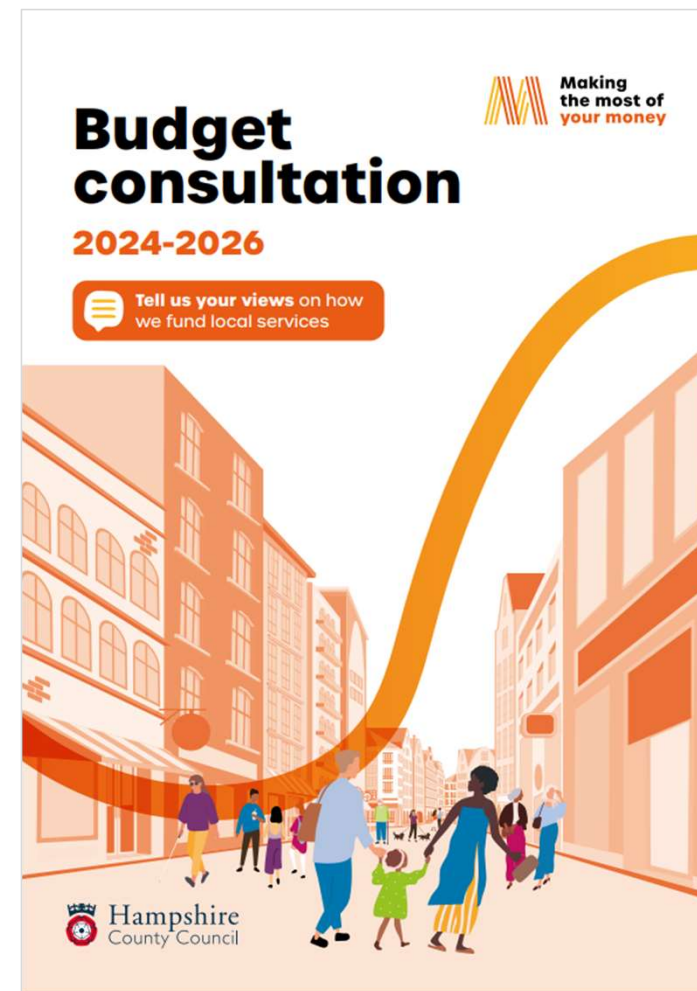


2023 Hampshire County Council Budget Consultation

Insight Report

July 2023



Consultation Context

Like households across the County, Hampshire County Council faces financial challenges of a scale that we have never seen before, caused by factors outside of our control. By April 2025, our forecasts predict an annual budget shortfall of around £132 million, yet we have a legal obligation to balance our books.

In November 2023, Hampshire County Council will meet to agree a financial strategy for the next two years. To inform this decision, residents and stakeholders were invited to share their views on a range of high-level options that could contribute towards balancing the revenue budget, and any alternatives not yet considered – as well as the potential impact of these approaches.

The options included in the consultation were:

- Reducing and changing services*;
- Introducing and increasing charges for some services;
- Lobbying central Government for legislative change;
- Generating additional income;
- Using the County Council's reserves;
- Increasing Council Tax; and
- Changing local government arrangements in Hampshire.

**Illustrative examples of possible ways that the County Council could reduce or change the current level of service were provided*

Methodology

- The consultation ran from 12 June to 23 July 2023 and was widely promoted through a range of online and offline channels.
- Information Packs and Response Forms were made available both digitally and in hard copy in standard and Easy Read formats, with other formats available on request. Unstructured responses could be submitted via email, letter or as comments on the County Council's corporate social media posts.
- The **consultation received 2935 responses** – 2806 via the consultation Response Forms and 130 as unstructured responses via email/ letter (37) or social media (92).
- Of the responses submitted via the consultation Response Forms, 2743 were from individuals and 25 from democratically Elected Representatives. Including the unstructured responses, 56 groups, organisations or businesses responded.
- The views submitted through this consultation were shared directly with departments across the County Council to inform discussions at Executive Member, Select Committee, Cabinet and Council budget meetings during 2023 - and shape the overall approach to balancing the budget from 2024-2026. Any resulting changes to specific services may be subject to further, more detailed consultation.
- This presentation offers insight into key findings and is supported by a summary report providing comparative demographic analysis for key groups and an appendix of data tables.

Demographic analysis

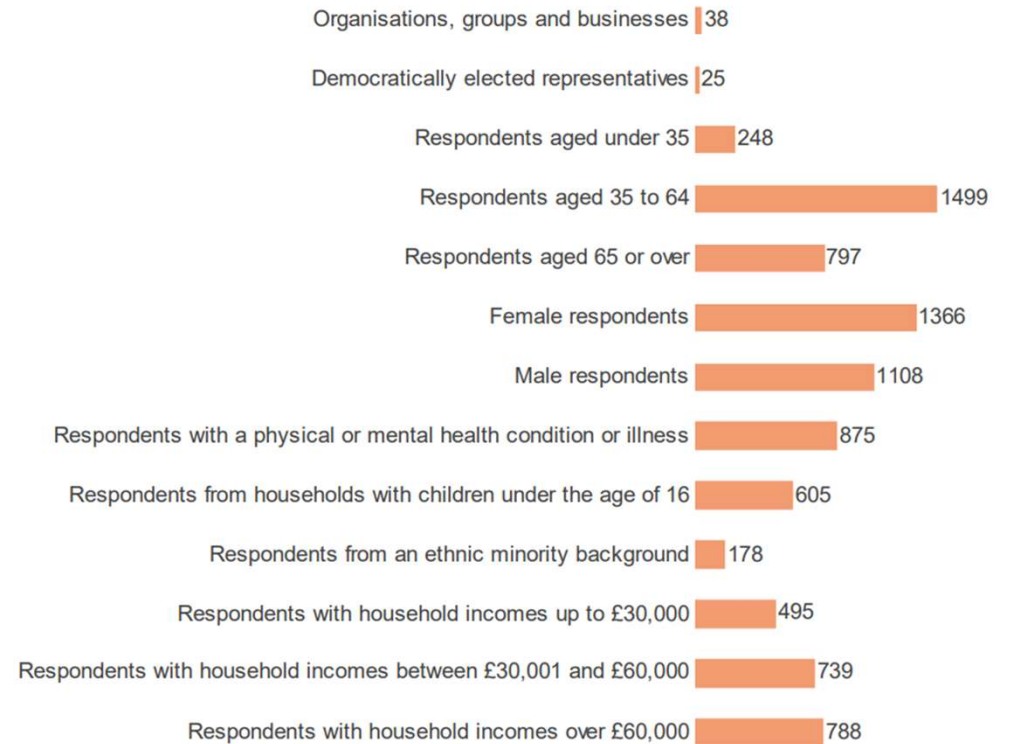
In order to understand how views may vary amongst different demographics, several groups have been identified for the more detailed analyses in this report.

The sizes of these response groups are shown in the adjacent chart, with further detail on slides 54-58.

In most cases, reported data has been re-based by excluding 'don't know' responses to facilitate these demographic comparisons.

A full breakdown of responses for each of these groups can be viewed in the Budget Consultation Summary Report.

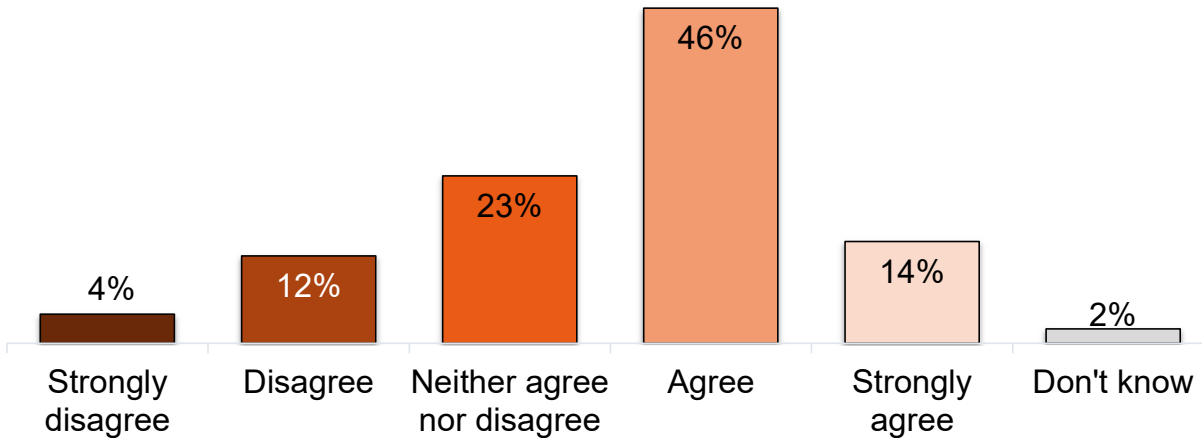
Number of respondents in demographic analysis groups



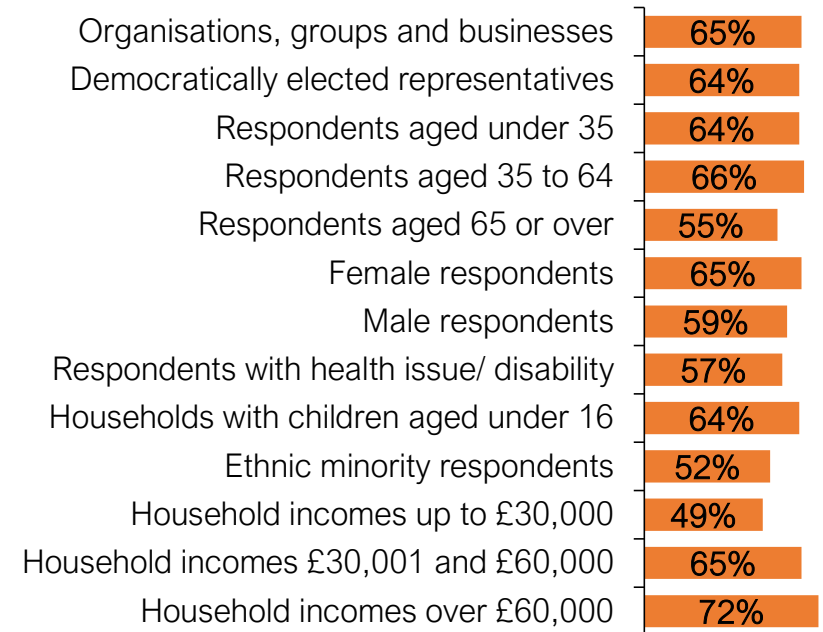
The County Council's financial strategy

The County Council's focus continues to be on planning ahead, securing savings early and targeting resources on those who need them most. In 2023, all services are being asked to consider any savings that could be made, rather than asking each to reduce savings by the same proportion.

60% of respondents agreed with the County Council's financial strategy, compared to 45% in 2021.



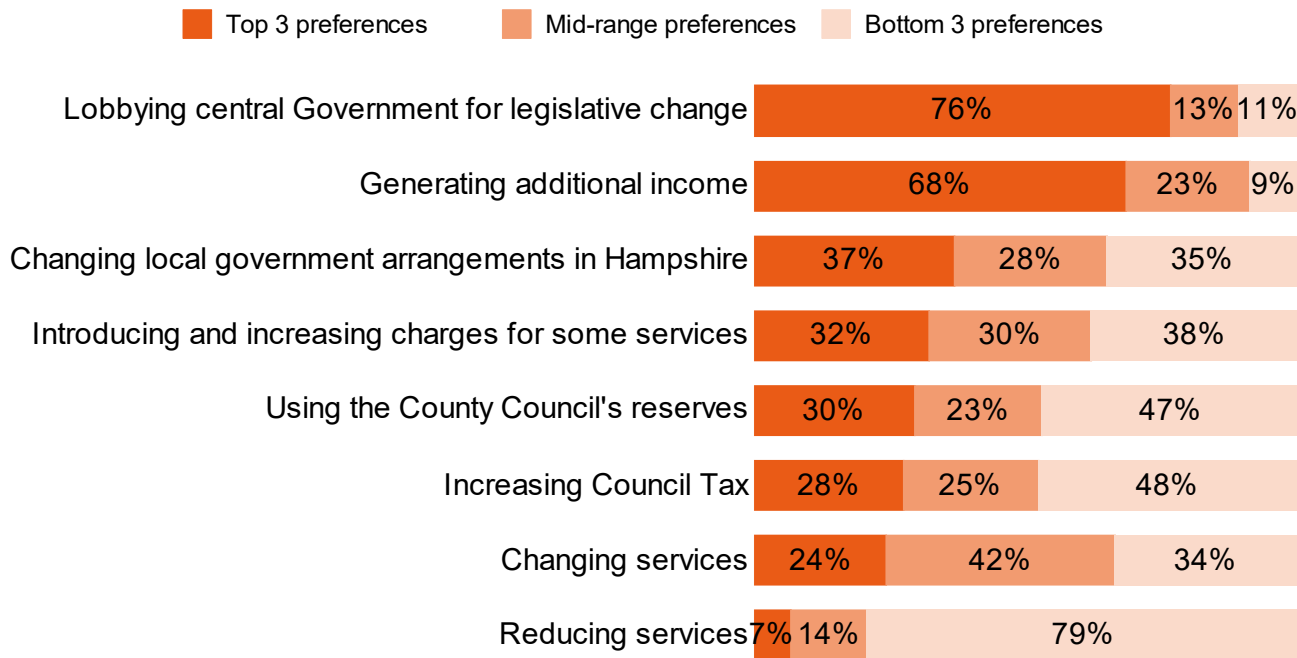
There was majority agreement with the financial strategy across a range of respondent groups



Level of agreement with the County Council's financial strategy as described (Base: 2551 / Groups: 35, 22, 234, 1339, 742, 1227, 1028, 799, 524, 164, 455, 685, 703 – combined agree / strongly agree shown)

Preferred options

Budget options ranked by order of preference (Base: 2694)

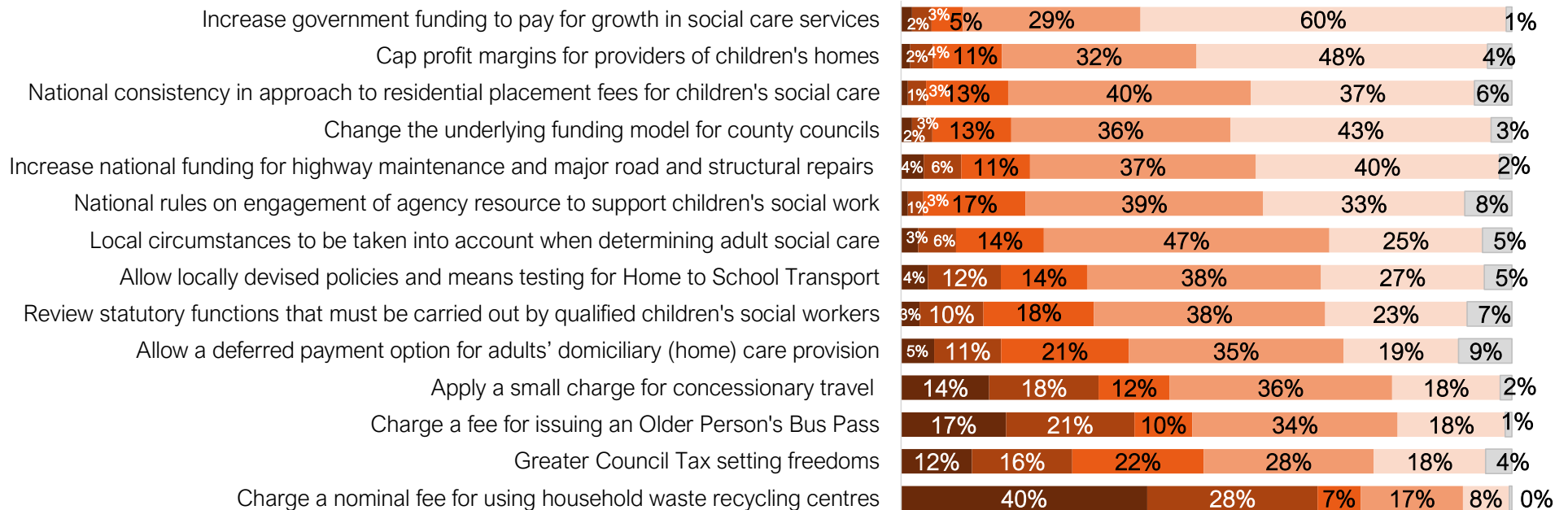


When asked to consider all the options together and rank in order, a clear preference emerges for the County Council to continue lobbying central Government and looking for ways to generate additional income as the primary methods of closing the budget gap.

All other options were preferred to seeing existing services reduced.

Lobbying central Government for legislative change

Respondents advocated lobbying central government for change in most suggested areas, although aspects related to charging were less popular than those seeking funding or a change of approach, particularly with regards to waste recycling centres

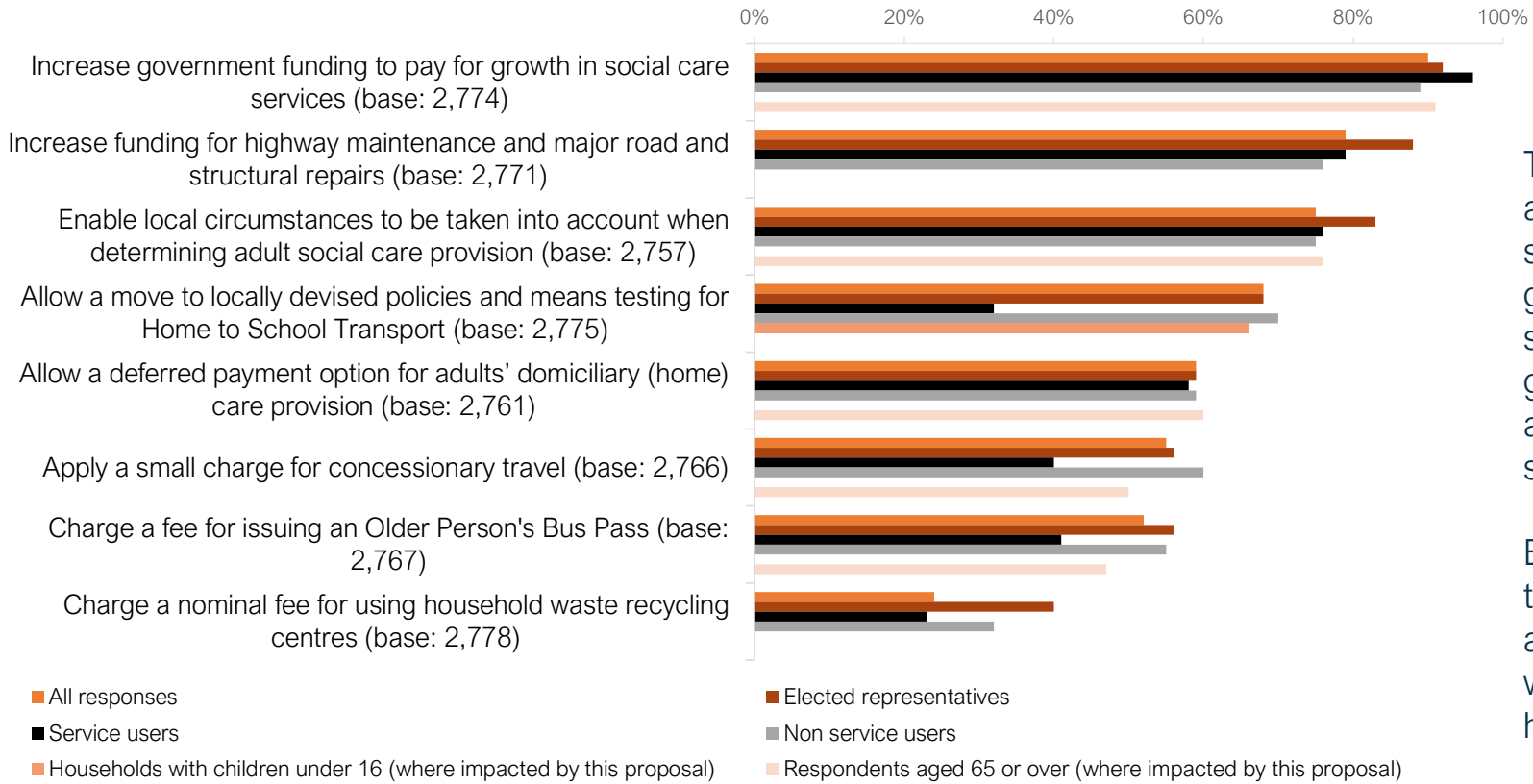


Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the County Council should lobby the Government for legislative change in the following areas in order to help maintain local services? (Base: 2778-2751)

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Don't know

Variations in views on lobbying proposals related to service specific funding

Level of agreement with lobbying proposals related directly to funding of specific services



The data suggests higher support amongst service users than non-service users on lobbying central government for funding, but lower support on lobbying central government to allow the Council to apply charges - especially regarding school transport.

Elected representatives' agreement tends to be slightly higher than average, most notably for household waste recycling centre charging and highways maintenance funding.

Lobbying

Changing the council tax will initiate anger and mean increased people are in debt, adding to the wider issues with the cost of living. Lobbying government for additional funding is the best avenue

We are a school in a significant deficit position struggling to meet the needs of our vulnerable children and strongly feel that lobbying government is essential to enable us to serve our local community with the purpose of supporting vulnerable children and families with a view to making positive difference to their lives.

While page 13 gave examples of lobbying central Government for legislative change, there is no sense that any of these efforts so far have succeeded.

The council should continue to lobby central government for more central expenditure on social care across the board. These services are becoming more and more demanding as the population ages and as the NHS improves its ability to keep us all alive for so much longer.

I think it would be much more appropriate to lobby government to provide more funding to local Councils. . . . They can find £100s of millions when they want something. But when local people need support, the money seems to disappear.

Lobby central government to relax rules to allow professional services to widen their market

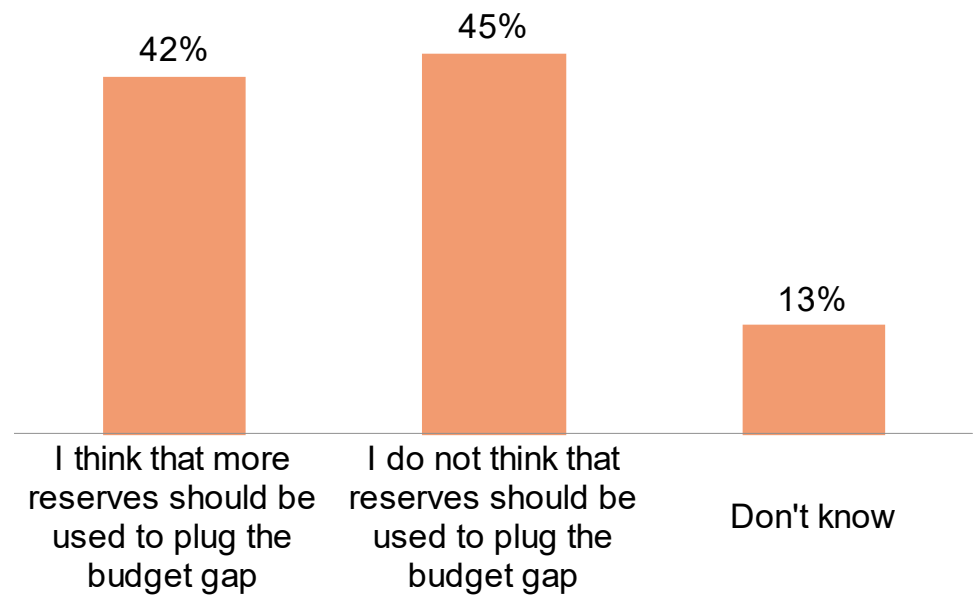


Using the County Council's reserves

There was a narrow split between respondents who felt that the County Council should (42%) or should not (45%) use reserves to plug the budget gap, with the latter figure falling from 48% in the previous 2021 consultation.

Views were also split within many respondent groups, although only organisations (53%), respondents with household incomes under £30k (52%), with a health condition or illness (46%) and those aged 65 or over (46%) were more likely to feel reserves should be used than not.

When considering how the County Council should balance its budget, which ONE of the following two statements is closest to your view about how reserves should be used? (Base: 2787)



Examples of arguments for and against using reserves

In particular I think we are still in a post-Covid 'rescue' situation and that some reserves should be used to improve services which were left to deteriorate during that time.....

While using reserves and raising tax is not ideal, if that is what is needed, then that's what's needed.

Look at yourselves first - reserves, buildings and raising income. Don't cut services to the residents of Hampshire unnecessarily - review them.

The County Council has a relatively high level of uncommitted reserves which it is able to release. In these exceptional times, now would be the right time to use these to mitigate the impact on services that the government's funding cuts and restrictions on tax raising have caused.



Using the reserves would put the County Council in a vulnerable financial situation.

Greater government funding, greater services efficiencies, introduction of charging for optional services and new ways of working would be preferable to cutting the budget or spending the precious reserves.

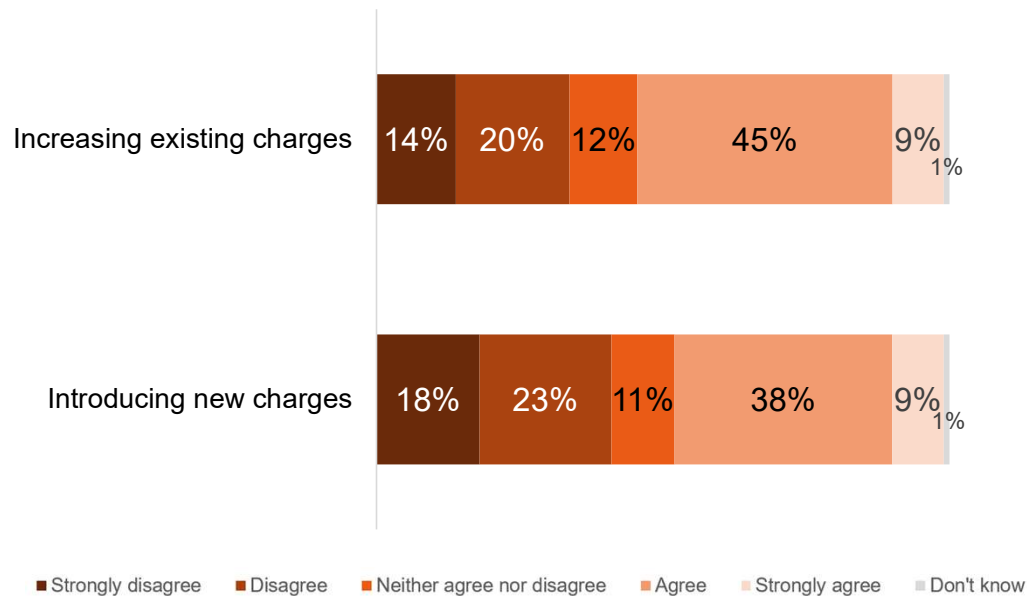
...you need to lobby Hampshire MP's more as it is untenable that you need to use most of your reserves just to carry out statutory duties.

Using reserves is incredibly short sighted and likely to hurt the council in the medium/long term, so generating extra income (if possible) is much more preferable.



Charging for services

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to cover the costs of running some local services by raising existing charges / introducing new charges for services that are currently free?
(Base 2716, 2749)



Respondents were more supportive of increasing existing service charges (54%) than introducing new ones (47%), although support for both options has increased since 2021 (when these figures were 45% and 41% respectively).

Support was highest amongst

- democratically Elected Representatives (67% / 63%)
- households on incomes over £60k (66% / 62%)

34% of respondents felt charges should not increase and 42% felt that new charges should not be introduced.

Disagreement was highest amongst respondents:

- aged under 35 years (39% / 52%)
- with a health condition or illness (38% / 44%)
- from an ethnic minority background (38% / 50%)
- with household incomes up to £30,000 (37% / 47%)

NB: Data in brackets is increase / new charges

Examples of arguments for and against charging

Increasing council tax will obviously hit people hard given the recent cost of living crisis. I think introducing or increasing costs for services is fairer because people may have more flexibility to change their habits if the costs become prohibitive.

It could have a "pay what you can" model on a number of things it currently doesn't charge for - increasing income without disadvantaging the poorest.

Whilst inflation levels are high and costs have increased due to exceptional circumstances beyond the Councils control, charges and fees must be adjusted upwards accordingly. Given the Councils statutory obligation to produce a balanced budget, such increases are justified. However equally, when costs fall, charges and fees should also reduce.

...there are many vulnerable groups who may impact more by changes and these groups need to be protected. I think those that can afford to pay for a service should do so to protect these groups, and that service charges should reflect this.

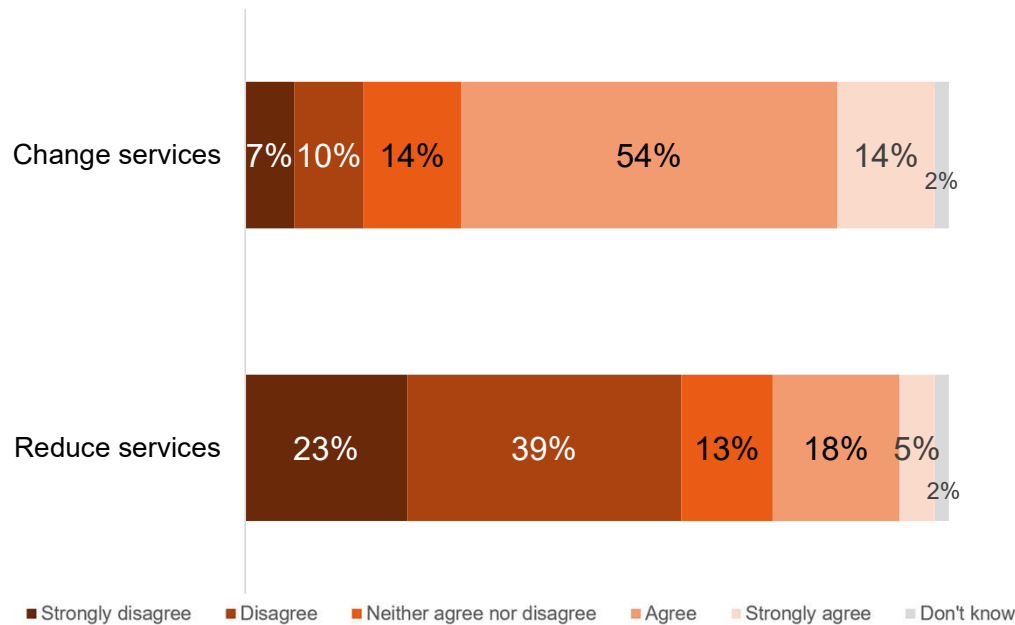
Introducing charges would mean I would not be able to afford to use the services being offered with a fee, which means I would not go out to places and use facilities being maintained by the council. I think add on facilities and optional extras should be charged but basis [sic] facilities should all remain free

If you introduce charges they should either be voluntary or means tested and only after you've exhausted those options should you be looking to make services chargeable for all or cut them.



Changing and reducing services

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the County Council should seek to change / reduce services in order to contribute to anticipated savings?
(Base 2765, 2663)*



Respondents were notably more supportive of service change than service reduction.

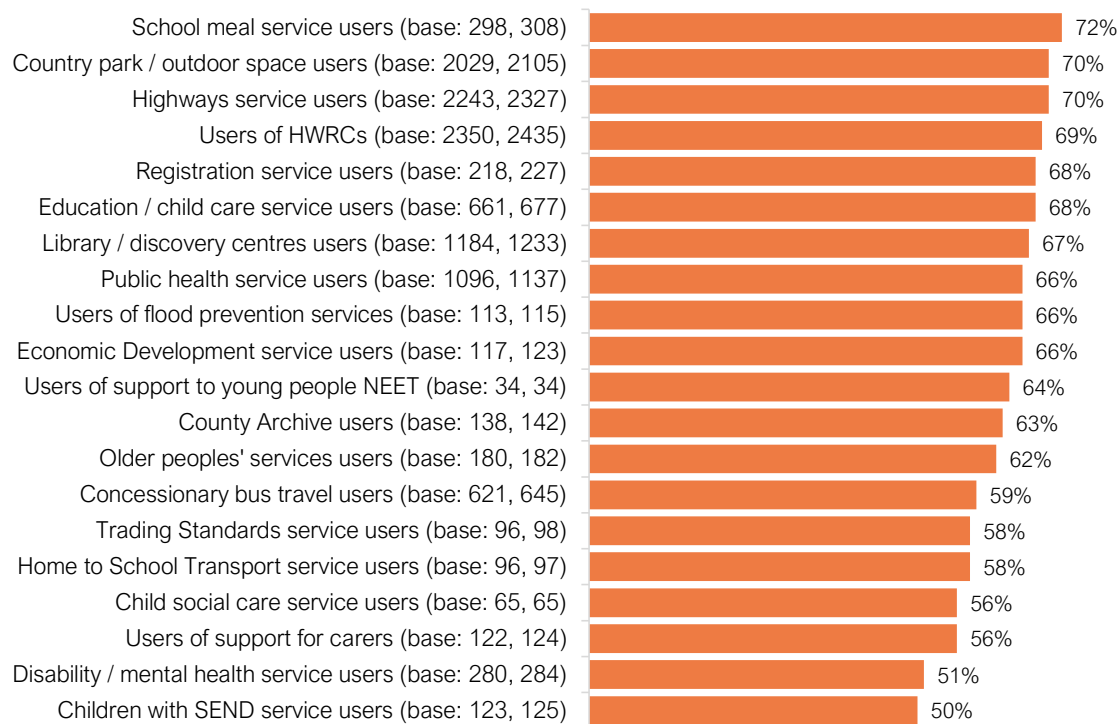
69% agreed with the principle of service change, compared to 17% who opposed this. Agreement was above 60% across all key respondent groups.

In contrast, **63% disagreed** with the principle of service reduction, with only 23% agreeing that this should be considered as a savings option. Disagreement was above 60% in all key respondent groups, with the exception of democratically Elected Members (43%), male respondents (59%) and those with a household income of over £60k (57%).

*NB: This question was split into two for the first time this year, following respondent feedback

Agreement with the principle of service change, by service used

Agreement with the principle of service change, by users of different services



Although most users across a range of services were supportive of service change, there was a 20+ percentage point variance between users who were most and least supportive.

Lower levels of support tend to arise amongst more vulnerable service users, including those using services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), services for people with a disability or mental health need, support for carers and children's social care; and in services related to transport which are often subject to consultation and subsequent change.

HWRCs: Household Waste Recycling Centres; NEET: Not in education, employment or training; SEND: Special educational needs or disabilities.

Examples of rationale for opposing reduction

Whilst money is tight, I see the value in the services provided by HCC for all ages. I would sooner increase my costs either through tax or the use of services than see these vital services removed.

I'm not sure how one could contemplate reducing already stretched services - such as funding to school or social care.

It looks to me that those that need the most help, under your plan, would be the ones that would be affected the most.

I am absolutely opposed to the proposed 1.7m reduction in Transport Services. These services are a vital economic and social enabler for the Market Towns and rural areas, where commercial services are not always viable.

I think it's important for the County Council to consider different opportunities for balancing the budget rather than reducing or changing services. These services have been dramatically reduced over the last 15 years and continuing to do so will only leave the local authority increasing problems in the future with more residents needing support

More problems with potholes in the roads. Less opportunities to exercise eg swimming. Long term issues ie climate change, caused by the council not working towards sustainability and recycling.

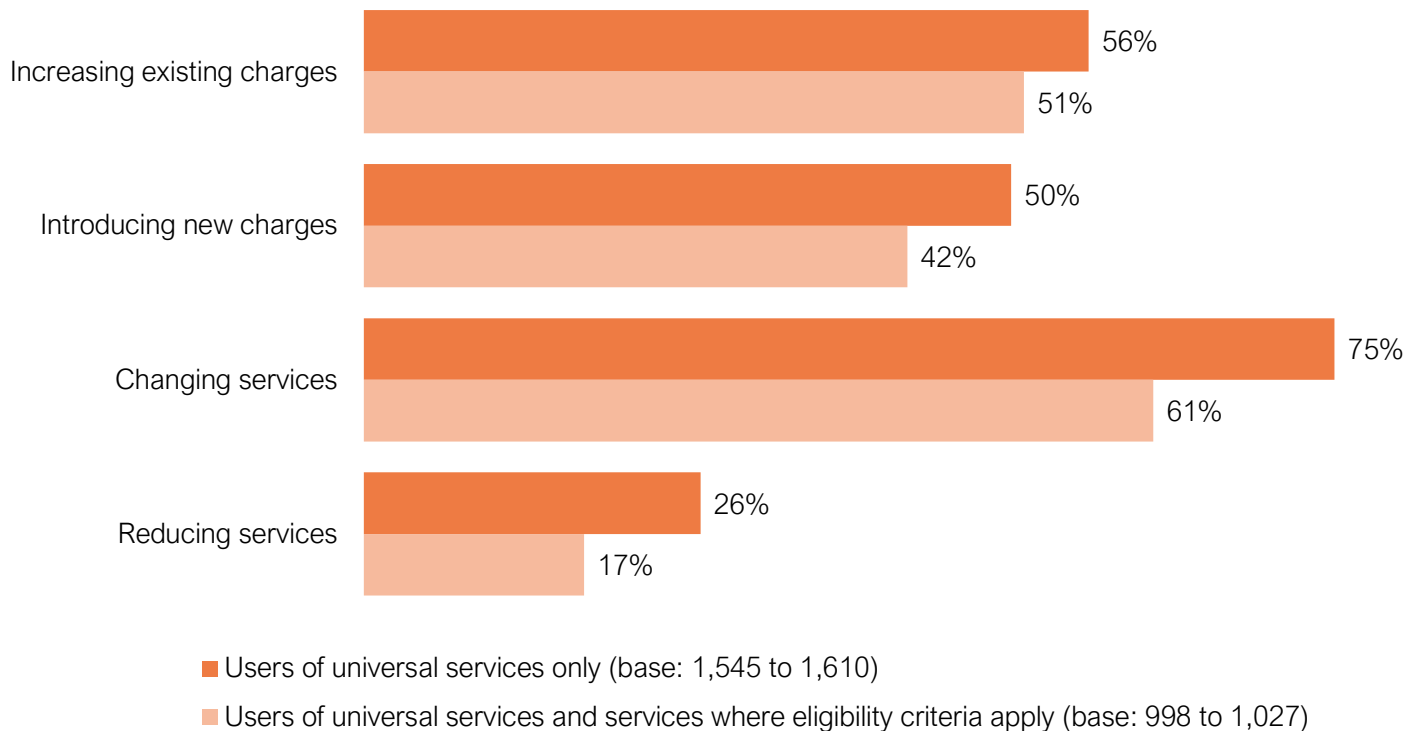
Our charity supports families on low incomes and people with disabilities who face health disparities and inequalities.

Reductions in social care, educational and support services will further increase the barriers these groups face to achieving a good quality of life and will erode dignity by increasing their reliance on foodbanks and handouts.



Service user views of service charging, change and reduction

Agreement with charging, changing, and reducing services by types of services used



The data generally suggests higher levels of support for service charging and change amongst users of universally available services, and lower levels amongst users of services where eligibility criteria apply.

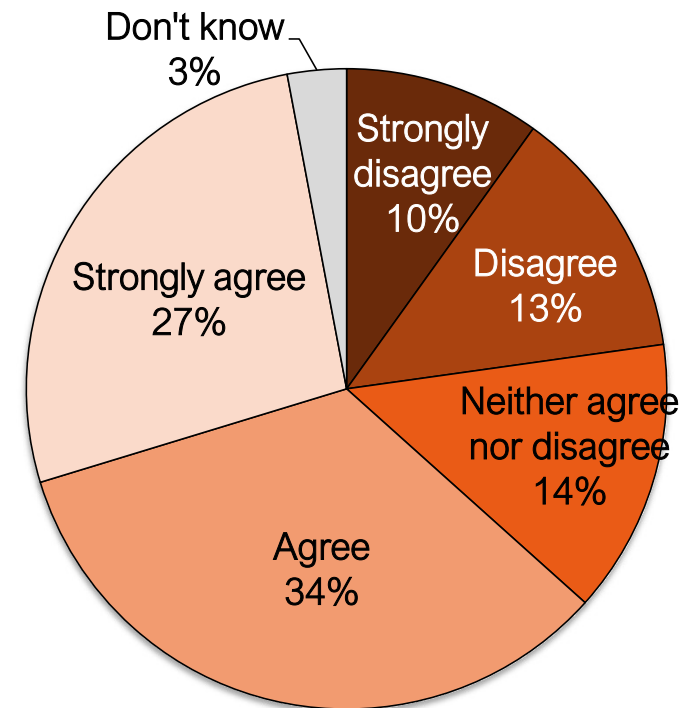
Changing local government arrangements in Hampshire

Over six out of ten respondents (61%) felt that the County Council should explore the possibility of changing local government arrangements in Hampshire.

This view has remained consistent with the past three budget consultations in 2021 (63%), 2019 (61%), and 2017 (64%).

Majority agreement was reached across all key respondent groups, but respondents aged 65 and over (59%) and democratically Elected Representatives (52%) were least likely to agree, with 40% of the latter disagreeing with the option of re-organisation.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the County Council should explore further the possibility of changing local government structures in Hampshire?
(Base 2761)



Examples of arguments for and against changing local government arrangements

The option of a Unitary Council is the best, most obvious option that will deliver the best savings and efficiencies in what councils must provide.

No longer need many independent small parish councils. Very inefficient. Join parish councils or District councils. Introduce more Unitary authorities to reduce waste.

Fundamentally though, we have too many layers of government in Hampshire, Parish, City, County and National. Each layer adds bureaucracy and cost. We should accept that there should be two layers only. Local and National. Hampshire needs to become a unitary authority this banishing entire layers of costs.



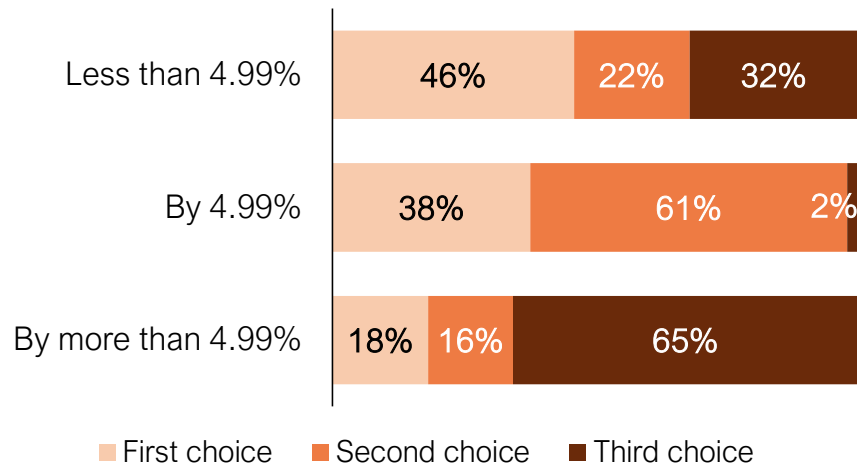
Concern with the 'One Hampshire' combined authority approach is that a) it would be too big and unwieldy and given the geographic spread of Hampshire, the requirements of those in central Portsmouth or Southampton (or even Basingstoke or Havant) are very different to those in the rural areas of the Test and Meon valleys and the bulk of the Hampshire portion of the South Downs National Park and b) it may well lead to a devolvement of more issues to Town and Parish Councils. This is fine if those councils are adequately resourced but not if it is simply a case of moving a cost from one Council Tax budget to another.

Existing structure is wasteful but as Hampshire is a large county, there is a danger of communities feeling more remote from the centre of power if we changed to a Unitary Authority.



Council Tax

Please indicate which of the following three options is your first, second, and third [Council Tax] preference for the next two years
(Base: 2690, 2678, 2645)



Although the clear first preference was for the lowest council tax rise (46%), this has fallen from a majority view in 2021* (52%). At the same time, there was a corresponding increase in first preference for a mid-level rise (to 38% from 34% in 2021*).

Respondents aged under 35 (57%) and those on household incomes of up to £30k (58%) were most likely to prefer a council tax rise of less than 4.99%.

Openness to a higher rise increases with age and higher levels of income and was also the preference of democratically Elected Representatives.

*NB: the forecast rise in 2021 was 3.99%

Examples of arguments for and against raising Council Tax

Increasing council tax would have an impact on households across Hampshire as the cost of living is already at an all-time high and people are struggling.

Cost of living is very high so an increase in council tax would be difficult to meet.

An increase of council tax to 4.99% or above would have a huge impact on the monthly finances of my household and our ability to make ends meet in this stressful financial period....

We had an increase in council tax to cover all these issues why are we now being asked to pay again.



In my opinion higher council tax to pay for essential services is the best option...., a higher council tax can significantly add to the sustainability of essential services and quality of life.

Raise council tax if necessary to protect the most vulnerable.

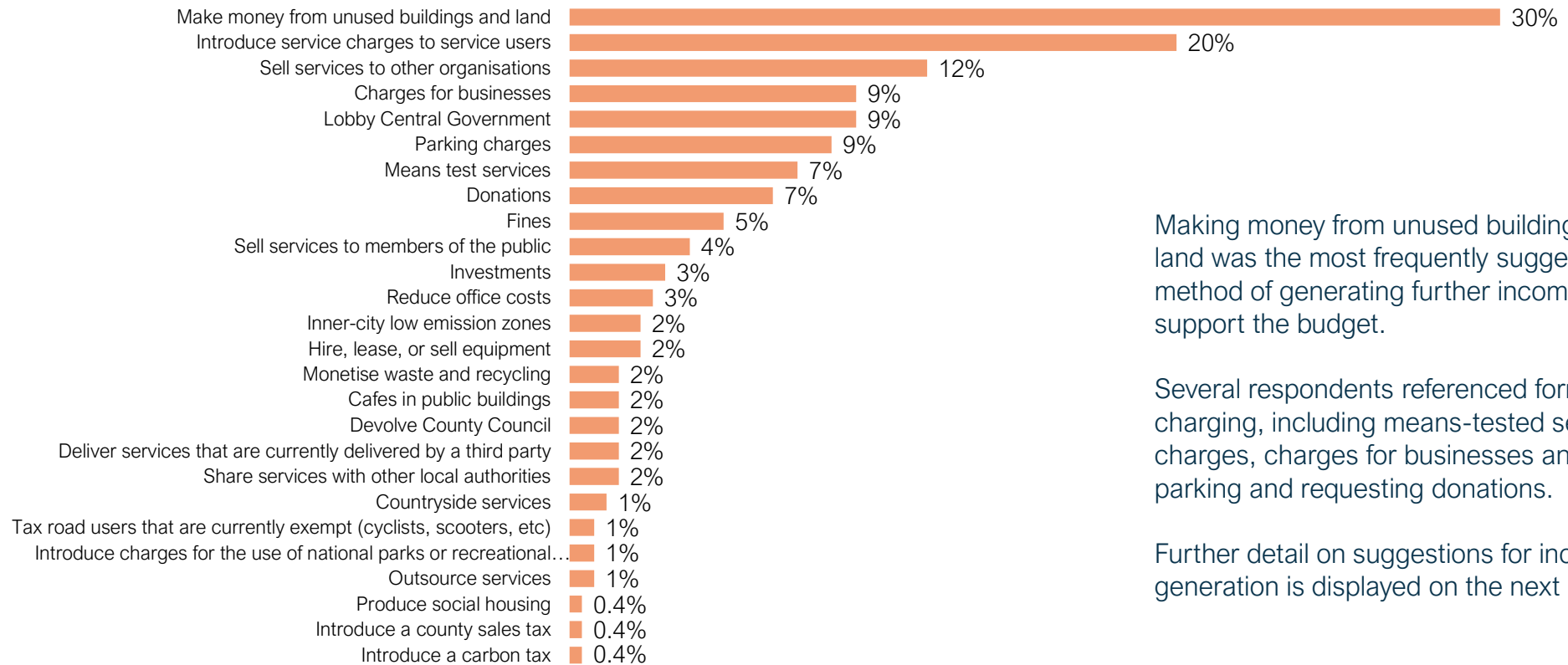
An increase in council tax will impact on me but I would rather see that than a reduction in services.

Raising council tax and charging for services will impact my disposable income. However, in order that the council can provide a sustainable service to the residents of Hampshire for the future, I recognise that this needs to be funded. For a reasonable service, I am prepared to pay more.



Suggestions for generating additional income

Themes from comments on ways that the County Council could generate additional income (multi code, base: 258 randomly selected comments which provided suggestions for income generation from 1,019 submitted)



Making money from unused buildings and land was the most frequently suggested method of generating further income to support the budget.

Several respondents referenced forms of charging, including means-tested service charges, charges for businesses and for parking and requesting donations.

Further detail on suggestions for income generation is displayed on the next slide.

Suggestions for generating additional income, further detail

Suggestions about **making money from unused buildings and land** related to leasing council buildings or land (15%), selling buildings or land (13%), using facilities as buildings hubs (6%), using them to generate renewable energy (5%), using them for social housing (2%), and converting them to private or commercial rental sites (2%)

Where suggestions about **introducing charges for service users** were expanded upon, these related to being means tested to only apply to more wealthy users (3%), that exercise classes provided by the Council should be charged for (2%), as should HWRC access (2%), with other suggestions relating to public health services, school transport, library usage, social care, Blue Badges, road usage, and traveller communities using Council land (1% each)

Comments providing **suggestions for selling services to other organisations** related to environmental services (2%), the Council's County Supplies service (2%) and also mentions of legal, property management, marketing, business support, management consultancy, printing, catering, IT, transport, HR, and financial services (1% each)

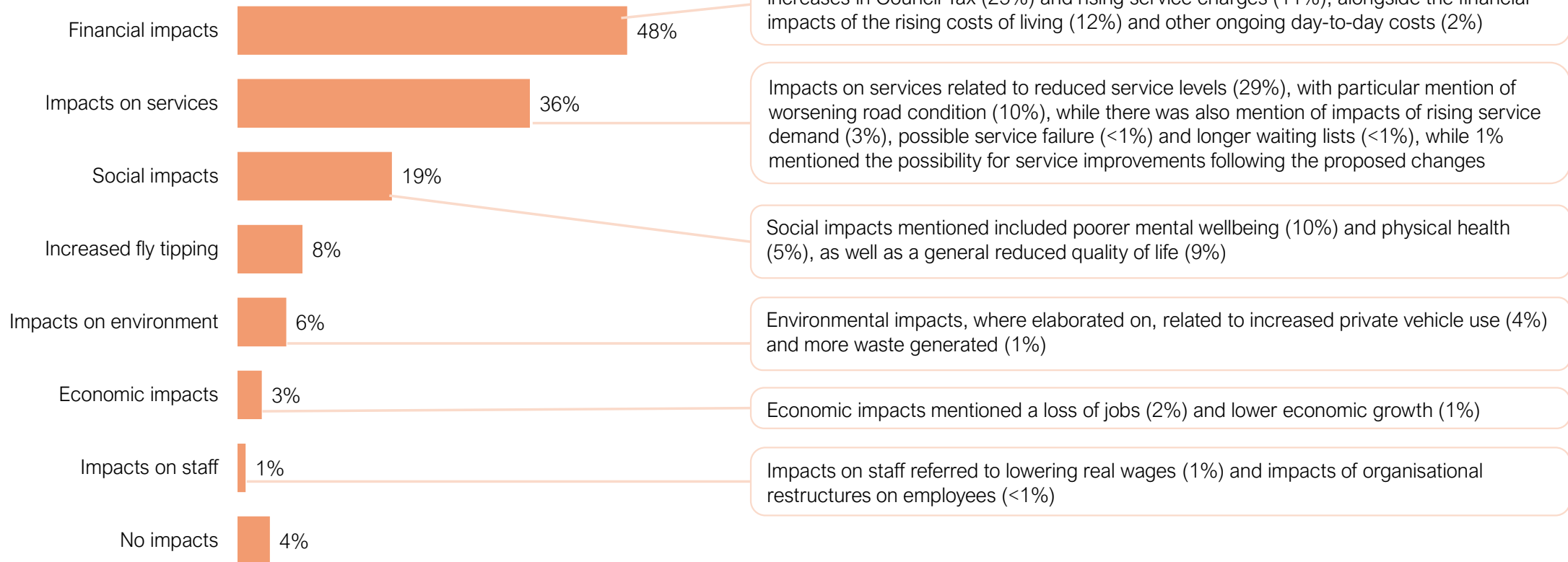
Charges for businesses were mentioned in relation to introducing a tourism tax (3%), charging utility companies for highway disruption (2%), sponsorship or advertising at Council sites (2%), higher business rates (2%), as well as greater charges for building and housing developers for infrastructure, charges for polluting businesses, and taxes for private schools in Hampshire (1% each)

Suggested ways to **lobby central government**, where expanded upon, related to securing permission to increase local planning charges (3%), and to give councils greater permission to provide their services in a commercial context (1%)

Parking charges related to residential parking permits (2%) and charging County Council staff for the use of parking on office premises (2%), as well as charging more for recreational use such as caravans, disabled parking, and charging for the use of school car parks outside of school term time (1% each)

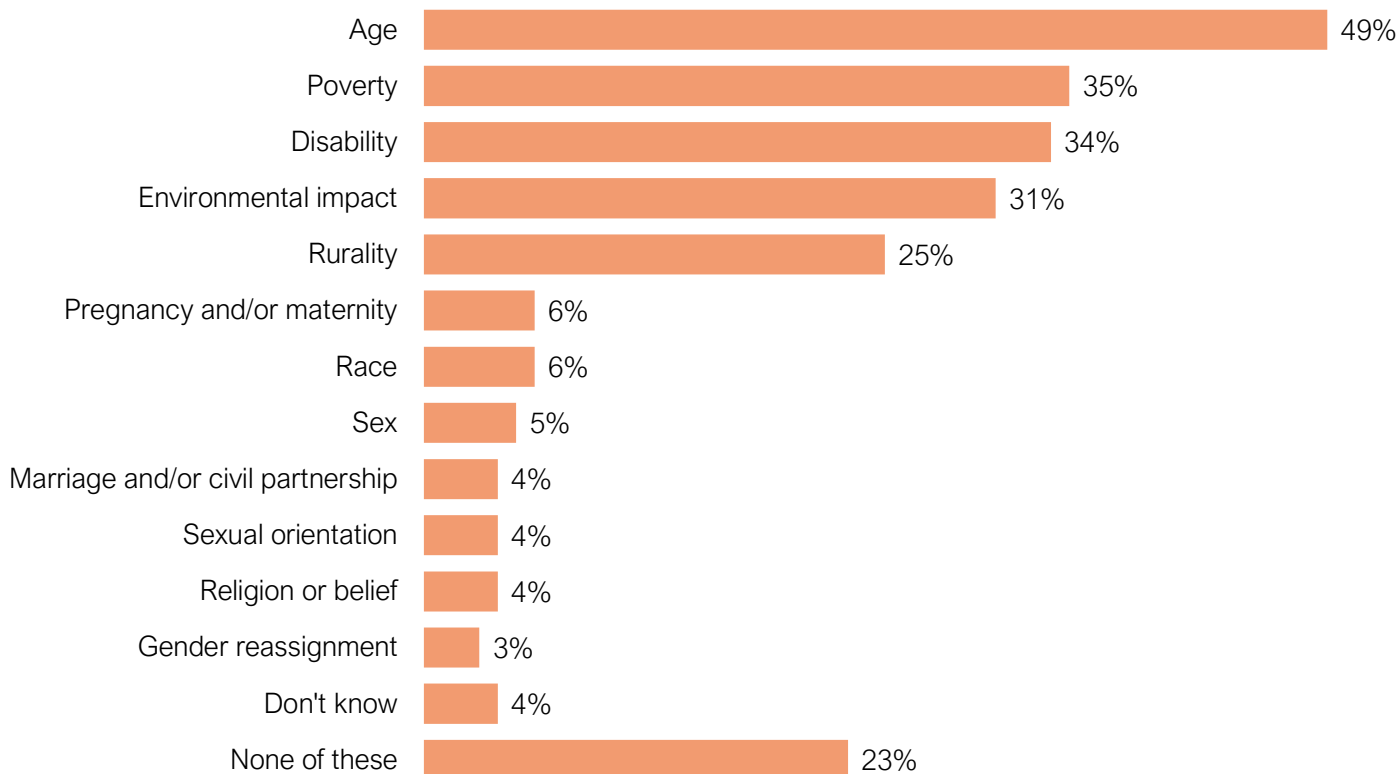
Perceived impacts of proposed budget options

Perceived impacts of proposed budget options (multi code, base: 273 randomly selected comments from 1,395 submitted)



Perceived impacts due to individuals' characteristics

Perceptions of which specific groups the proposed options could impact
(multi code, base: 892)



To help the County Council assess the impact of policies and practices on equalities (particularly individuals and communities with a protected characteristic) and climate change, respondents were asked to indicate whether the impacts they identified would affect a range of characteristics.

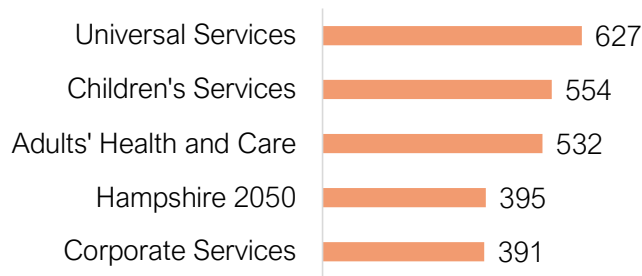
An impact on age was identified by almost half of respondents, with by impacts on poverty, disability, rurality and the environment also commonly mentioned.

Further comments and suggested alternatives

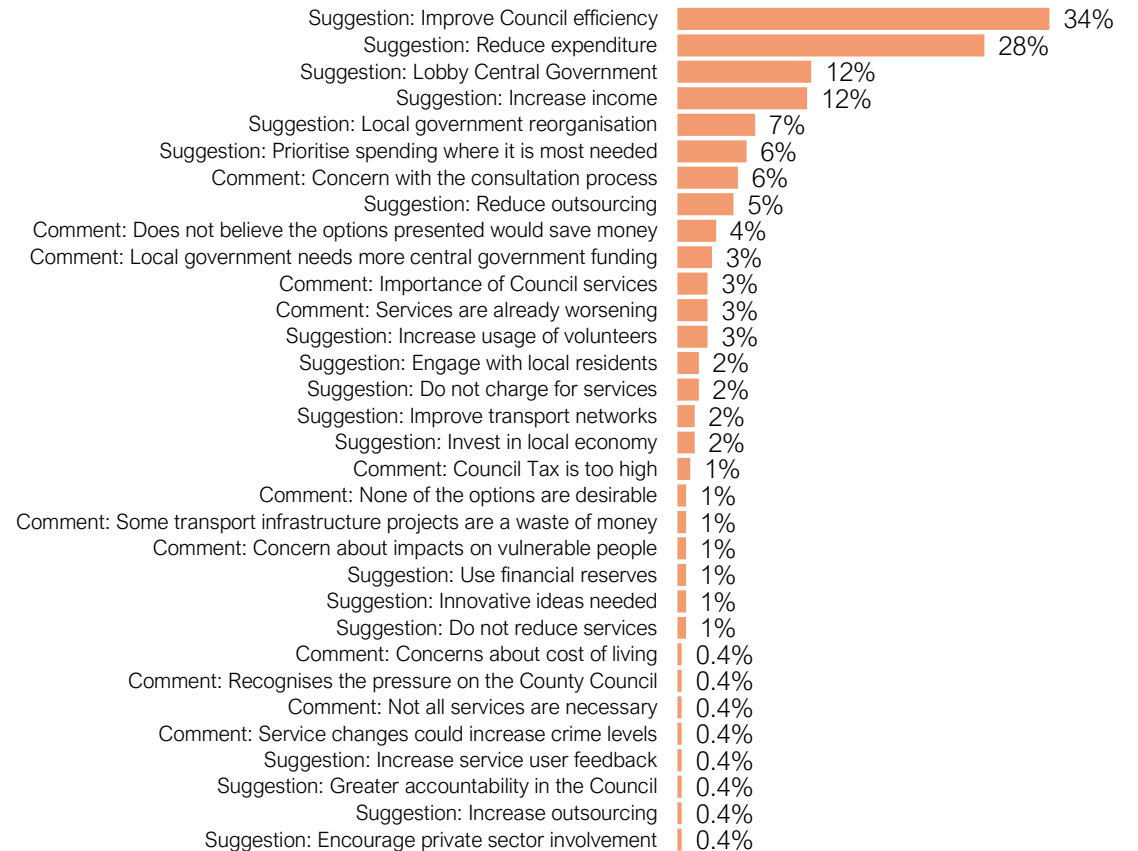
Respondents were invited to suggest alternatives to the budget options proposed by the County Council. At a general level continued work towards efficiency improvements and expenditure reductions were most often mentioned, along with specific ideas relating to how the proposed options could be implemented.

Further details are available on the following slide.

The following number of comments were also submitted about, and have been provided to, Directorates for consideration.



Comment themes (multi code, base: 254 randomly selected comments from 507 submitted)



Feedback and alternative approaches in more detail

Where respondents mentioned **improving the efficiency of the County Council**, this included finding ways to reduce bureaucracy (7%), put more focus on front-line services (6%), selling or leasing unused property (4%), identifying and reducing wastage (3%), working with other councils more often (3%), means testing services (3%), having more efficient procurement methods (2%), and identifying economies of scale that can be exploited (2%)

In relation to **reducing expenditure**, ways to do so most commonly mentioned reducing senior officer costs (10%) and staffing costs (9%), with other comments relating to reducing pension costs (4%), for the Council to only deliver minimum service levels (3%), and reducing street lighting (2%), highways infrastructure (1%), and projects which do not have a clear benefit for the local area (1%)

Suggestions of **lobbying the Government** related to doing so to improve the level of funding for the County Council (7%) and to allow the County Council to have more powers to deliver services and generate revenue (5%), while 1 comment mentioned that local authorities should jointly lobby the Government

Ways that the Council could **increase income** included suggestions that the County Council raise Council Tax (4%), increase Council Tax revenue through increasing housing supply (2%), introduce charges to use highways (1%) and for utility companies when they need to do roadworks (1%), with a tourism tax also mentioned (1%) as well as proposed charges for using a concessionary bus pass (1%)

Service areas that respondents felt should be prioritised included:

- green policies (4%),
- public health (2%), and
- highways maintenance (1%),

With services for children, vulnerable adults, heritage, library services, and support for deprived areas also mentioned (<1% each)

Concerns with the consultation process, where described in more detail, related to views that the consultation questions were seen as unbalanced or 'leading' (2%), that information provided was unclear (2%), a belief that the consultation may be ignored (1%), that it was too complex (1%), that there was poor public awareness of it (<1%), and that it may have been an expensive exercise (<1%)

Unstructured responses

Unstructured responses include the emails, letters and other correspondence that the Council receives as part of the consultation that do not use the Response Form. The County Council received 37 unique unstructured responses to the Budget Consultation.

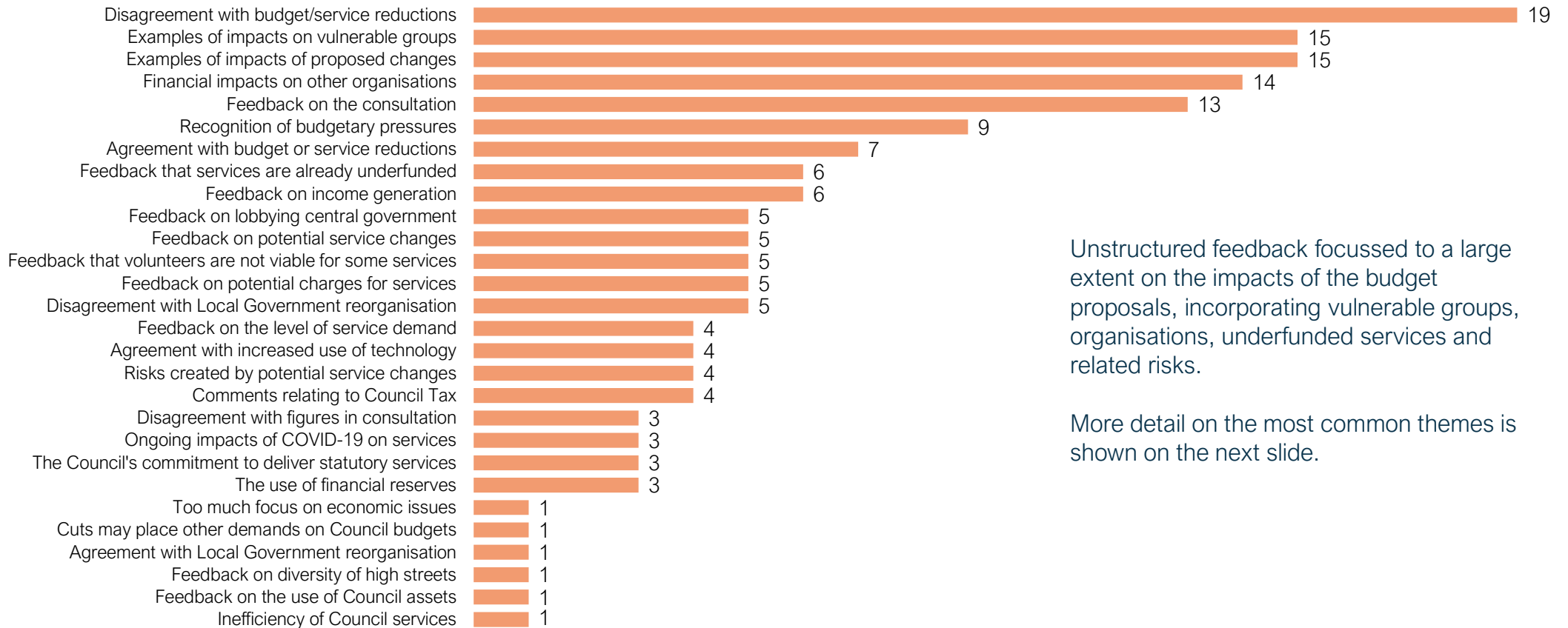
Of these 37 responses, 31 provided feedback on the consultation and its proposals, while 21 provided suggestions for ways that the County Council could deliver services differently and deliver a balanced budget.

Additionally, 92 comments were provided in response to corporate social media posts.

The themes covered by these comments are summarised within this section.

Unstructured responses giving feedback on the consultation proposals

Themes of comments which provided feedback on the consultation proposals (multi code, base: 31 comments)



Unstructured feedback focussed to a large extent on the impacts of the budget proposals, incorporating vulnerable groups, organisations, underfunded services and related risks.

More detail on the most common themes is shown on the next slide.

Feedback provided in unstructured responses

Comments expressing **disagreement with potential reductions** to budgets and services mentioned:

- disagreement with the County Council making changes to passenger transport (12 mentions) or community transport (10 mentions), school crossing patrols (6 mentions), highways maintenance (5 mentions), grant support to other organisations (4 mentions), libraries (1 mention) and street lighting (1 mention)
- that some services may become unviable if there were to be reductions in funding (3 mentions)

Comments about **impacts on vulnerable groups** specified that there could be impacts on people in rural areas (11 mentions), older adults (9 mentions), people with physical or mental health or disability issues (8 mentions), those experiencing poverty (8 mentions), and younger people (6 mentions), with 1 mention each for carers, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion, sex, and victims of abuse or substance misuse

Comments describing **impacts of proposed changes** most commonly related to environmental impacts (8 mentions), social isolation (7 mentions), public health (5 mentions), mental health (4 mentions), economic growth (4 mentions), and fly tipping (3 mentions)

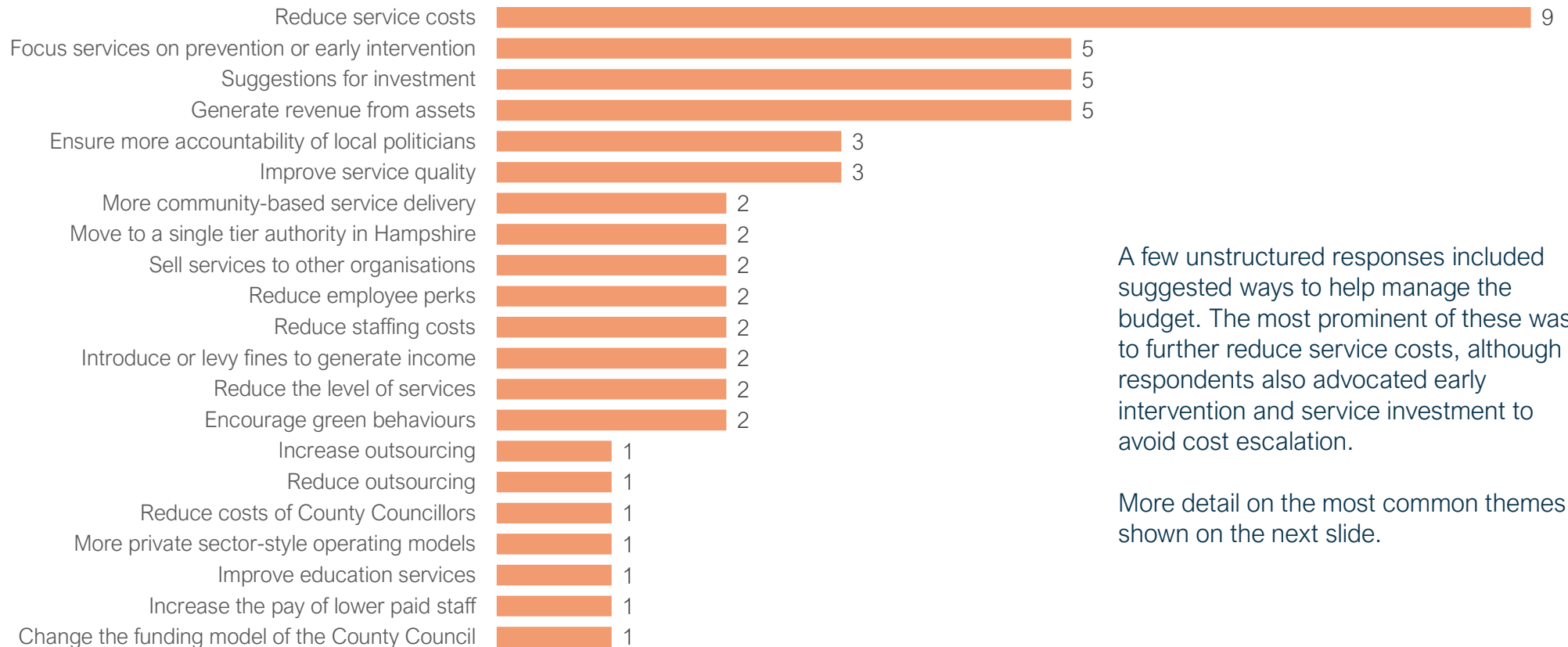
Financial impacts on other organisations most frequently described impacts on:

- charities and community groups (7 mentions),
- healthcare providers (6 mentions),
- district and parish councils (5 mentions),
- emergency services (2 mentions), and
- schools and transport providers (1 mention each)

In addition, 5 organisations mentioned that they and other organisations would be unable to pick up services if there were to be a need to do so following County Council reductions

Unstructured responses which provided suggestions

Themes of comments which provided suggestions on Council services or the consultation proposals (multi code, base: 21 comments)



A few unstructured responses included suggested ways to help manage the budget. The most prominent of these was to further reduce service costs, although respondents also advocated early intervention and service investment to avoid cost escalation.

More detail on the most common themes is shown on the next slide.

Suggestions mentioned in unstructured responses

Suggestions about **reducing service costs** most commonly related to sharing services with other organisations (4 mentions), and reducing bureaucracy at the County Council (2 mentions), as well as reducing underused services, lowering utility bills, transferring service responsibilities to community groups, and ensuring that the Council is reducing opportunities for fraud (1 mention each)

Suggestions about **focusing services on early intervention** and prevention of need for other services mainly related to public health (4 mentions), while there were also suggestions of prevention around services for families (2 mentions) and adult social care (1 mention)

Comments providing **suggestions for investment opportunities** related to providing this for:

- mental health support,
- passenger transport services,
- active travel infrastructure (1 mention),
- highways infrastructure (1 mention), and
- Investing in developer contributions (1 mention)

Suggested Ways to **generate income from assets** included car parking charges (3 mentions), finding ways to generate revenue in libraries (2 mentions), and with 1 mention each for generating income by renting out buildings, charging for the use of the Council's outdoor spaces, providing more NHS-funded social care, and selling or charging for access to the Council's art collection

Where respondents mentioned **improving the accountability of local politicians**, this was in relation to being more clear about the responsibilities for different types of local authorities, making it easier to contact councillors and services when with issues, and ensuring suitable political involvement in partnership working arrangements, which were each mentioned once

Suggested ways to **improve service quality** related to:

- better quality highways maintenance (3 mentions),
- waste services (1 mention), and
- ensuring that children and young people had safer walking routes to their schools and places of education (1 mention)

Feedback provided via social media

92 comments were provided in response to corporate social media posts. Of these, 31 were not relevant to the consultation as they commented on other subjects, such as national politics or non-council services.

The most common themes raised within the comments are listed below:

- 12 comments expressed views that responses would be ignored
- 6 comments shared views that insufficient detail was provided
- 6 comments gave views that council staff pensions and salaries should be reduced
- 5 comments suggested that the County Council should put greater focus on road maintenance
- 4 comments indicated views that the County Council was not using its money efficiently
- 4 comments shared concerns that charges for HWRCs could increase fly tipping
- 3 comments expressed concerns that budget and service reductions would impact the most vulnerable
- 2 comments suggested that the respondent would struggle to pay higher Council Tax rates, and another 2 comments mentioned that respondents were already struggling due to the increased costs of living
- 2 comments mentioned that consultation exercises were expensive to run
- 2 comments suggested that there is insufficient infrastructure to support new housing developments
- 2 comments encouraged other people to take part in the Budget Consultation
- 2 comments suggested that street lights could be switched off during quieter times at night

Methodology and demographics

About this report

This report summarises the main findings from Hampshire County Council's 2023 Budget Consultation. Notable demographic variances from the average response are also highlighted, with further information available in the supporting data pack and tables.

As this was an open consultation, the respondents do not provide a representative sample of the Hampshire population. All consultation questions were optional, and the analyses only take into account actual responses – where 'no response' was provided to a question, this was not included in the analysis. As such, the totals for each question generally add up to less than the total number of respondents who replied via the consultation Response Form. In most cases, reported data has been re-based to exclude 'don't know' responses to facilitate demographic comparisons.

Respondents could disclose if they were responding as an individual, providing the official response of an organisation, group or business or if they were responding as a democratically Elected Representative. Given the relatively low number of organisations / democratically Elected Representatives that responded, the usefulness of percentages in quantifying their views is limited. However, analysis has been completed by 'respondent type', using indicative percentages for each closed question in order to help illustrate any contrast between their views and those of individuals – recognising that organisations / democratically Elected Representatives provide both an 'expert' view and speak on behalf of a larger audience.

A note on verbatim coding

All of the comments and unstructured responses received through the consultation were shared directly with services for full review, in order to inform the ongoing development of further proposals to balance the Council's budget, and associated Equality Impact Assessments.

Additionally, consultation codeframes were created using an inductive approach* from a random sample of replies from each general open-ended question received across the course of the consultation, in order to understand key themes arising, with the aim to code at least 200 comments per question (with the end number for each question being higher due to a high rate of responses in the final week of the consultation).

Unstructured responses and social media comments, which were small in number, were coded in full.

The codeframes aimed to draw out the key themes and messages from the comments covered, including any:

- specific groups to which they related;
- impacts that they mentioned;
- suggestions for how the Council could ensure a balanced budget; and
- feedback on the consultation process.

One individual worked on each codeframe to ensure a consistency of approach for each.

**This means that the themes were developed from the responses themselves, not pre-determined based on expectations, to avoid any bias in the analysis of these responses.*

Communications and promotion

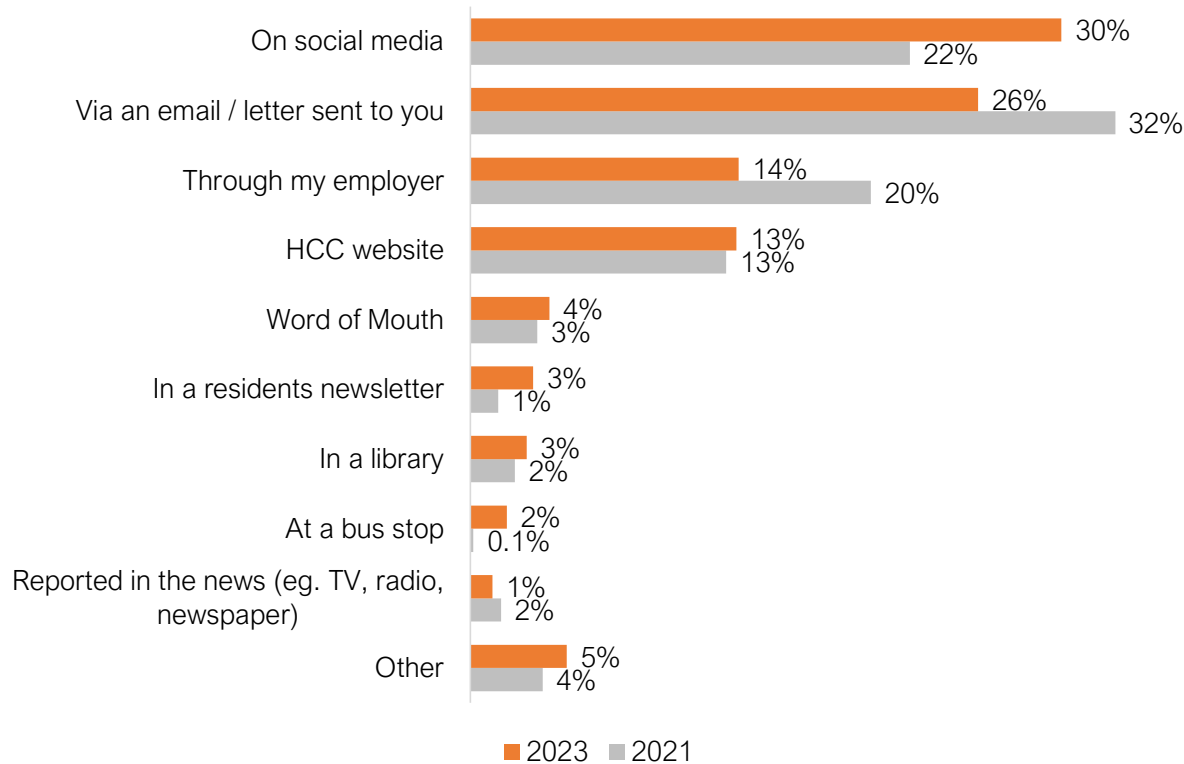
- Press releases
- Consultation webpage
- Promotional email banner added to HWRC bookings and promotional block added to all HCC e-newsletters
- Organic social media posts (including contextual [animation](#) and [video](#)), displayed to users (impressions) 106,730 times
- Targeted social media and Google ads to address under-representation, displayed to users (impressions) 470,834 times
- Hampshire libraries - consultation documents and posters displayed, included in 'Read All About It' newsletter
- Digital screen or hard copy posters at 100+ bus stops
- Cascade via elected Members, staff, partner organisations (including, but not limited to Districts, Parishes, Police, Fire, Health, Community First), Schools and Youth Parliament, Community Pantries, Community researchers, Interfaith and multi-cultural networks
- Newsletter to Hampshire Perspectives residents' forum and consultation distribution list
- *Your Hampshire* resident newsletters
- Posters displayed at country parks, HCC Care establishments
- E-screens in County Council reception

The collage illustrates the multi-channel communication strategy for the budget consultation. It features:

- A bus stop with a digital screen displaying the council's logo and the slogan "making the most of your money".
- A table with budget consultation materials, including a "Budget consultation 2024-2026" poster and informational leaflets.
- A screenshot of the Hampshire County Council website showing the consultation details, including the contact number 6978619 and the dates for public input (12 June to 23 July 2023).
- A video of the County Council Leader, stating: "Just like Hampshire households, our budgets are under huge pressure".
- Social media posts from Hampshire County Council and local partners like Eastleigh Town Council and Minstead Study Centre, all encouraging residents to share their views on the budget.

How respondents heard about the consultation

How respondents heard about the consultation (Base: 2718, 714)



Most respondents heard about the consultation via social media (30%) or direct correspondence (26%).

This reflects the promotional work to raise awareness of the consultation.

Compared to 2021, social media, newsletters and bus stops have played a more prominent role in raising awareness, whereas the proportion of people learning about the consultation via direct correspondence or via their employer is lower.

List of responding organisations, groups and businesses

- Andover CE Primary School
- Barton Stacey Parish Council
- Basingstoke Hindu Society
- Brockhurst Primary School
- Buses in Fleet group
- Chandler's Ford Infant School
- Citizens Advice New Forest
- Communities First Wessex
- Eastleigh Youth and Community Trust
- Ecchinswell, Symdonton and Bishops Green Parish Council
- Energise Me
- G K Benford & Co
- Grayshott Parish Council
- Greenview RCH
- Hampshire Cultural Trust
- Hampshire UNISON
- Hampshire Youth Justice Service
- Havant and East Hants Mind x3
- Horndean Technology College
- Kay Hallsworth Gosport Voluntary Action
- Mind
- Odiham Parish Council
- Potley Hill Primary School
- Rowledge Church of England Controlled Primary School
- Solent Youth Action
- Specialist Teacher Advisory and Therapy Service Communication and Interaction Service
- St Columba school
- St Marks CE Primary School
- Steep C of E VC Primary School
- Tower Hill Primary School
- Unity (Southern) Ltd
- Ways into Work CIC
- Winchester Action on the Climate Crisis
- Yelabus Association CIO
- Youth Options
- Church Crookham Parish Council
- St Lawrence CE Primary School
- Eastleigh Borough Council
- One Community
- HIOW Fire and Rescue Service
- Community Transport Association
- Action Hampshire
- Community Transport Association
- Rushmoor Borough Council
- Solent Mind, Andover Mind and Havant & East Hants Mind
- Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB
- Rushmoor Voluntary Services
- Stagecoach South
- Healthwatch
- Frimley Health and Care ICS
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Winchester Green Party

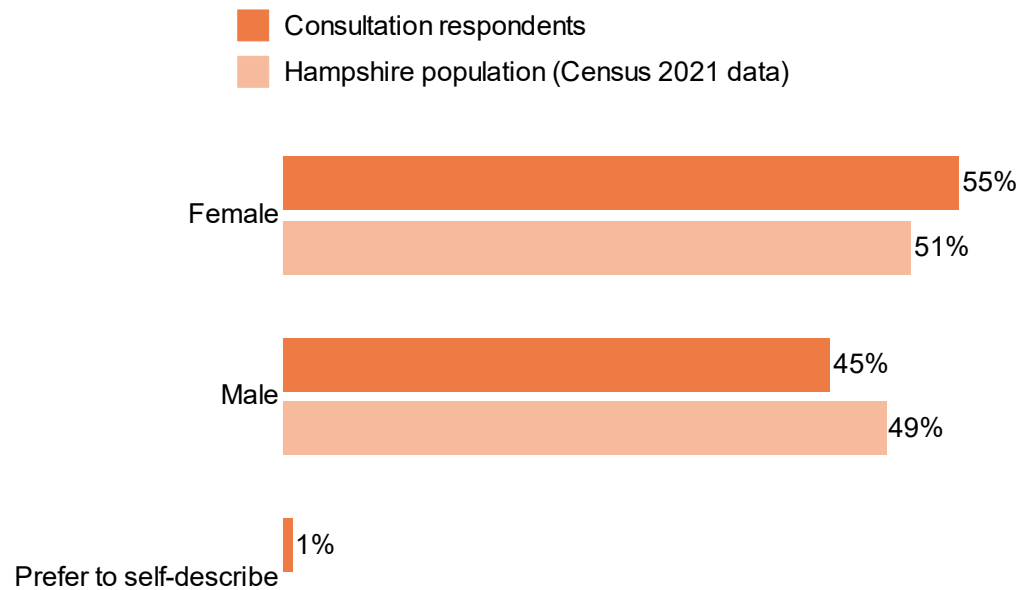
List of responding Democratically Elected Member Constituencies

- Aldershot North
- Aldershot South Division
- Ancells
- Ballard, New Milton Town Council
- Boyatt Wood Parish Council
- Boyatt Wood Parish Council
- Brighton Hill ward, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
- Candovers Oakley and Overton Division
- Chartwell Green , West End Parish Council
- East Boldre Parish council
- East Hampshire District Council
- Empress Ward, Rushmoor
- Fleet Town Council
- Fordingbridge Town Council
- Hardley. Holbury, N. Blackfield
- Hythe Central, New Forest District Council
- Itchen Valley Division
- Liphook, Headley and Grayshott
- Liss
- Petersfield Hangers
- Sherborne St John & Rooksdown
- St Bartholomew
- Steep
- Tadley and Baughurst
- Winchester - St Michael ward

Respondent age and gender profiles

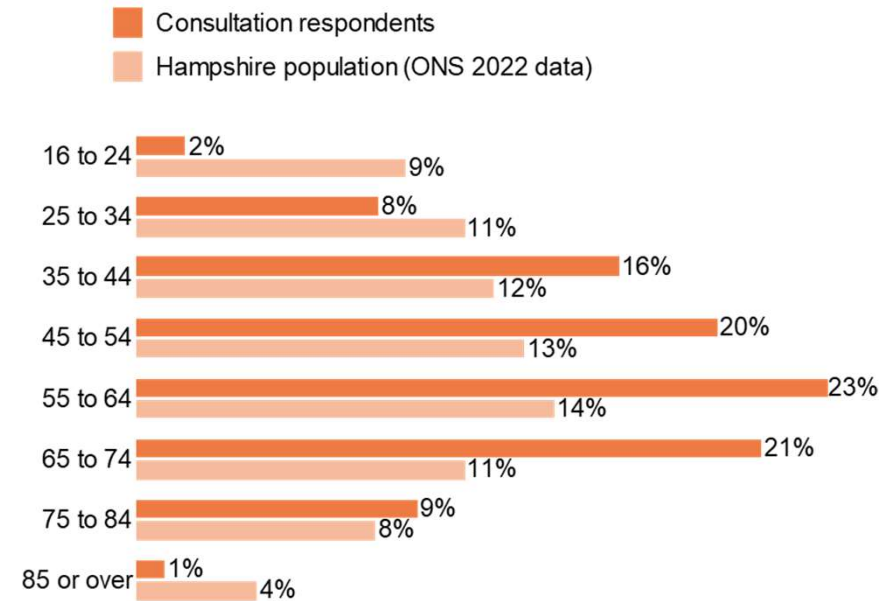
A slight over-representation of female respondents when compared to the Hampshire population.

Respondent gender profile (base: 2488, excludes 'prefer not to say', Census data only includes 'female' and 'male' categories)



Respondents aged between 35-64 were over-represented, whilst younger age groups (16-34) were under-represented.

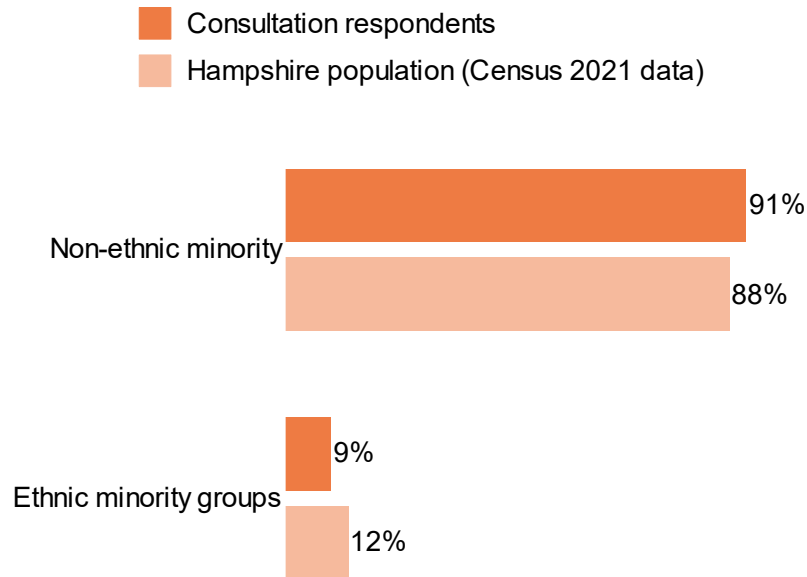
Respondent age profile (base: 2544, excludes 'prefer not to say')



Respondent ethnicity and disability profiles

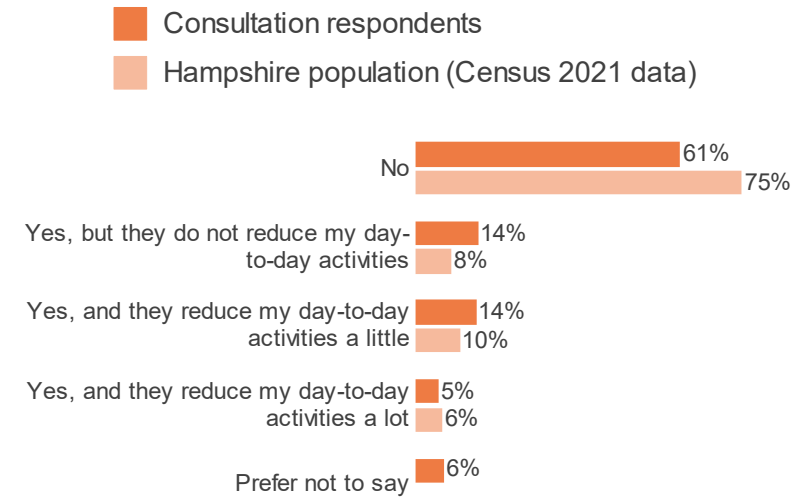
The respondent profile was slightly oriented towards the white ethnic population when compared to Hampshire's ethnic profile.

Respondent ethnic categorisation profile (base: 2426, excludes 'prefer not to say')



19% of respondents reported that they had a long-term disability or health issue that limited their day-to-day activities, slightly above the Hampshire average.

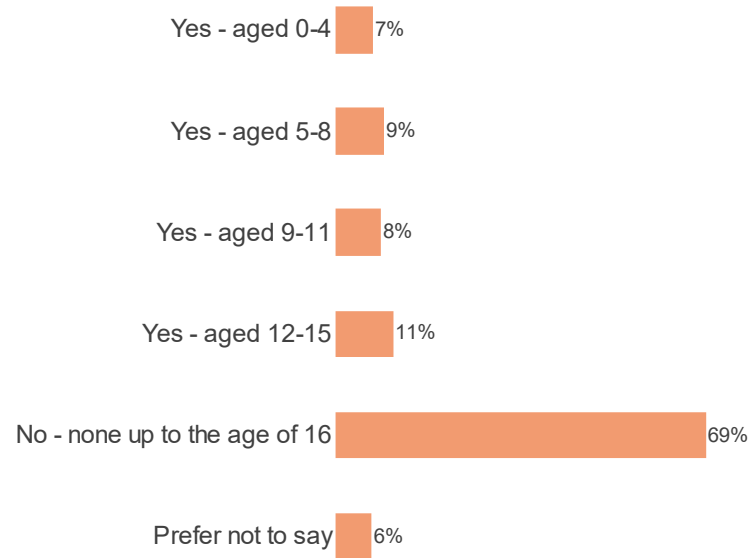
Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? (base: 2651)



Respondent household profiles*

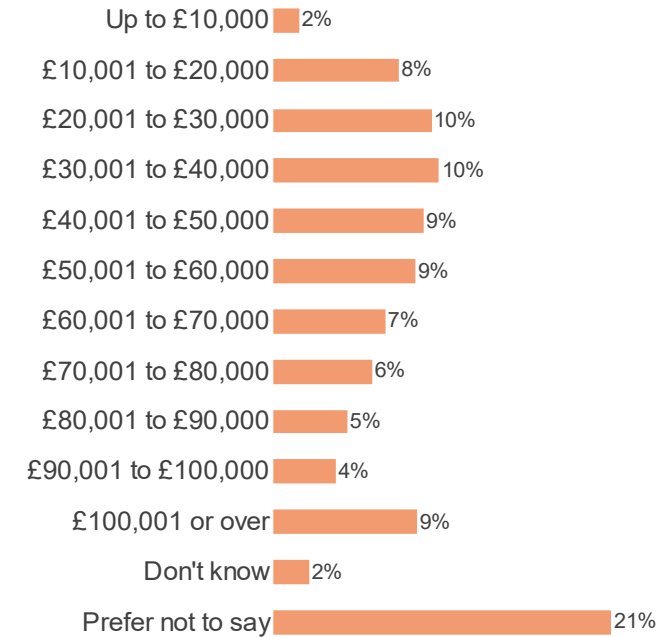
25% of respondents indicated that they had children living within their household

Presence of children in respondents' households (Multi code, base: 2429)



20% of respondents had a household income of under £30,000 per year, compared to 31% earning over £60,000

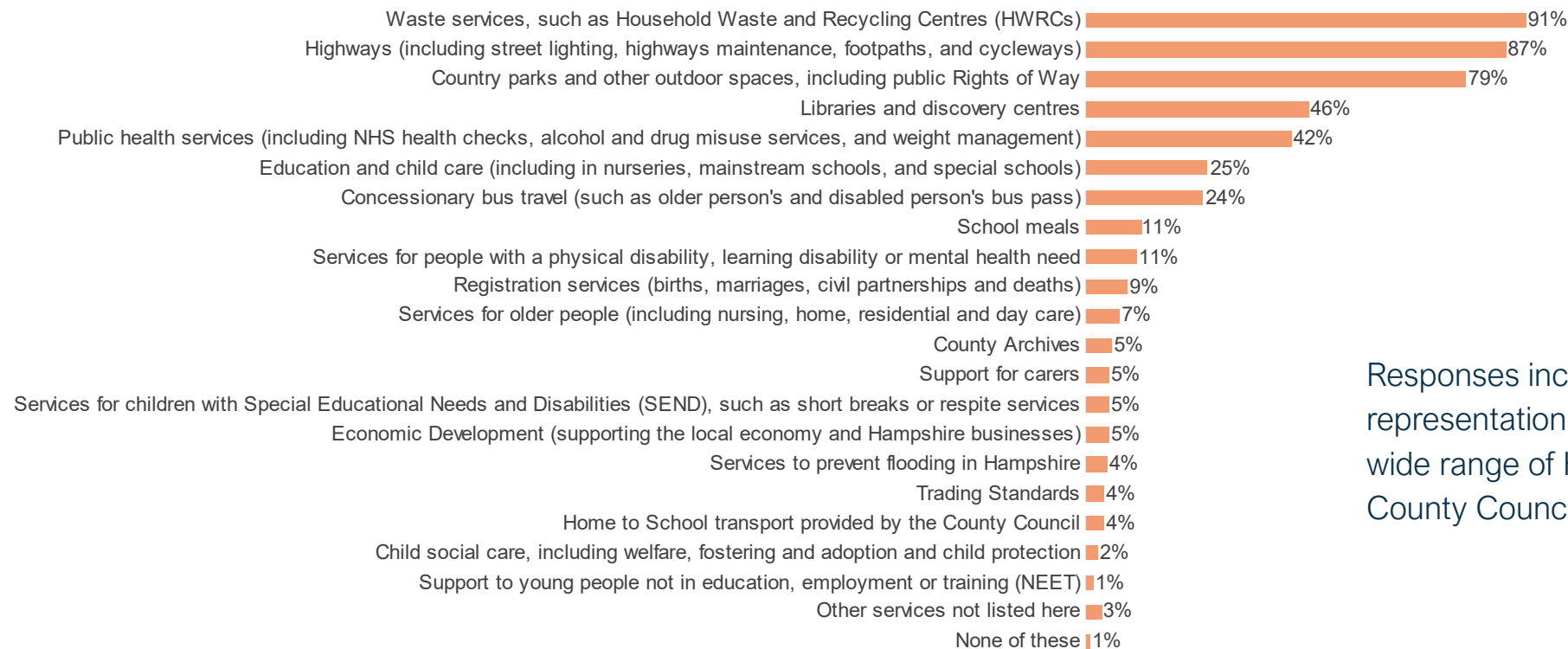
Household income profile (base: 2625)



*No available Census comparator for this data

Respondent Service Use

Hampshire County Council services used by respondents in the previous year (Base: 2714)

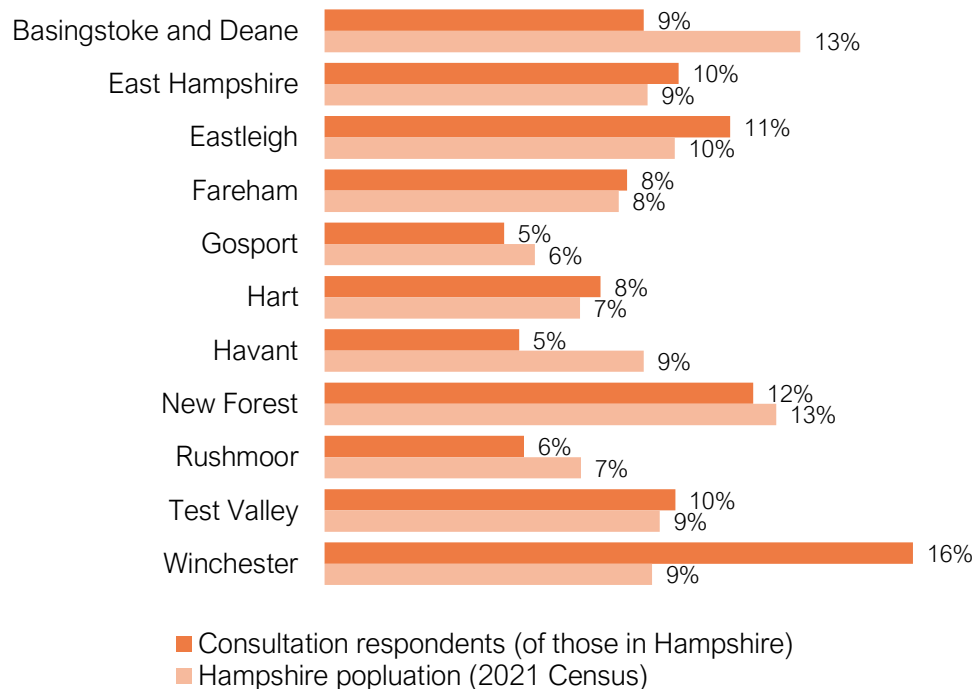


Responses included representation from users of a wide range of Hampshire County Council services

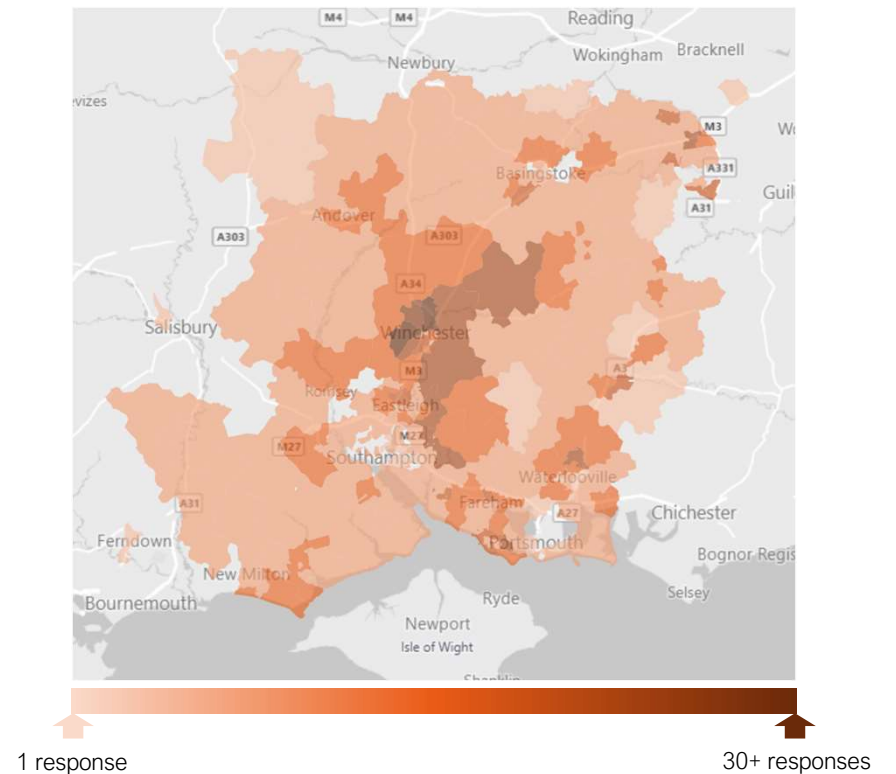
Location of respondents

The consultation heard from respondents from across the county, although the districts of Basingstoke and Havant were under-represented, despite targeted communications to these areas.

Respondent district profile
(base: 2,275 responses with Hampshire district data)



Respondent location profile (base: 1,814 postcodes)

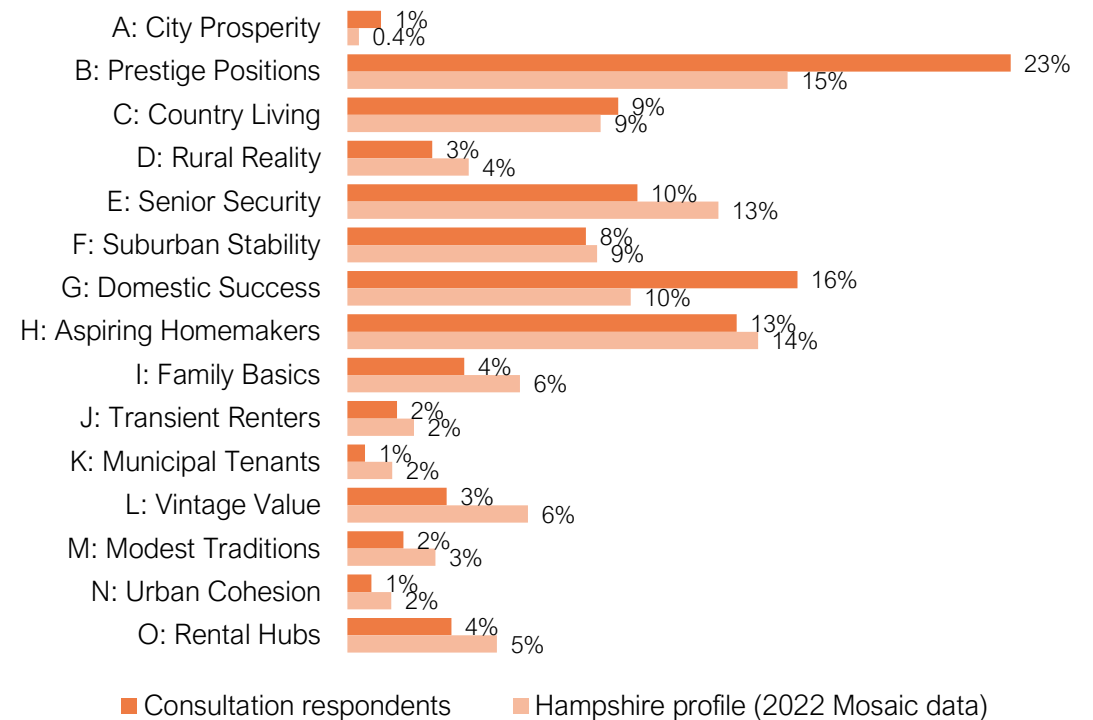


Mosaic 7 group profile*

Mosaic Groups ‘B’ (Prestige positions) and ‘G’ (Domestic Success) were notably overrepresented in the consultation responses, with 23% and 16% of postcodes respectively falling into this category, compared with 15% and 10% of postcodes in the Hampshire profile. These groups have high incomes, successful careers and live in desirable neighbourhoods.

In contrast, less affluent and more urban Groups are under-represented in the consultation responses, particularly Group L (Vintage Value), which is characterised as being composed of retired people aged over sixty-five who live, commonly alone, in modestly sized accommodation and groups K (Municipal Tenants) and N (Urban Cohesion) who are long-term residents of urban locations.

Respondent Mosaic 7 group profile
(base: 1,815 valid postcodes)



*Experian Mosaic is a customer segmentation tool which categorises every household and postcode in the UK into one of 15 Groups and 66 Types, based on demographic, economic, social and geographical information



Hampshire
County Council