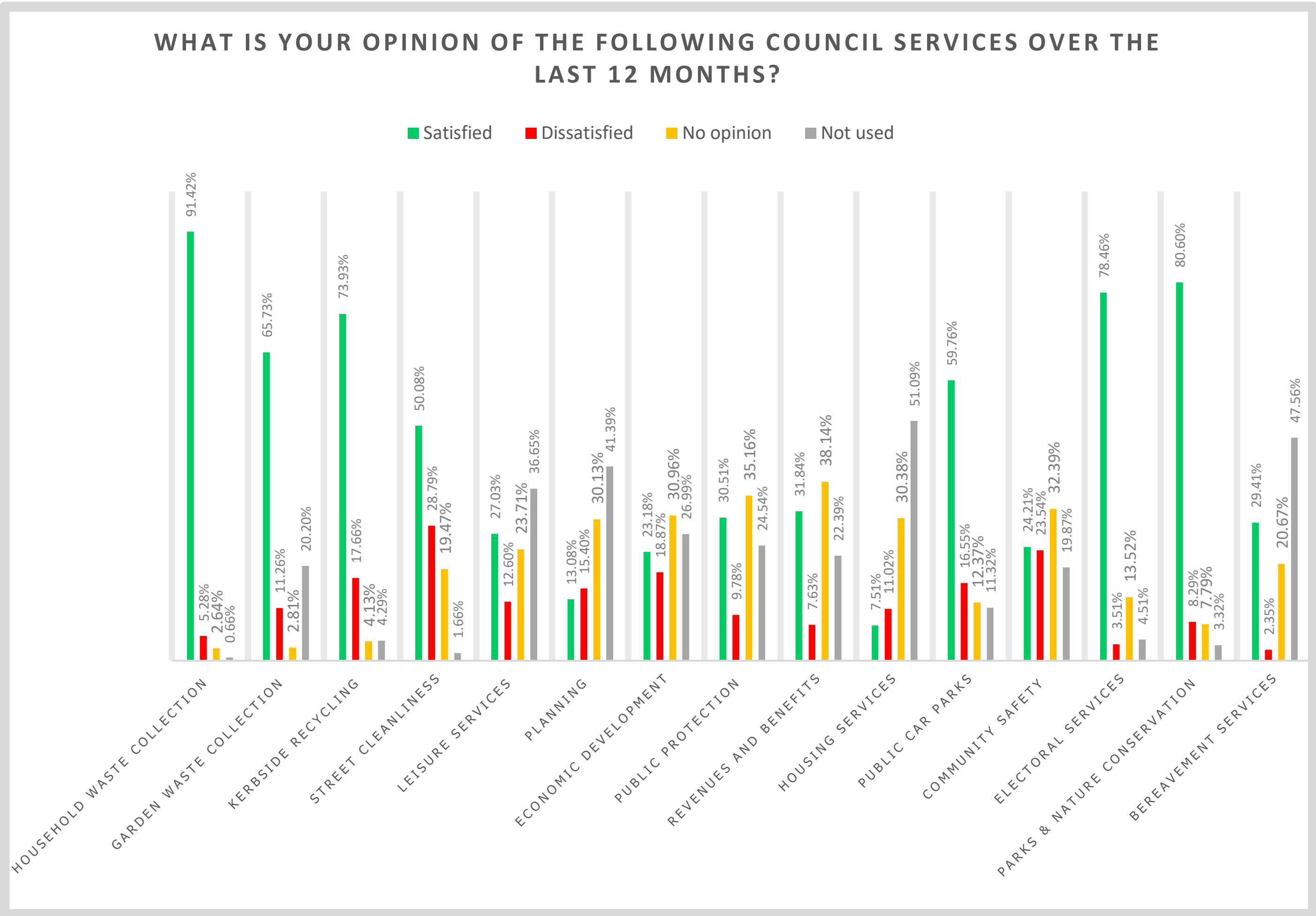
Satisfaction with Services

In overall terms, local people are satisfied with the borough of Broxtowe and the Council’s management of it. The results show that 76% of people were either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the area in which they live which is slightly improved on the 2020/21 positive response. Over 65% are either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the way that the Council delivers services, again a slight increase on the previous year. A further 25% had a neutral stance. However, 2% of people are ‘very dissatisfied’ in both categories which is a similar level to last year’s consultation.

Figure 1 analyses the level of satisfaction with individual Council services over the last twelve months. The services with the highest satisfied responses were Household Waste Collection *(black lidded bin)* with 91%; Parks and Nature Conservation (81%); Electoral Services (78%); Kerbside Recycling *(green lidded bin, glass bag or red lidded glass bin, textiles)* with 74%; and Garden Waste Collection *(brown lidded bin)* with 66% of responders being satisfied.

The services with the highest levels of dissatisfied responses were Street Cleanliness *(litter collection, graffiti removal, fly tipping, neighbourhood wardens)* with 29%; Community Safety *(anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, alcohol awareness)* with 24%; and Economic Development *(support to businesses, regeneration, Town Centre Management, business growth)* at 19%.

Figure 1:



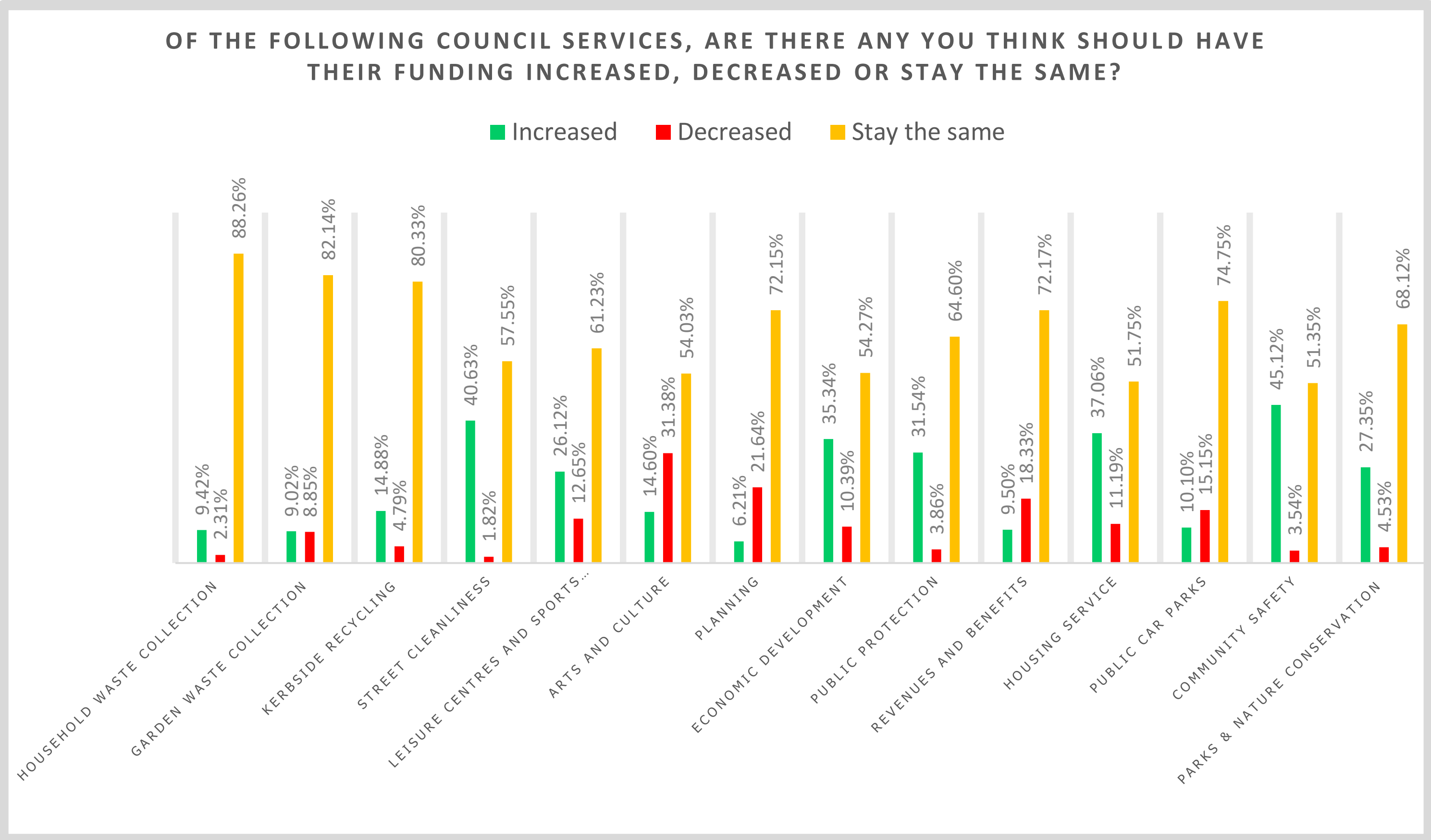
Spending on Services

When asked about whether spending on services should be increased, decreased or stay the same, Community Safety (45%); Street cleanliness (41%); Housing service *(housing options advice, homelessness, provision of affordable housing, tenancies)* (37%); and Economic Development (35%) scored the highest in terms of respondents thinking their funding should be increased. Arts and Culture (31%); Planning *(planning applications and planning policy)* (22%); Revenues and Benefits *(housing benefit and council tax support payments)* (18%) and Public Car Parks (15%) scored the highest in terms of respondents thinking their funding should be decreased.

Household Waste Collection (88%), Garden Waste Collection (82%) and Kerbside Recycling (80%) scored highest in terms of respondents thinking their funding should stay the same. This could be interpreted as indicating a relationship with satisfaction levels as both services secured the highest satisfaction rating. This pattern is reflected in most services with respondents consistently voting more for the funding of services to stay the same.

Figure 2 provides detailed analysis on whether spending on services should be increased, decreased or stay the same across a range of Council activities.

Figure 2:

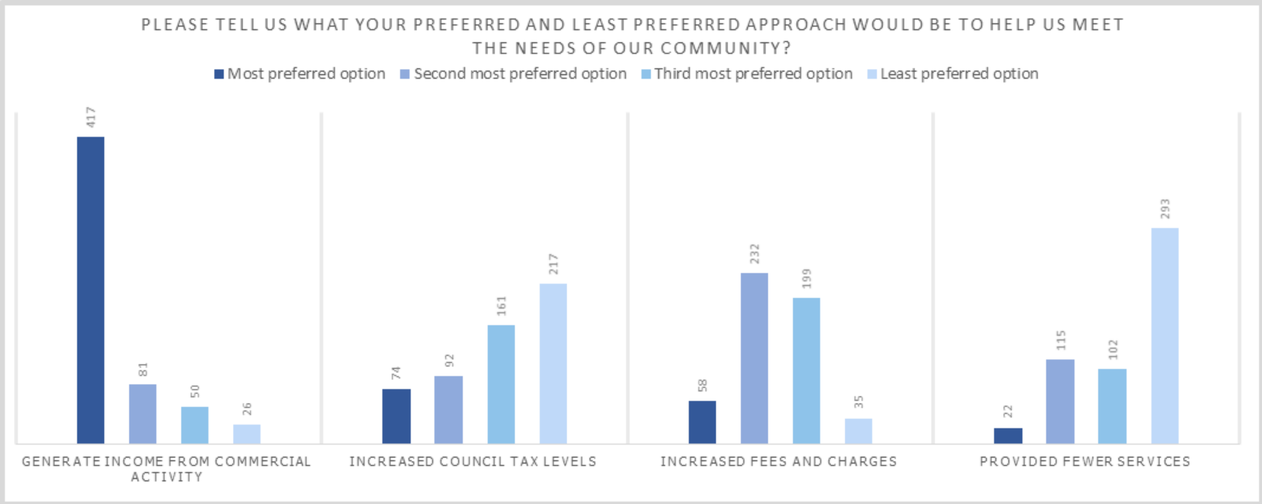


Balancing the Budget

The questionnaire asked that "We work to provide the services that local people need, but providing these services costs money. Please tell us what your preferred and least preferred approach would be to help us meet the needs of our community?". Respondents were asked to state their preferred and least preferred approach to help the Council balance its budget.

By far the most preferred option for balancing the budget was to "generate income from commercial activity" (73%) with the next most preferred option being "increased council tax levels (14%) and "increased fees and charges" (11%). The least preferred option for balancing the budget was to provide fewer services with 55% of respondents followed by increasing council tax levels with 40%. The responses are provided in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3:



Communicating with the Council

As in previous years, respondents were asked a 'yes/no' question as to whether they feel the Council listens to them. The results showed that 50% answered 'No' (an improvement on 54% in the 2020/21 responses) with 50% answering 'Yes'.

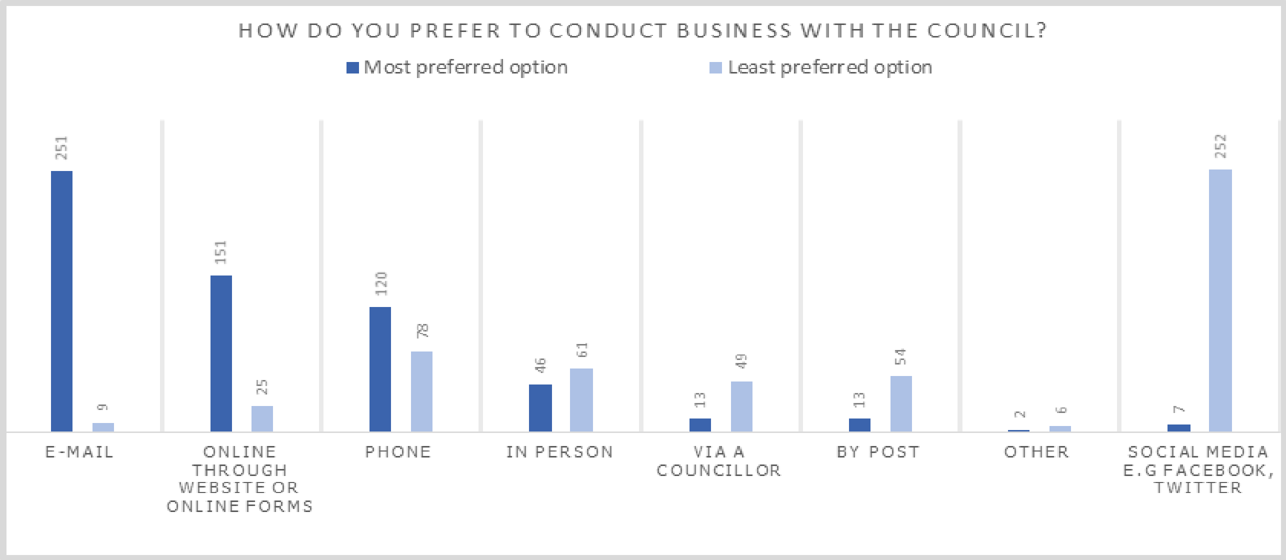
To obtain further information on how to shape services in future, local people were asked about how satisfied they are with the ways they can access Council services and how they prefer to contact the Council to do business. Over 57% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the way they can access Council services which represents a decrease of 13% on 2020/21. Around 13% of respondents were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which they can access Council services (increased 3% on the previous figure). However, 29% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (i.e. neutral) which represents an 8% increase on 2020/21.

The large majority of responders (75%) only contacted the Council 'a few times a year". Only 14% of responders contacted the Council more frequently than monthly.

In terms of what methods of communication local people prefer to use, there was clearly a preference in the budget consultation for email contact (251 'positive' responses) and online which reinforced the results from recent years. It must be remembered however that all respondents were already able to access services online by virtue of them completing this survey.

Communicating via social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter was the least preferred method of conducting business with the Council (252 responses) followed by ‘phone’ (78) and ‘in-person’ (61). Further details are set out in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4:



Responders were also asked if “the pandemic has changed how people access services and will you continue to access services in new ways once the pandemic is over? Over 38% of responders answered ‘Yes’ with only 18% saying ‘No’. The remaining 44% were not sure.

Climate Change

The questionnaire asked “overall, how satisfied are you with the Council's approach to tackling climate change?” This was the first time that such this question was included on the budget consultation.

Over 29% of responders were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Council’s approach, with a further 56% providing a neutral response. The remaining 15% were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the approach.

Demographic Data

Gender	Number of Reponses	%
Male	307	52
Female	269	45
Another Way	1	0
Prefer not to say	15	3
Not stated – 14	**592**	

Age	Number of Reponses	%
Under 18	-	-
18 – 24	4	1
25 - 29	7	1
30 - 44	86	14
45-59	151	26
60-64	85	14
Over 65	259	44
Not stated – 14	592	

Ethnicity	Number of Reponses	%
White – British	543	92.8
White – Irish	6	1.0
White – Other	11	1.9
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	0.7
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0.2
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Other Background	5	0.9
British or Black British - Caribbean	5	0.9
British or Black British - African	1	0.2
British or Black British - Other Background	-	-
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	1	0.2
Mixed - White and Black African	-	-
Mixed - White and Asian	2	0.3
Mixed - Other Background	-	-
Chinese	3	0.5
Any Other Ethnic Group	-	-
Not stated – 21	585	

Disabled or with long term health problems limiting daily activity	Number of Reponses	%
Yes	129	22
No	466	78
Not stated – 11	595	

Residence - Area	Number of Reponses	%
Attenborough	15	2.5
Awsworth	10	1.7
Beeston	141	23.5
Bramcote	57	9.5
Brinsley	17	2.8
Chilwell	69	11.5
Cossall	3	0.5
Eastwood	40	6.7
Greasley	28	4.7
Kimberley	36	6.0
Newthorpe	19	3.2
Nuthall	30	5.0
Stapleford	77	12.9
Strelley	3	0.5
Toton	34	5.7
Trowell	20	3.3
Not stated – 7	599	