

2023/24 Oxfordshire County Council budget engagement and consultation

1. This report sets out the key findings from Oxfordshire County Council's budget engagement, carried out between 1 August 2022 and 19 December 2022, to support the 2023/24 budget and business planning setting process.
2. Feedback from phases 2 - 4 of the engagement and consultation will be shared as follows:
 - This consultation and engagement annex will be shared with councillors to support the budget setting process at cabinet in January and at full council in February 2023.
 - The report will be published on the council's digital consultation and engagement platform, Let's talk Oxfordshire, with a link to the meetings. This will be supplemented by a 'you said, we did' update on Let's talk Oxfordshire after decisions have been made.
 - A deposit of all consultation responses (suitably redacted to comply with GDPR) will be compiled and made available internally on request.

Executive summary

3. This year, the council's engagement and consultation on the budget has four distinct phases, putting residents' views at the heart of the council's budget and business planning from the start to the finish.
 - Phase one: Maximising the use of existing feedback
 - Phase two: Representative residents' survey
 - Phase three: Oxfordshire conversation events
 - Phase four: Public consultation on the council's 2023/24 budget proposals (18 November to 19 December 2022)

Phase one: maximising the use of existing feedback

4. To support the early stages of the council's budget and business planning process, digests of residents' and stakeholder feedback were compiled, themed by each of the council's nine strategic priorities. These digests were made available to senior officers, alongside a range of other insight, to inform the early stages of development of directorate budget proposals. This insight is historical and not included in this report.

Phase two: representative residents' survey

5. Between 1 August and 26 September 2022, the council undertook a large-scale residents' survey with adults aged 18+. The survey questionnaire covered a range of subjects, including service satisfaction and specific questions on the council's nine strategic priorities, budget and possible council tax levels.
6. The residents' survey was conducted by market research agency Marketing Means, using a postal approach supported by an online survey. In total, 4,900 households were randomly selected to take part and, following two reminders, 1,162 residents responded giving a response rate of 23.9 per cent. The final respondent profile was

'weighted' by local authority area, age and gender in order to be reflective of Oxfordshire's population as a whole and the figures reported are for weighted data. The confidence interval for figures from questions asked of the entire sample is ± 2.9 per cent at the 95 per cent level of confidence.

7. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with the balance of opinion (net satisfaction) being +68 per cent. This is notably down from the net score of +77 per cent in 2021.
8. Respondents consider the two leading factors in making somewhere a good place to live as health services (51 per cent) and the level of crime (50 per cent). Road and pavement maintenance was selected by 33 per cent of respondents.
9. Perceptions of individual council services vary widely (range 71 per cent - 18 per cent satisfaction). **Road and pavement maintenance** draws the most negative views and is a key focus for improvement in local areas. **Road maintenance** is considered as the most important service we provide in respondents' local areas.
10. **Prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents** is the most popular strategic priority amongst respondents (41 per cent selected in their top two most important priorities), consistent to 2021 (39 per cent) **and play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy** the least (three per cent selected in their top two most important priorities) again consistent to 2021 (two per cent)
11. The two approaches – both of which would be likely to have a direct impact on residents' households - were far less popular, drawing similarly very negative levels of net agreement of -57 per cent and -58 per cent. These were **increasing council tax to generate additional income** and **reducing spending on frontline services**.
12. Findings from the residents' survey show there is little appetite for **council tax increases**. A proposed rise of 4.99 per cent drew a mixed level of agreement, and a net agreement score of -9 per cent. The two larger proposed increases drew significantly more negative views. The balance of opinion (agreement minus disagreement) for a 5.99 per cent increase was -42 per cent and for a 6.99 per cent increase was -56 per cent.

Phase three: Oxfordshire conversations

13. For phase three, between 18 and 21 October, we held three online Oxfordshire Conversation events to engage with residents, share our emerging budget challenges and to give them the chance to ask cabinet members questions about issues that matter to them. An in-person sounding board with children and young people, incorporating an Oxfordshire Conversation, was also held on 15 October.
14. These four events replaced a much fuller programme of in-person and online meetings, which were cancelled following the death of Her Majesty The Queen.
15. Overall, 194 people signed-up to attend the Oxfordshire Conversation events with 122 of these attending. Nearly 100 questions were submitted in advance, with more posed on the day. Highways, travel and transport matters (speed limits, bus services, cycle provision, traffic filters etc) were by far the dominant themes for discussion although a range of other topics were raised.

16. Twenty-eight children and young people attended the sounding board. Travel and transport, home education, support for neurodiversity and youth service were key themes.

Phase four: Public consultation on the council's 2023/24 budget proposals

17. Between 12 noon on 18 November 2022 and 11.59pm on 19 December 2022, the council invited comments on its budget proposals for 2023/24, with a specific focus on its savings proposals. Residents and stakeholders were also signposted to a supporting consultation booklet for background information and to the detailed budget reports published for Performance and Corporate Services Overview Scrutiny Committee. Respondents were encouraged to engage with these detailed supporting documents should they wish.

18. Feedback was primarily collated using an online survey on the council's digital consultation and engagement platform, Let's talk Oxfordshire, with residents and stakeholders also being able to submit comments by email or by letter.

19. In total, the council received **533** completed online survey responses, **0** completed paper surveys (three were sent out) and **26** email responses (multiple submissions from the same person have been grouped as a single response). As was permitted, not everyone answered each question in the online survey and the data in this report focuses on the total number of people who chose to engage with each budget proposal/question.

20. Most people did not give a view on each proposal and instead chose to answer only on those of specific interest to them or simply skipped this section of the survey entirely. The number of respondents engaging on individual savings' proposals ranged from 26 people to 121 people.

21. The savings proposals with the highest engagement were:

- **Environment and place 24EP13: saving £200,000.** Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme (121 respondents engaged).
- **Environment and place 24EP12: saving £2.25 million.** One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years (99 people engaged).
- **Public health and community safety 24PHCS2: saving £800,000.** Cancel annual contribution to the reserve holding future funding for the replacement of fire appliances on a one-off basis in 2023/24 (98 people engaged).

22. Most savings proposals received a combined higher level of support or neutral views than those against, but as stated above please note that the base size for some is very small.

23. There were 14 exceptions, mostly related to the children's services directorate (10 proposals) focusing on potential staffing reductions, reduction on spend on different types of staffing, recruitment, training, and efficiencies more generally. Two exceptions were for the environment and place directorate, one for culture and corporate services directorate and one was for the public health and community safety directorate.

24. These were:

- **Environment and place 24EP12: saving £2.25 million.** One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years. 57 people against (58 per cent) / 42 people neutral or support (42 per cent)
- **Customers, culture and corporate services 24CCCS26: saving £306,000.** Cultural services (libraries) – reduction in supplies and services expenditure, plus vacancy management. 49 people against (68 per cent) / 23 people neutral or support (32 per cent).
- **Public health and community safety 24PHCS2: saving £800,000.** Cancel annual contribution to the reserve holding future funding for the replacement of fire appliances on a one-off basis in 2023/24. 52 people against (53 per cent) / 46 people neutral or support (47 per cent)
- **Environment and place 24EP15: saving £150,000.** Anticipated increases in on-street parking income. 44 people against (61 per cent) / 28 people neutral or support (39 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS13: saving £240,000.** Children we care for services: reduction in staffing and support costs. 34 people against (77 per cent) / 10 people neutral or support (23 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS16: saving £85,000.** Youth justice and exploitation agency – staffing reduction. 29 people against (74 per cent) / 10 people neutral or support (26 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS5: saving £2 million.** Strengthen the application of thresholds and develop new working practices to safely reduce the number of children the council cares for so activity is more consistent with similar authorities. 28 people against (55 per cent) / 23 people neutral or support (45 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS15: saving £80,000.** Staffing efficiencies in leaving care service within children's social care. 25 people against (64 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (36 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS21: saving £135,000.** Children with disability team – agency staff reduction. 25 people against (69 per cent) / 11 people neutral or support (31 per cent).

- **Children’s services 24CS11: saving £67,000.** Efficiencies in early help services within children's social care. 22 people against (61 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (39 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS23: saving £66,000.** Reduction in funding for project work in children's services. 20 people against (63 per cent) / 12 people neutral or support (37 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS22: saving £73,000.** Safeguarding/quality assurance team – agency staff reduction. 18 people against (53 per cent) / 16 people neutral or support (57 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS10: saving £113,000.** Efficiencies in education services. 20 people against (56 per cent) / 16 people neutral or support (44 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS18: saving £50,000.** Reduction in recruitment and training spend within corporate parenting/countywide services. 15 people against (52 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (52 per cent).

25. This consultation, alongside the Oxfordshire Conversations, featured feedback on low traffic neighbourhoods, traffic filters and speed limits, which were hot topics during the consultation period across all the council’s communications channels and are known to divide opinion. Most of the feedback on these issues was overtly negative and critical or the council.

Key findings from representative residents' survey

Introduction

26. Between 1 August and 26 September 2022, the council undertook a large-scale residents' survey with adults aged 18+ to gauge their satisfaction with the council, the services we provide and their local area, as well as asking for opinions on our strategic priorities, how we might make savings and to explore council tax rises.
27. The survey was conducted by market research agency Marketing Means, using a postal approach supported by an online survey. In total, 4,900 households were randomly selected to take part and, following two reminders, 1,162 residents responded giving a response rate of 23.9 per cent.
28. The final respondent profile was 'weighted' by local authority area, age and gender in order to be reflective of Oxfordshire's population as a whole and the figures reported are for weighted data. The confidence interval for figures from questions asked of the entire sample is ± 2.9 per cent at the 95 per cent level of confidence.
29. For this report, we are only focusing on the questions relating to service satisfaction, feedback on the council's nine strategic priorities, budget and possible council tax levels. All councillors have had the opportunity to engage with the findings through an optional member briefing on 25 November 2022.

Service satisfaction

30. The survey explored residents' satisfaction with 20 different council services. The list included a mix of universal services (eg waste and recycling, roads and pavement maintenance) and others more specific to certain sub-groups (eg children's education and social care), for which many non-users with little or no experience felt they could not respond and gave a do not know answer.
31. As shown by table 1 below, perceptions of individual council services vary widely (range 71 per cent - 18 per cent satisfaction). Fire and Rescue Service – emergency response draws the highest satisfaction and net satisfaction (total percentage satisfied minus the total percentage dissatisfied). Road and pavement maintenance draws the most negative views.
32. The same question was asked in the council's 2021 residents' survey and only a small number of services showed significantly increased net satisfaction compared with 2021, these were for:
 - household waste and recycling centres (+13 percentage points)
 - managing the road network (+five percentage points)
 - parking (+six percentage points)
 - road and transport schemes (+five percentage points).
33. The largest decreases in net satisfaction from 2021 to 2022 were for:
 - early years education (birth to four years) (-19 percentage points)
 - countryside services (eg rights of way) (-13 percentage points)
 - fire and rescue service - public safety and road safety advice and support (-11 percentage points)

- primary education (5 -11 years) (-nine percentage points)
- trading standards (-ten percentage points)
- fire and Rescue service - emergency response (-six percentage points)
- secondary education (over 11 years) (-six percentage points).

Table 1: Satisfaction with county council services (among those could express an opinion)

Service (base totals shown after each service)	% Dissatisfied	% Satisfied	Net % score
Fire and Rescue service - emergency response (862)	7%	71%	+64%
Libraries (879)	9%	67%	+57%
Museums and history service (834)	6%	64%	+57%
Registration of births and deaths, and ceremonies including marriages and citizenship (629)	7%	58%	+51%
Household waste and recycling centres (tips) (1,108)	20%	66%	+47%
Fire and Rescue service - public safety and road safety advice and support (826)	10%	58%	+48%
Primary education (5 -11 years) (592)	15%	54%	+40%
Countryside services (eg rights of way) (993)	18%	55%	+37%
Secondary education (over 11 years) (574)	18%	48%	+31%
Public health (helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from health risk) (899)	20%	43%	+22%
Early years education (birth to 4 years) (526)	22%	39%	+17%
Trading Standards (601)	16%	32%	+16%
Children's social care (protecting and supporting vulnerable children and families) (483)	23%	34%	+12%
Support/care for older people (aged over 65) (666)	30%	35%	+5%
Managing the road network (eg traffic lights, speed limits, traffic and transport) (1,105)	43%	38%	-5%
Support/care for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, and/or mental health problems, general frailty (630)	36%	30%	-5%
Parking (enforcement, controlled parking zones, on-street parking) (1,004)	43%	31%	-12%
Road and transport schemes (eg new or improved junctions, bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.) (1,027)	48%	28%	-20%
Maintenance of pavements (1,114)	61%	22%	-39%
Maintenance of roads (1,132)	71%	19%	-52%

**Table 2: Net satisfaction with services (among those could express an opinion)
2021 vs 2022**

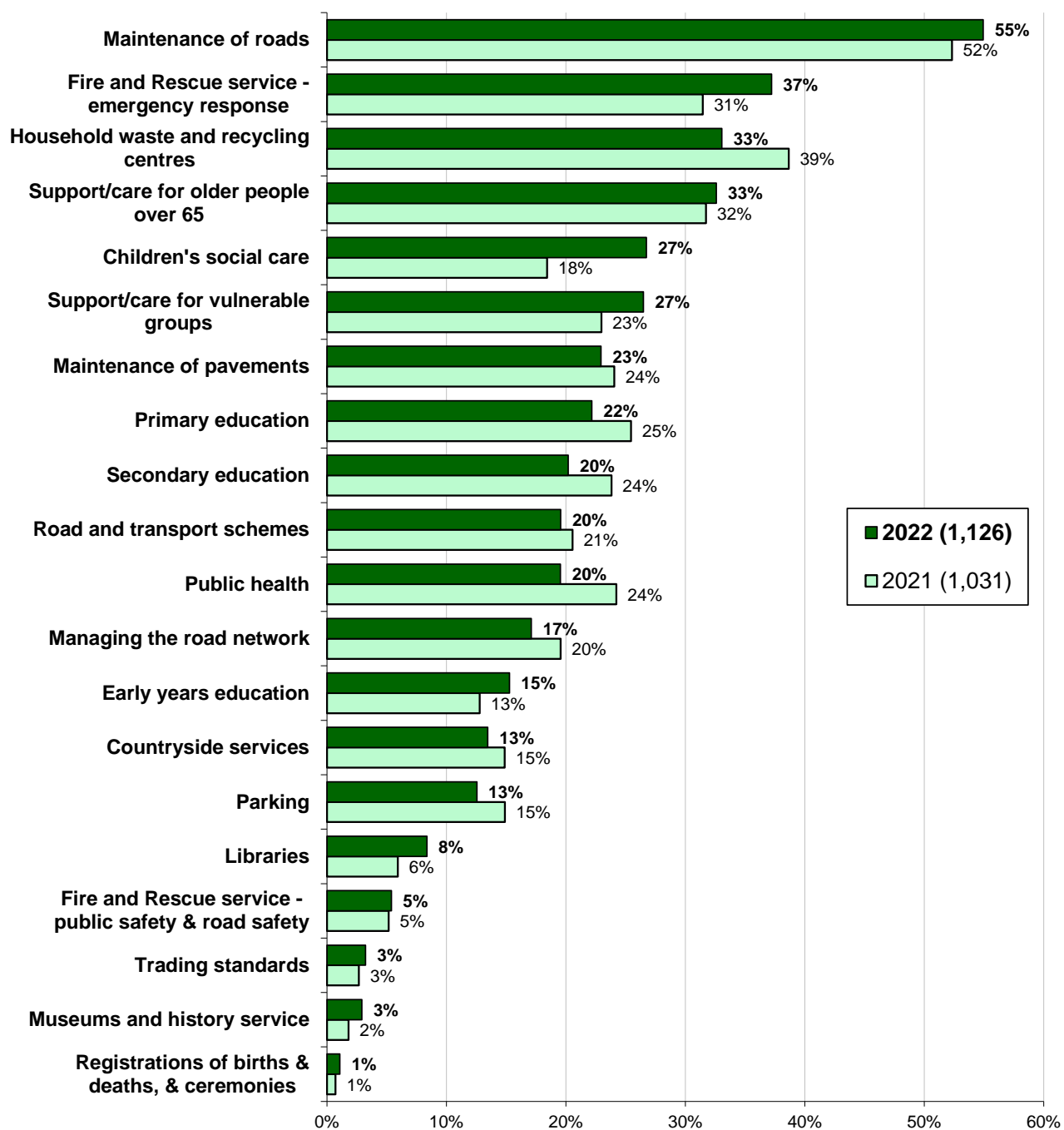
Service (base totals shown after each service, 2021 first, 2022 second)	2021 net % score	2022 net % score
Fire and rescue service - emergency response (767/862)	+70%	+64% ↓
Libraries (787/879)	+53%	+57%
Museums and history service (748/834)	+60%	+57%
Registration of births and deaths, and ceremonies including marriages and citizenship (556/ 629)	+63%	+51% ↓
Household waste and recycling centres (tips) (994/1,108)	+34%	+47% ↑
Fire and rescue service - public safety and road safety advice and support (735/826)	+59%	+48% ↓
Primary education (5 -11 years) (526/592)	+49%	+40% ↓
Countryside services (e.g., rights of way) (884/993)	+50%	+37% ↓
Secondary education (over 11 years) (511/574)	+37%	+31% ↓
Public health (helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from health risk) (799/899)	+25%	+22%
Early years education (birth to 4 years) (465/526)	+36%	+17% ↓
Trading Standards (534/601)	+26%	+16% ↓
Children's social care (protecting and supporting vulnerable children and families) (426/483)	+14%	+12%
Support/care for older people (aged over 65) (593/666)	+4%	+5%
Managing the road network (e.g., traffic lights, speed limits, traffic and transport) (994/1,105)	-10%	-5% ↑
Support/care for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, and/or mental health problems, general frailty (558/630)	-6%	-5%
Parking (enforcement, controlled parking zones, on-street parking) (896/ 1,004)	-18%	-12% ↑
Road and transport schemes (eg new or improved junctions, bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.) (917/1,027)	-25%	-20% ↑
Maintenance of pavements (999/1,114)	-39%	-39%

Service importance

34. When asked which four of the same list of services they felt to be most important for local people in this area, eight of the services were named by at least one in five (20 per cent) of respondents, as shown in chart 1 below which also includes the 2021 findings.

35. By far the most likely to be mentioned as important was **roads maintenance**, selected by 55 per cent of respondents, and which we have already seen was the service that drew the lowest level of satisfaction and net satisfaction.

Chart 1: The county council services that respondents perceive are the most important for local people in the local area (option to select up to four)



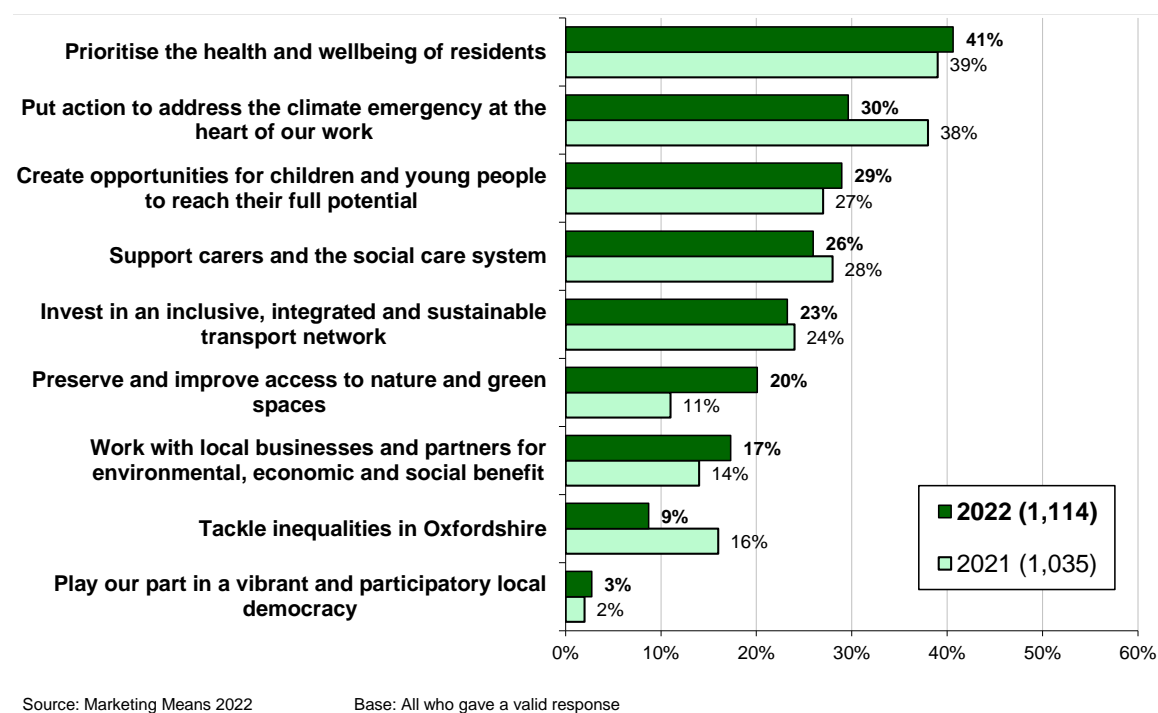
Source: Marketing Means 2022

Base: All who gave a valid response

Council priorities

36. All respondents were asked to read summary notes on the council's nine priority themes and then to select two that they considered to be most important for the council to concentrate on. Chart 2 below (provided by Marketing Means) summarises the results, including comparisons between 2021 and 2022.

Chart 2: Most important priority themes for the council to concentrate on?



37. Prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents is the most popular of the nine strategic priorities amongst respondents (41 per cent), with the reasons given including:

- Need to tackle health and wellbeing / healthcare problem
- More accessible/ faster health care, eg more GPs
- Consider the future / future generations / children are our future
- Healthier society / population has wider / knock on benefits.

38. The next most popular choices were put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of the council’s work (30 per cent), creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential (29 per cent) and supporting carers and the care system (26 per cent). The only other theme selected by more than one in five respondents was investing in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network (23 per cent).

39. The largest proportional shift in attitudes towards our priorities between 2021 to 2022 is seen for **preserving and improving access to nature and green spaces**, which has increased significantly from 11 per cent to 20 per cent (although it should be noted that the wording in 2021 referred only to “Improving access to nature and green spaces”).

40. The largest proportional decreases since 2021 were for **tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire**, which has fallen from 16 per cent to nine per cent, and for **put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work**, declining from 38 per cent to 30 per cent.

41. Based on the same summary notes on nine different council priorities, respondents were also asked to indicate which two themes they felt were the least important for the council to concentrate on and the most frequently selected priority was **play our part in a vibrant local democracy** (55 per cent).

42. The reasons for this included:

- Council can't or shouldn't affect change / individuals or other bodies should focus on priority instead / Council doesn't have responsibility.
- Priorities aren't as pressing or already underway / should be dealt with after other priorities.
- More important areas of life to get involved with than politics / disengagement from politics.
- Democracy strong / not needing improvement.

43. Table 1 below (provided by Marketing Means) summarises the most important priorities and least important priorities side by side.

Table 3: Most and least important priority themes for the council to concentrate on

	% considered most important (1,114)	% considered least important (941)
Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents	41%	4%
Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work	30%	22%
Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential	29%	7%
Support carers and the social care system	26%	3%
Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network	23%	19%
Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	20%	18%
Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	17%	26%
Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire	9%	31%
Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy	3%	55%

Budget engagement

44. To preface the budget engagement section of the questionnaire, respondents were given a brief explanation of the financial challenges that the council faces (using information that was available at the time) and asked how much they agreed or

disagreed with each of a list of nine possible approaches that the council suggested it could take to make savings / generate income.

45. Table 4 below (provided by Marketing Means) summarises the results and shows the feedback split into three groups.

Table 4: Net agreement with different approaches that the council could take to make savings or generate income

Approach (base totals shown after each)	Total % disagree	Total % agree	Net % agreement
Generate additional income by maximising the use of buildings and land the council owns (our assets) (1,109)	3%	86%	+83%
Reduce costs by using digital technology to deliver services more efficiently (1,098)	10%	72%	+61%
Reduce the costs of the contracts we use to provide services (1,105)	11%	64%	+53%
Reduce staffing costs by redesigning services, using fewer agency staff and/or holding vacancies (1,109)	14%	62%	+49%
Use the council's financial reserves (money set aside for unexpected events), to provide one-off funding (1,103)	23%	41%	+18%
Reduce spending on services the council is not legally required to provide (1,089)	24%	38%	+14%
Generate additional income from sales, fees, and charges (1,083)	26%	38%	+11%
Reduce spending on frontline services (1,102)	66%	10%	-56%
Generate additional income by increasing council tax (1,113)	70%	13%	-57%

46. The four most popular approaches drawing net support (total percentage agree minus total percentage disagree) of nearly +50 per cent or higher were:

- Generate additional income by maximising the use of buildings and land the council owns (our assets) (+83 per cent net agreement).
- Reduce costs by using digital technology to deliver services more efficiently (+61 per cent net agreement).
- Reduce the costs of the contracts we use to provide services (+53 per cent net agreement).
- Reduce staffing costs by redesigning services, using fewer agency staff and/or holding vacancies (+49 per cent net agreement).

47. Three approaches drew more mixed views, and a modest net agreement. These were:

- Using the council's financial reserves (+18 per cent net agreement).
- Reducing spending on services that do not legally need to be provided (+14 per cent net agreement).
- Generating more income from sales, fees and charges (+11 per cent net agreement).

48. By far the least palatable approaches were:

- Reduce spending on frontline services (-56 per cent net agreement).
- Generate additional income by increasing council tax (-57 per cent net agreement).

49. When respondents were asked to suggest other ways in which the council could save money and/or generate income very few people chose to put forward an idea. None were mentioned by more than four per cent of respondents.

30. Some of the comments reflected or built on some of the nine approaches set out in the previous question, eg different ways of making more efficient use of staff with some possible staffing cuts, cutting back on any non-essential spending, selling off assets, and improving contractors or bringing services back in-house.

50. Just over one per cent put forward suggestions related to the need to invest in some services/ activities now to avoid more expensive consequences in future, with examples including preventing fly tipping or maintaining home visits by carers.

51. Focusing specifically on council tax, respondents were provided with supporting information and asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the council should consider increases of 4.99, 5.99 or 6.99 per cent to help fund adult social care and other key services.

52. All three suggested levels drew general disagreement and, as shown by table 5 below, net agreement scores of -9 per cent, -42 per cent and -56 per cent respectively. A third of respondents agreed with the idea of a 4.99 per cent increase. Some of the most frequent comments supporting people's views related to how current cost of living pressures and/or the already high level of council tax meant that council tax should not be increased, but others accepted that a rise was inevitable to help the council address a shortfall in funding, especially if the money raised is ringfenced for specific uses.

Table 5: Net support for possible council tax increases the council could consider to help fund adult social care and other services

Levels of increase in council tax (base totals shown after each)	% disagree	% agree	% don't know	Net % agreement
4.99 per cent increase , which is equal to an additional £82.42 per year or £1.59 per week in council tax on a Band D property (1,103)	43%	34%	6%	-9%
5.99 per cent increase , which is equal to an additional £98.93 per year or £1.90 per week in council tax on a Band D property (1,074)	59%	17%	6%	-42%
6.99 per cent increase , which is equal to an additional £115.45 per year or £2.22 per week in council tax on a Band D property (1,078)	68%	12%	6%	-56%

Phase 3: Oxfordshire Conversations and sounding board

53. Between 18 and 21 October, the council held three online Oxfordshire Conversation events to engage with residents, share our emerging budget challenges and to give them the chance to ask cabinet members questions about issues that matter to them. An in-person sounding board with children and young people, incorporating an Oxfordshire Conversation, was also held on 15 October.

54. These four events replaced a much fuller programme of in-person and online meetings, which were cancelled following the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

Oxfordshire Conversations feedback

55. Overall, 194 people signed-up to attend the Oxfordshire Conversation events with 122 of these attending. Nearly 100 questions were submitted in advance, with more posed on the day. Highways, travel and transport matters (speed limits, bus services, cycle provision, traffic filters etc) were by far the dominant themes for discussion. A range of other topics were raised also raised including budget, cost of living, climate action, the impact of COVID-19 on young people and planning matters. Many of the questions were very detailed and had multiple points a number were outside the remit of the council.

56. The events were lively and representatives from the Cabinet responded to the questions posed. Work continues to provide answers to unanswered questions.

Sounding board feedback

57. Twenty-eight children and young people attended the sounding board who were from a range of different areas and backgrounds. The young people were provided with the opportunity to feedback to councillors the issues that are important to them.

58. Diagram one summarising the feedback as captured by the graphic facilitator on the day. Travel and transport were key issues mentioned including mention of low traffic neighbourhoods, 20 mph speed limits, transport to school and access to bus services (particularly in rural areas) a recurring theme. Home education, support for neurodiversity and youth service were also mentioned.

Diagram 1: Key issues for young people expressed at the sounding board



Phase 4: budget proposals consultation

Executive summary

Approach

59. Between 12-noon on 18 November 2022 and 19 December 2022, the council invited comments on its budget proposals for 2023/24, with a specific focus on its savings proposals. Residents and stakeholders were also signposted to a supporting consultation booklet for background information and to the detailed budget reports published for Performance and Corporate Services Overview Scrutiny Committee. Respondents were encouraged to engage with these detailed supporting documents should they wish.

60. Feedback was primarily collated using an online survey on the council's digital consultation and engagement platform, Let's Talk Oxfordshire, with residents and stakeholders also being able to submit comments by email or by letter.

61. The budget consultation was actively promoted to a wide range of audiences using multiple channels (media briefing and news story on the county council website, social media and other digital platforms including paid for advertising) and to staff, councillors, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action and Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to help them spread the word to their contacts.
62. Promotional posters were distributed to libraries, town and parish councils, community centres, children’s centres and village halls and the budget consultation appeared three times in Your Oxfordshire, the council’s direct e-newsletter.
63. The social media posts stimulated some comments, related to traffic and transport matters including 20mph zones, traffic schemes generally, low traffic neighbourhoods, bus gates and traffic filters. Others took time to comment that the council wastes money, that engagement in consultation is ignored and other matters not related to this exercise. Where genuine questions were raised, we responded to clarify any misunderstandings and provide helpful information.
64. When respondents were asked how they found about this consultation (multiple responses were permitted), a direct email from the council (214 mentions) and Facebook were by far the most frequently mentioned channels.
65. In total, the council received **533** completed online survey responses, **0** completed paper surveys (3 were sent out) and **26** email responses (multiple submissions from the same person have been grouped as a single response). As was permitted, not everyone answered each question in the online survey and the data in this report focuses on the total number of people who chose to engage with each budget proposal/question.
66. Ninety-five per cent of survey respondents (506) identified themselves as Oxfordshire residents and two respondents said they were members of the public living elsewhere. The remainder five per cent (25) identified as stakeholders: district, city or county councillors, parish or town councillors or representatives, business representatives, council employees, groups/organisations or as another type of stakeholder.
67. Collectively these respondents are referred to as stakeholders in the report and key (as opposed to residents). A breakdown of who responded to the survey is shown in table 6 below and a detailed respondent profile is set out later in this section of the report. A summary of the responses to the survey for councillors, businesses and groups/organisations is also provided later on in this section of the report.

Table 6: How people responded

	Number
As an Oxfordshire resident	506
As a member of the public living elsewhere	2
As a parish meeting representative, parish councillor or town councillor	3
As a county council employee	11
As a county councillor	2

As a district or city councillor	1
As a representative of a business	1
As a representative of a group or organisation	5
Other	2
Base: All respondents (533)	

Views on savings proposals

68. The survey gave people the opportunity to give their views on 62 of the savings proposals put forward the council, which were segmented by directorate. For the savings proposals presented, respondents were invited to express if they supported, were against or were neutral towards each and give comments. The distribution of engagement by directorate is shown in table 5.

69. To provide context this section of the survey was prefaced provided before about the current status of the of council's finances, stating that we had yet to work through the implications of the government's autumn statement announced on 17 November and the local government settlement expected in mid-December.

Table 5: Distribution of engagement with directorate's savings proposals

Directorate	Number of proposals presented	Number of people commenting
Adult services	11	93
Children's services	19	101
Environment and place	11	215
Public health and community safety	1	98
Customers, culture and corporate services	15	125
Other corporate services	5	96
Base: All commenting on one of more savings proposal (318)		

Summary of findings

70. Most people did not give a view on each proposal and instead chose to answer only on those of specific interest to them or simply skipped this section of the survey entirely. The number of respondents engaging on individual savings' proposals ranged from 26 people to 121 people.

71. The savings proposals with the highest engagement were:

- **Environment and place 24EP13: saving £200,000.** Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme (121 respondents engaged).
- **Environment and place 24EP12: saving £2.25 million.** One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects

expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years (99 people engaged).

- **Public health and community safety 24PHCS2: saving £800,000.** Cancel annual contribution to the reserve holding future funding for the replacement of fire appliances on a one-off basis in 2023/24 (98 people engaged).

72. Most savings proposals received a combined higher level of support or neutral views than those against, but as stated above please note that the base size for some is very small.

73. There were 14 exceptions, mostly related to the children's services directorate (10 proposals) focusing on potential staffing reductions, reduction on spend on different types of staffing, recruitment, training, and efficiencies more generally. Two exceptions were for the environment and place directorate, one for culture and corporate services directorate and one was for the public health and community safety directorate.

74. These were:

- **Environment and place 24EP12: saving £2.25 million.** One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years. 57 people against (58 per cent) / 42 people neutral or support (42 per cent)
- **Customers, culture and corporate services 24CCCS26: saving £306,000.** Cultural services (libraries) – reduction in supplies and services expenditure, plus vacancy management. 49 people against (68 per cent) / 23 people neutral or support (32 per cent).
- **Public health and community safety 24PHCS2: saving £800,000.** Cancel annual contribution to the reserve holding future funding for the replacement of fire appliances on a one-off basis in 2023/24. 52 people against (53 per cent) / 46 people neutral or support (47 per cent)
- **Environment and place 24EP15: saving £150,000.** Anticipated increases in on-street parking income. 44 people against (61 per cent) / 28 people neutral or support (39 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS13: saving £240,000.** Children we care for services: reduction in staffing and support costs. 34 people against (77 per cent) / 10 people neutral or support (23 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS16: saving £85,000.** Youth justice and exploitation agency – staffing reduction. 29 people against (74 per cent) / 10 people neutral or support (26 per cent).
- **Children's services 24CS5: saving £2 million.** Strengthen the application of thresholds and develop new working practices to safely reduce the number of children the council cares for so activity is more consistent with similar

authorities. 28 people against (55 per cent) / 23 people neutral or support (45 per cent).

- **Children’s services 24CS15: saving £80,000.** Staffing efficiencies in leaving care service within children's social care. 25 people against (64 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (36 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS21: saving £135,000.** Children with disability team – agency staff reduction. 25 people against (69 per cent) / 11 people neutral or support (30 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS11: saving £67,000.** Efficiencies in early help services within children's social care. 22 people against (61 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (39 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS23: saving £66,000.** Reduction in funding for project work in children's services. 20 people against (63 per cent) / 12 people neutral or support (37 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS22: saving £73,000.** Safeguarding/quality assurance team – agency staff reduction. 18 people against (53 per cent) / 16 people neutral or support (47 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS10: saving £113,000.** Efficiencies in education services. 20 people against (56 per cent) / 16 people neutral or support (44 per cent).
- **Children’s services 24CS18: saving £50,000.** Reduction in recruitment and training spend within corporate parenting/countywide services. 15 people against (52 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (48 per cent).

75. Some people chose to give comments to support their views, others did not. In total, 302 respondents commented on one of more savings proposal. At the end of each directorate budget proposals section, respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on any of other budget proposals including proposed budget increases. In total, 257 respondents made comments in this section as shown in table 6 below.

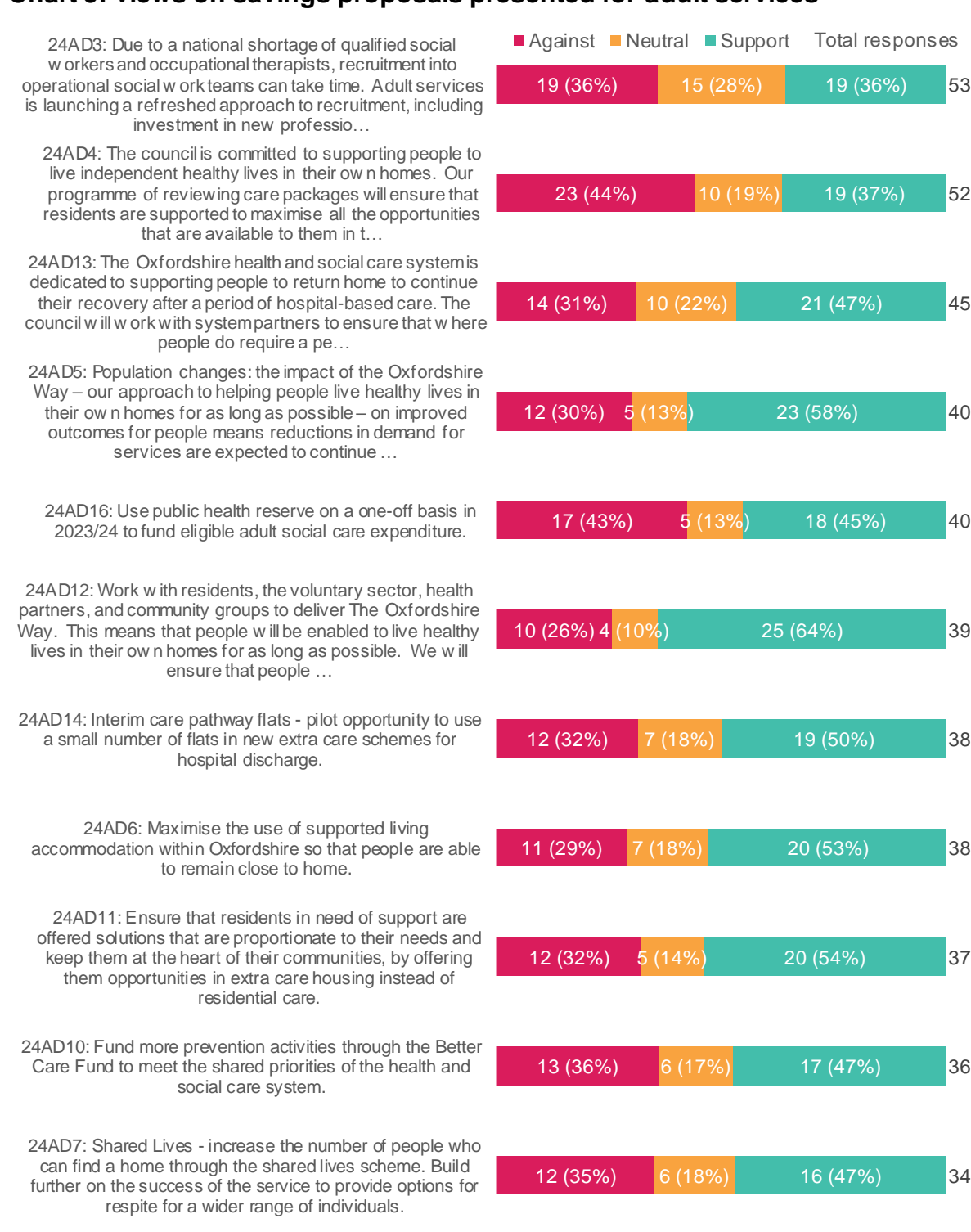
Table 6: Number of people commenting on other budget proposals by directorate

Directorate	Number of people commenting
Adult services	120
Children’s services	105
Environment and place	146
Public health and community safety	42
Customers, culture and corporate services	90
Other corporate services	42
Base: All commenting on one of more other directorate budget proposals (257)	

Views on savings proposals presented for adult services

76. Eleven proposals were presented for detailed views for the adult social care directorate and the sentiment towards each is shown in chart 3. The number of people engaging with different proposals was low ranging from 34 to 53 with people most engaging with saving proposal 24AD3 (53 people engaged) and savings proposal 24AD4 (52 people engaged).

Chart 3: views on savings proposals presented for adult services



77. For all the adult social care directorate savings proposals presented, the majority of people were supportive or neutral towards each of the proposals presented as opposed to against.
78. The following proposals were supported outright by the small number of people who engaged ranging from 64 per cent to 53 per cent agreement:
- **24AD12: saving £1.75 million.** Work with residents, the voluntary sector, health partners and community groups to deliver The Oxfordshire Way. This means that people will be enabled to live healthy lives in their own homes for as long as possible. We will ensure that people do not enter into residential care when there is a better outcome that they could achieve by accessing equipment, technology or Extra Care Housing. 25 people support (64 per cent) / 4 people neutral (10 per cent) and 10 people against (26 per cent)
 - **24AD5: saving £1.81 million.** Population changes: the impact of the Oxfordshire Way – our approach to helping people live healthy lives in their own homes for as long as possible – on improved outcomes for people means reductions in demand for services are expected to continue in 2023/24 and beyond. 23 people support (58 per cent) / 5 people neutral (13 per cent) and 12 people against (30 per cent)
 - **24AD11: saving £460,000.** Ensure that residents in need of support are offered solutions that are proportionate to their needs and keep them at the heart of their communities, by offering them opportunities in extra care housing instead of residential care. 20 people support (54 per cent) / 5 people neutral (14 per cent) and 12 people against (32 per cent)
 - **24AD6: saving £65,000 from 2024/25.** Maximise the use of supported living accommodation within Oxfordshire so that people are able to remain close to home. 20 people support (53 per cent) / 7 people neutral (18 per cent) and 11 people against (29 per cent).
79. Only one proposal had proportionally more responses against the proposal (23) than actively support (19) and this was **24AD4 (the council is committed to supporting people to live independent healthy lives in their own homes. Our programme of reviewing care packages will ensure that residents are supported to maximise all the opportunities that are available to them in the community to achieve better outcomes).**
80. Of those people who expressed a wide range of points including questioning the achievability of the saving and being generally concerned about service reductions and the impact on people. Some people felt this proposal was too vague and not properly explained.
81. Another proposal had an equal number of responses supporting (19) as against the proposal (19). This was 24AD3 (Due to a national shortage of qualified social workers and occupational therapists, recruitment into operational social work teams can take time. Adult services is launching a refreshed approach to recruitment, including investment in new professional leadership and development roles specifically the principal social worker and principal occupational therapist. As this approach is

embedded there is expected to be a one-off saving in 2023/24 while vacancies are filled).

82. Sixteen people provided supporting comments, to explain why they were against this saving. Only one common theme emerged, shared by five people. This was that they wanted the new recruitment process to be geared towards frontline staff (not senior staff). Again, some people felt this proposal was too vague and not properly explained.

83. The number of comments people made to support their views on each savings proposal is shown in table 7. The detailed comments will be available on deposit for all councillors to read.

Table 7: summary of engagement with adult social care savings proposals presented

Saving	Response	Comment
24AD3: Due to a national shortage of qualified social workers and occupational therapists, recruitment into operational social work teams can take time. Adult services is launching a refreshed approach to recruitment, including investment in new professional leadership and development roles specifically the principal social worker and principal occupational therapist. As this approach is embedded there is expected to be a one-off saving in 2023/24 while vacancies are filled.	53	42
24AD4: The council is committed to supporting people to live independent healthy lives in their own homes. Our programme of reviewing care packages will ensure that residents are supported to maximise all the opportunities that are available to them in the community to achieve better outcomes.	52	42
24AD5: Population changes: the impact of the Oxfordshire Way – our approach to helping people live healthy lives in their own homes for as long as possible – on improved outcomes for people means reductions in demand for services are expected to continue in 2023/24 and beyond.	40	21
24AD6: Maximise the use of supported living accommodation within Oxfordshire so that people are able to remain close to home.	38	21
24AD7: Shared Lives - increase the number of people who can find a home through the shared lives scheme. Build further on the success of the service to provide options for respite for a wider range of individuals.	34	16
24AD10: Fund more prevention activities through the Better Care Fund to meet the shared priorities of the health and social care system.	36	19
24AD11: Ensure that residents in need of support are offered solutions that are proportionate to their needs and keep them at the heart of their communities, by offering them opportunities in extra care housing instead of residential care.	37	16
24AD12: Work with residents, the voluntary sector, health partners, and community groups to deliver The Oxfordshire Way. This means that people will be enabled to live healthy lives in their own homes for as long as possible. We will ensure that people do not enter into residential care when there is a better outcome that they could achieve by accessing equipment, technology, or Extra Care Housing.	39	22
24AD13: The Oxfordshire health and social care system is dedicated to supporting people to return home to continue their recovery after a period of hospital-based care. The council will work with system partners to ensure that where people do require a period of bed-based recovery in a nursing home or community hospital, they are supported to return home as quickly as possible. This is by accessing the full range of statutory and voluntary services that can support people to remain independent and healthy in their own homes.	45	28
24AD14: Interim care pathway flats - pilot opportunity to use a small number of flats in new extra care schemes for hospital discharge.	38	18
24AD16: Use public health reserve on a one-off basis in 2023/24 to fund eligible adult social care expenditure.	40	26
Other comments		120
Total respondents for directorate	93	169

Views on other adult social care budget proposals

84. All respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any other budget proposals for adult social care and 120 people chose to do so. Most could not be grouped into themes but where possible:

- 12 people said the council should maintain or increase adult services spend and/or services.
- 10 people suggested the council consider staffing costs and structure to improve value.

- Five people said the council should increase council tax to fund adult social care.
- Six people noted the importance of the voluntary and community sector in supporting council services.
- Five people were surprised to learn that adult social care makes up such a large proportion of the council's budget.

85. Although not relevant to the question, 17 people used the space to express disagreement with the council's traffic management measures.

Views on children's services savings proposals

86. Nineteen proposals were presented for detailed views for the children's services directorate and the sentiment towards each is shown in chart 4. The number of people commenting on different proposals was low ranging from 26 to 51, with people most engaging with savings proposals 24CS5 (51 people engaged) followed by 24CS13 (44 people engaged).

Chart 4: views savings proposals presented for children's services



87. For children's services directorate savings proposals presented:

- Five savings proposals were supported outright by the small number of people who engaged ranging from 61 per cent to 52 per cent support
- Nine had more people supportive or neutral towards them rather than against
- Ten savings proposals had a majority of respondents against them, from the small number of people who engaged ranging from 52 per cent to 77 per cent against

88. The following proposals were supported outright:

- **24CS19: saving £120,000.** Efficiencies in how the council manages the process of collecting data and administrating the Supporting Families Grant process with central government. 17 people support (61 per cent) / two people neutral (seven per cent) and nine people against (32 per cent).
- **24CS28: saving £500,000.** Release youth funding pump-priming reserve. This reserve was established to implement youth service initiatives. Funding can now be met from within the youth service revenue budget (one-off in 2023/24). 16 people support (57 per cent) / four people neutral (14 per cent) and eight people against (29 per cent).
- **24CS7: saving £60,000.** Use one-off funding held in reserves to support expenditure for education in 2023/24. 14 people support (54 per cent) / three people neutral (12 per cent) and nine people against (35 per cent).
- **24CS8: saving £95,000. Review costs and/or increase charges for traded services to ensure full cost recovery.** 14 people support (56 per cent) / two people neutral (eight per cent) and nine people against (36 per cent).
- **24CS27: saving £200,000.** Release funding held in the early intervention reserve (one-off in 2023/24). 13 people support (52 per cent) / four people neutral (16 per cent) and eight people against (32 per cent).

89. The ten savings proposals which had a majority of respondents against them ranging from 52 per cent to 77 per cent against were:

- **24CS13: saving £240,000.** Children we care for services: reduction in staffing and support costs. 34 people against (77 per cent) / 10 people neutral or support (23 per cent).
- **24CS16: saving £85,000.** Youth justice and exploitation agency – staffing reduction. 29 people against (74 per cent) / 10 people neutral or support (26 per cent).
- **24CS5: saving £2 million.** Strengthen the application of thresholds and develop new working practices to safely reduce the number of children the council cares for so activity is more consistent with similar authorities. 28 people against (55 per cent) / 23 people neutral or support (45 per cent).

- **24CS15: saving £80,000.** Staffing efficiencies in leaving care service within children's social care. 25 people against (64 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (36 per cent).
- **24CS21: saving £135,000.** Children with disability team – agency staff reduction. 25 people against (69 per cent) / 11 people neutral or support (30 per cent).
- **24CS11: saving £67,000.** Efficiencies in early help services within children's social care. 22 people against (61 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (39 per cent).
- **24CS23: saving £66,000.** Reduction in funding for project work in children's services. 20 people against (63 per cent) / 12 people neutral or support (37 per cent).
- **24CS22: saving £73,000.** Safeguarding/quality assurance team – agency staff reduction. 18 people against (53 per cent) / 16 people neutral or support (47 per cent).
- **24CS10: saving £113,000.** Efficiencies in education services. 20 people against (56 per cent) / 16 people neutral or support (44 per cent).
- **24CS18: saving £50,000.** Reduction in recruitment and training spend within corporate parenting/countywide services. 15 people against (48 per cent) / 14 people neutral or support (52 per cent).

90. There were commonalities across in the comments expressed across all the savings proposals for children's services. People who explained why they had said they were against individual savings, simply thought that these were not a good idea, a false economy. Some people felt these proposals were too vague and lacked evidence to enable meaningful comment others felt the children's services was already underfunded and needs more investment.

91. The number of comments people made to support their views on each savings proposal is shown in table 8. The detailed comments will be available on deposit for all councillors to read.

Table 8: summary of engagement with adult social care savings proposals presented

Saving	Response	Comment
24CS5: Strengthen the application of thresholds and develop new working practices to safely reduce the number of children the council cares for so activity is more consistent with similar authorities.	51	43
24CS7: Use one-off funding held in reserves to support expenditure for education in 2023/24.	26	13
24CS8: Review costs and/or increase charges for traded services to ensure full cost recovery.	25	12
24CS10: Efficiencies in education services.	36	27
24CS11: Efficiencies in early help services within children's social care.	36	26
24CS12: Reduce expenditure on legal costs in children's social care.	31	19
24CS13: Children we care for services: reduction in staffing and support costs.	44	33
24CS15: Staffing efficiencies in leaving care service within children's social care.	39	28
24CS16: Youth justice and exploitation agency - staffing reduction.	39	28

24CS17: Thames Valley regional adoption service – one-off reduction of our contribution based on placing more children with our own adopters (one-off) and review the recovery of the council's overheads as hosts of the regional adoption agency.	27	15
24CS18: Reduction in recruitment and training spend within corporate parenting/countywide services.	29	15
24CS19: Efficiencies in how the council manages the process of collecting data and administering the Supporting Families Grant process with central government.	28	15
24CS21: Children with disability team – agency staff reduction.	36	26
24CS22: Safeguarding/quality assurance team – agency staff reduction.	34	21
24CS23: Reduction in funding for project work in children's services.	32	18
24CS25: Administration efficiencies in education and social care.	30	18
24CS27: Release funding held in the early intervention reserve (one-off in 2023/24).	25	9
24CS28: Release youth funding pump-priming reserve. This reserve was established to implement youth service initiatives. Funding can now be met from within the youth service revenue budget (one-off in 2023/24).	28	13
24CS29: Service reviews of non-statutory / non-case holding areas.	26	12
Other comments		105
Total respondents for directorate	101	162

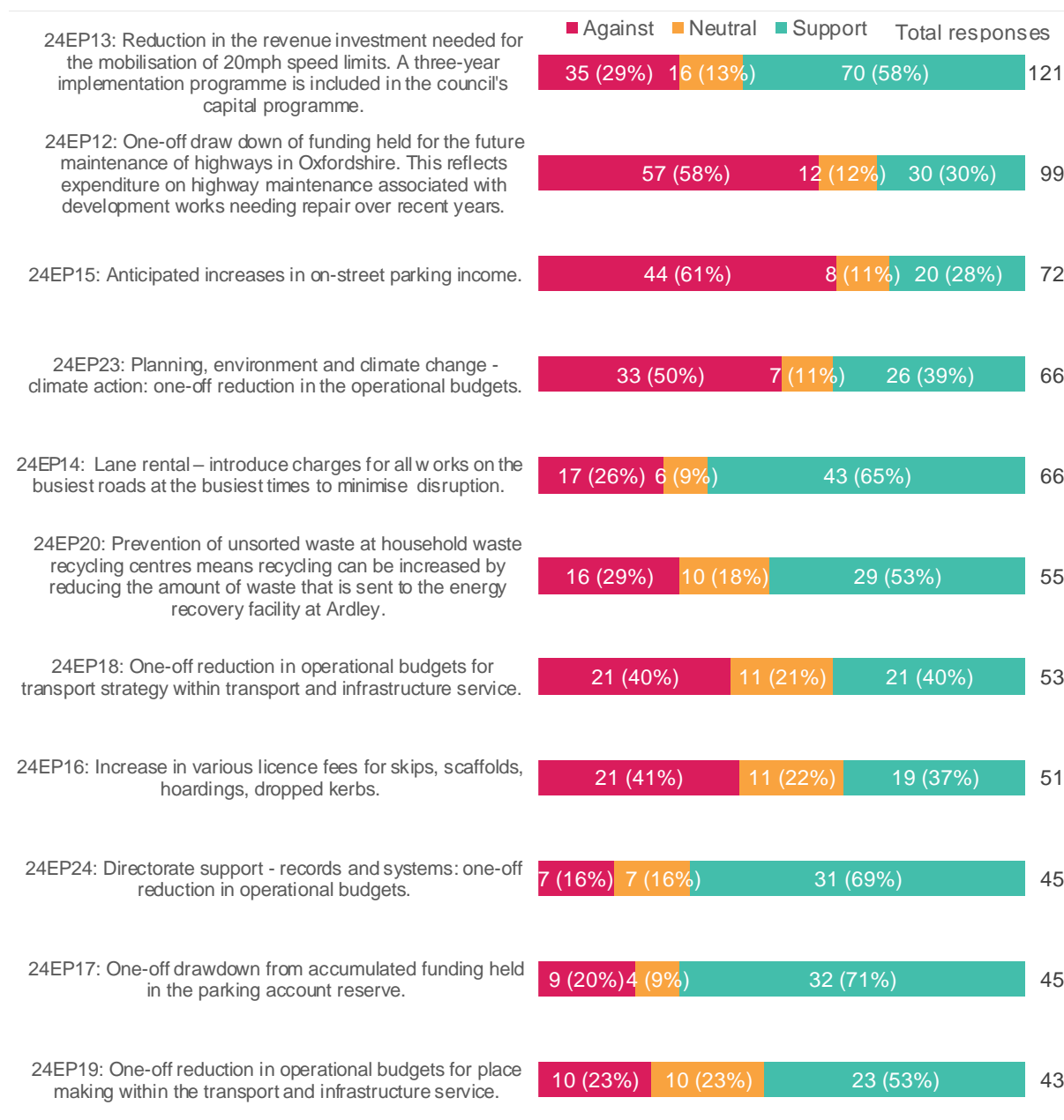
Other views on children's services budget proposals

92. All respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any other budget proposals for children's social care and 105 people chose to do so. Overall, there were 43 comments calling for children's services to be properly funded and resourced such as, "We cannot take chances with our children's wellbeing."
93. Most other comments could not be grouped into themes and when they could they were for less than five people.
94. Although not relevant to the question, 15 people used the space to express disagreement with the council's traffic management measures.

Views on environment and place savings proposals presented

95. Eleven proposals were presented for detailed views for the environment and place directorate and the sentiment towards each is shown in chart 5. The number of people commenting on different proposals was low ranging from 43 to 121, with people most engaging with savings proposals 24 EP13 (121 people engaged) followed by 24EP12 (99 people engaged).
96. For environment and place directorate savings proposals presented:
- Six savings proposals were supported outright by the small number of people who engaged ranging from 69 per cent to 53 per cent support.
 - Eight had more people supportive or neutral towards them rather than against.
 - Opinions on two savings proposals was finely balanced with the same or nearly the proportions of engaged respondents for and against.
 - Two savings proposals had a majority of respondents against them, from the small number of people who engaged ranging from 52 per cent to 77 per cent against.

Chart 5: views on savings proposals presented for environment and place



97. More people engaged with savings proposals 24 EP13 (121 people) and 24EP12 (99 people engaged) than any other savings proposals in the consultation.
98. **For 24EP13: saving £200,000. Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme:** A majority supported this savings proposal, but a review of the comments indicate 84 of the 101 people who gave comments were negative towards the implementation of the 20mph scheme in the county generally. They wanted the scheme to be discontinued saying that it creates more pollution and traffic and that it was not possible to police/enforce. It was felt that more efficiencies could be made by the removal of the implementation of the scheme as a whole.
99. The remaining comments were neutral or supportive in tone. They were supportive of the idea of 20mph areas. However, this was caveated that it should be implemented in areas of most need such as around schools or high pedestrian areas. In addition, some mentioned that that the scheme should be paused while we are in a national time of financial crisis and that money needs to be spent on other areas for now.
100. **For 24EP13: saving £200,000. Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme:** A majority supported this savings proposal, but a review of the comments indicate 84 of the 101 people who gave comments were negative towards the implementation of the 20mph scheme. They wanted the scheme to be discontinued saying that it creates more pollution and traffic and that it was not possible to police/enforce. Generally, it was felt that more could be made by the removal of the implementation of the scheme as a whole.
101. The remaining comments were neutral or supportive in tone. They were supportive of the idea of 20mph areas. However, this was caveated that it should be implemented in areas of most need such as around schools or high pedestrian areas. In addition, some mentioned that that the scheme should be paused while we are in a national time of financial crisis and that money needs to be spent on other areas for now.
102. **For 24EP12: saving £2.25 million. One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years** – a majority were against this savings proposal - a majority were against this savings proposal, but a review of the comments indicate that it is because people want investment in the highways. 41 of the 99 people who gave comments were critical of the state of Oxfordshire's road network and 13 people wanted funding to be increased.
103. The following proposals were supported outright:
- **24EP17: saving £250,00. One-off draw down from accumulated funding held in the parking account reserve.** 32 people support (71 per cent) / 4 people neutral (9 per cent) and 9 people against (20 per cent).

- **24EP24: saving £40,000. Directorate support - records and systems: one-off reduction in operational budgets.** 31 people support (69 per cent) / 7 people neutral (16 per cent) and 7 people against (16 per cent).
- **24EP14: saving £2.15 million from 2024/25. Lane rental – introduce charges for all works on the busiest roads at the busiest times to minimise disruption.** 43 people support (65 per cent) / 6 people neutral (9 per cent) and 17 people against (26 per cent).
- **24EP13: saving £200,000. Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme.** 70 people support (58 per cent) / 16 people neutral (13 per cent) and 35 people against (29 per cent).
- **24EP19: saving £40,000. One-off reduction in operational budgets for place making within the transport and infrastructure service.** 23 people support (53 per cent) / 10 people neutral (23 per cent) and 10 people against (23 per cent).
- **24EP20: saving £200,000 from 2024/25. Prevention of unsorted waste at household waste recycling centres means recycling can be increased by reducing the amount of waste that is sent to the energy recovery facility at Ardley.** 29 people support (53 per cent) / 10 people neutral (18 per cent) and 16 people against (29 per cent).

104. The two savings proposals which had a majority of respondents against them ranging from 61 per cent to 58 per cent against were:

- **24EP15: saving £150,000. Anticipated increases in on-street parking income.** 44 people against (61 per cent) / 28 people neutral or support (39 per cent)
- **24EP12: saving £2.25 million. One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years.** 57 people against (58 per cent) / 42 people neutral or support (42 per cent)

105. Feedback on savings proposals 24SP12 have already been summarised. For those against the anticipated increase in on-street parking income, 39 people made comments. Of these, 10 people felt that parking charges were already too high, 13 people expressed concerns about the negative impact on shopping/leisure destinations in Oxford with some people saying it is making the city inhospitable. Seven people were against parking charges per se, with some criticising the council for being anti-car.

106. One response was from a stakeholder group representing Jericho business owners, replicating a letter already sent to the Chief Executive. It sets how the change in parking zones has already impacted traders, how many have received complaints from customers, the impact of bus route changes in the area. The letter

asks the county council to look at the parking charges for the area again, with a view of making the charges 'fairer' and in line with other shopping districts in Oxford for the 2023 budget.

107. The number of comments people made to support their views on each savings proposal is shown in table 9. The detailed comments will be available on deposit for all councillors to read.

Table 9: summary of engagement with the environment and place savings proposals presented

Saving	Response	Comment
24EP12: One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years.	99	80
24EP13: Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme.	121	105
24EP14: Lane rental – introduce charges for all works on the busiest roads at the busiest times to minimise disruption.	66	43
24EP15: Anticipated increases in on-street parking income.	72	53
24EP16: Increase in various licence fees for skips, scaffolds, hoardings, dropped kerbs.	51	24
24EP17: One-off draw down from accumulated funding held in the parking account reserve.	45	17
24EP18: One-off reduction in operational budgets for transport strategy within transport and infrastructure service.	53	33
24EP19: One-off reduction in operational budgets for place making within the transport and infrastructure service.	43	23
24EP20: Prevention of unsorted waste at household waste recycling centres means recycling can be increased by reducing the amount of waste that is sent to the energy recovery facility at Ardley.	55	29
24EP23: Planning, environment and climate change - climate action: one-off reduction in the operational budgets.	66	35
24EP24: Directorate support - records and systems: one-off reduction in operational budgets.	45	15
Other comments (Environment and Place Services)		146
Total respondents for directorate	215	290

Other views on environment and place budget proposals

108. All respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any other budget proposals for environment and 146 people chose to do so. Key themes were:

- 12 people asked us to continue to prioritise projects that would benefit the environment, walkers and cyclists.
- 13 people said areas such as social care or existing road maintenance should be prioritised over transformative projects in the environment and place directorate.
- Some people put forward suggestions for additional revenue such as increase parking permits, fines and enforcement (6 people).
- Others thought savings could be achieved through reducing expensive infrastructure projects, pause climate and net zero work while budgets are tight (8 people)

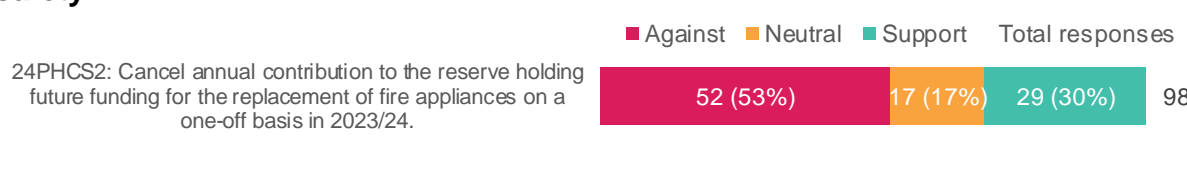
109. Although not relevant to the question, 54 people felt there was too much focus on low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) projects, bus filters and/or 20 mph zones with some suggesting the projects should stop. A significant number of negative comments were

focused on LTN's and 20 mph zones, with one comment suggesting that the money spent on these projects should be diverted to adults and children's social care.

Views on public health and community safety proposals presented

110. Only one proposal was presented for detailed views for the public health and community safety. Ninety-eight respondents engaged with it, with slightly more against the proposal 52 people (53 per cent) than either neutral or supportive (46 people or 47 per cent)

Chart 6: views on the saving proposal presented for public health and community safety



111. The number of comments people made to support their views on each savings proposal is shown in table 10. The detailed comments will be available on deposit for all councillors to read.

Table 10: summary of engagement with the public health and community safety proposal presented

Saving	Response	Comment
24PHCS2: Cancel annual contribution to the reserve holding future funding for the replacement of fire appliances on a one-off basis in 2023/24.	98	70
Other comments		42
Total for directorate	98	99

112. Forty-one people against the proposal shared their reasons. Of these, eleven people felt this it would be dangerous or irresponsible to reduce spending on fire appliances, nine people thought this was a short-sighted proposal, not without risk or counterproductive and five people were overtly against any funding reductions related to public safety.

Other views on public health and community safety budget proposals

113. All respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any other budget proposals for public health and community safety and 42 people chose to do so. As before, wide range of themes were covered however, a sizeable number did not directly relate to the question asked

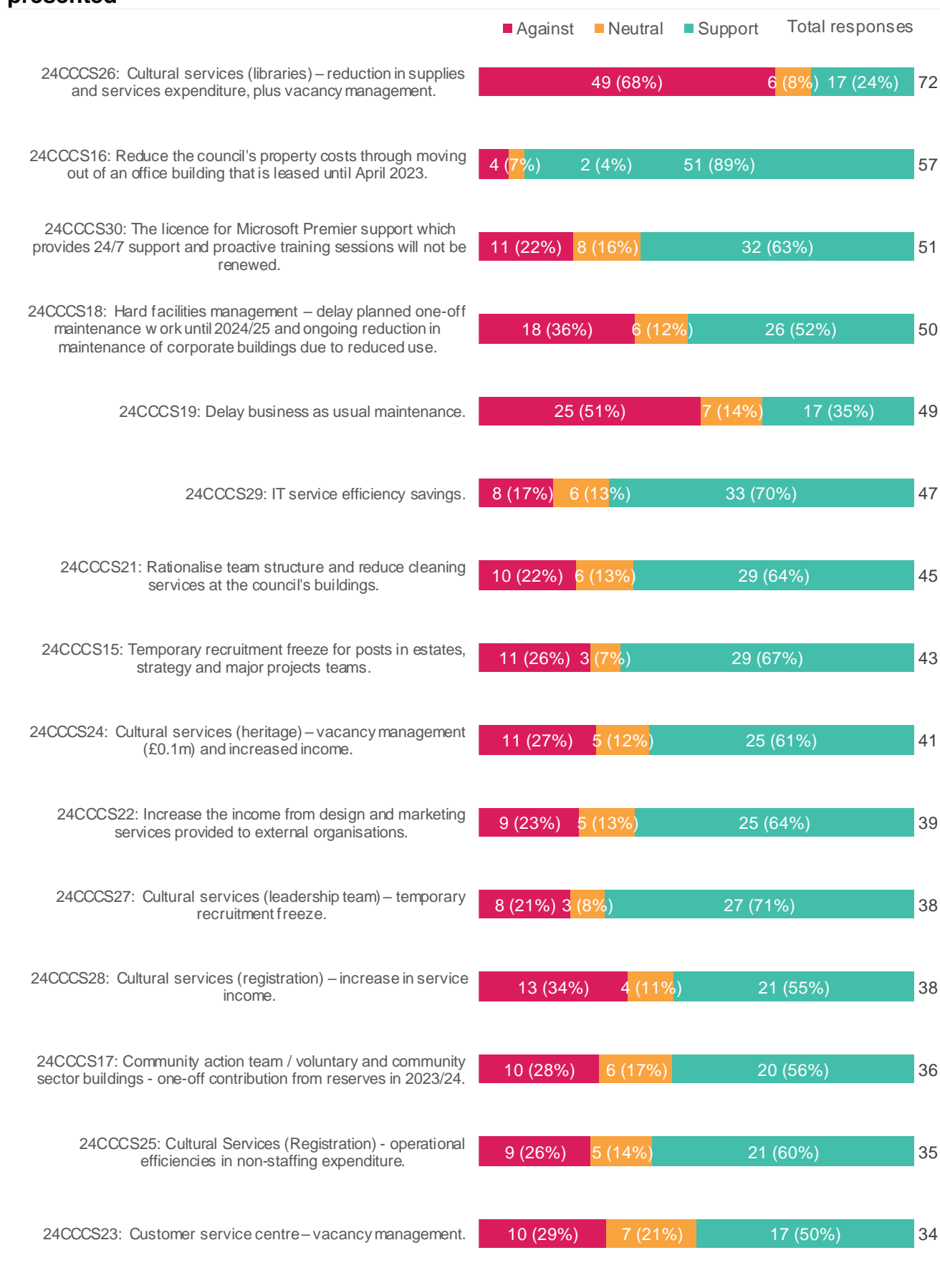
114. Better pay for emergency and care staff, more support for the fire and rescue services and to consider linking with neighbouring services were mentioned by very small numbers of respondents.

115. Although not relevant to the question, eight people used the space to express disagreement with the council's traffic management measures.

Views on customers, culture and corporate services savings proposals presented

116. Fifteen savings proposals were presented for detailed views for the customers, culture and corporate services and the sentiment towards each is shown in chart 7. The number of people commenting on different proposals was low ranging from 72 to 34, with people most engaging, by far, with savings proposal 24 CCSC26 (72 people engaged).

Chart 7: Views on customers, culture and corporate services savings proposals presented



117. For customers, culture and corporate services savings proposals presented:
- Twelve savings proposals were supported outright by the small number of people who engaged ranging from 89 per cent to 52 per cent support.
 - Fourteen savings proposals had more people supportive or neutral towards them rather than against.
 - Two savings proposals had a majority of respondents against them ranging from 51 per cent to 68 per cent.
118. The following proposals were supported outright:
- **24CCCS16: saving £611,000. Reduce the council's property costs through moving out of an office building that is leased until April 2023.** 51 people support (89 per cent) / two people neutral (four per cent) and four people against (seven per cent).
 - **24CCCS15: saving £79,000. Temporary recruitment freeze for posts in estates, strategy and major projects teams.** 29 people support (67 per cent) / three people neutral (seven per cent) and 11 people against (26 per cent).
 - **24CCCS17: saving £116,000. Community action team / voluntary and community sector buildings rent concession – fund from budget priority reserve on a one-off basis in 2023/24.** 20 people support (56 per cent) / 6 people neutral (17 per cent) and 10 people against (28 per cent)
 - **24CCCS18: saving £410,000. Hard facilities management – delay planned one-off maintenance work until 2024/25 and ongoing reduction in maintenance of corporate buildings due to reduced use.** 26 people support (52 per cent) / six people neutral (12 per cent) and 18 people against (36 per cent).
 - **24CCCS21: saving £256,000. Rationalise team structure and reduce cleaning services at the council's buildings.** 29 people support (64 per cent) / six people neutral (13 per cent) and 10 people against (22 per cent).
 - **24CCCS22: saving £20,000. Increase the income from design and marketing services provided to external organisations.** 25 people support (64 per cent) / 5 people neutral (13 per cent) and 9 people against (23 per cent)
 - **24CCCS24: saving £118,000. Cultural services (heritage) – vacancy management (£0.1m) and increased income.** 25 people support (61 per cent) / 5 people neutral (12 per cent) and 11 people against (27 per cent)
 - **24CCCS25: saving. £43,000. Cultural services (registration) – operational efficiencies in non-staffing expenditure.** 21 people support (60 per cent) / 5 people neutral (14 per cent) and 9 people against (26 per cent)
 - **24CCCS27: saving £80,000. Cultural services (leadership team) – temporary recruitment freeze.** 27 people support (71 per cent) / 3 people neutral (8 per cent) and 8 people against (21 per cent)

- **24CCCS28: saving £10,000. Cultural services (registration) – increase in service income.** 21 people support (55 per cent) / 4 people neutral (11 per cent) and 13 people against (34 per cent)
- **24CCCS29: saving £239,000. IT service efficiency savings.** 33 people support (70 per cent) / 6 people neutral (13 per cent) and 8 people against (17 per cent)
- **24CCCS30: saving £110,000. The licence for Microsoft Premier support, which provides 24/7 support and proactive training sessions, will not be renewed.** 32 people support (63 per cent) / 8 people neutral (16 per cent) and 11 people against (22per cent).

119. Two savings proposals had proportionally more responses against the proposal than actively support:

- **24CCCS26: saving £306,000.** Cultural services (libraries) – reduction in supplies and services expenditure, plus vacancy management. 49 people against (68 per cent) / 23 people neutral or support (32 per cent).
- **24CCCS19: saving £200,000.** Delay business as usual maintenance. 25 people against (51 per cent) / 24 people neutral or support (49 per cent).

120. Of the people provided supporting comments as to why they were against this saving proposal **24CCCS26** (38 people), nearly were making comments regarding the importance of the library service to them or to their community and were against funding being reduced for this service.

121. With regards to savings proposal **24CCCS19**, of the people provided supporting comments as to why they were against this saving proposal (14 people), nearly all thought this was a short-sighted savings that is likely to result in more expenditure in the long-term.

122. The number of comments people made to support their views on each savings proposal is shown in table 11. The detailed comments will be available on deposit for all councillors to read.

Table 11: summary of engagement with the customers, culture and corporate services savings proposals presented

Saving	Response	Comment
24CCCS15: Temporary recruitment freeze for posts in estates, strategy and major projects teams.	43	21
24CCCS16: Reduce the council's property costs through moving out of an office building that is leased until April 2023.	57	34
24CCCS17: Community action team / voluntary and community sector buildings - one-off contribution from reserves in 2023/24.	36	10
24CCCS18: Hard facilities management – delay planned one-off maintenance work until 2024/25 and ongoing reduction in maintenance of corporate buildings due to reduced use.	50	23
24CCCS19: Delay business as usual maintenance.	49	19
24CCCS21: Rationalise team structure and reduce cleaning services at the council's buildings.	45	17
24CCCS22: Increase the income from design and marketing services provided to external organisations.	39	16
24CCCS23: Customer service centre – vacancy management.	34	11
24CCCS24: Cultural services (heritage) – vacancy management (£0.1m) and increased income.	41	13
24CCCS25: Cultural Services (Registration) - operational efficiencies in non-staffing expenditure.	35	11
24CCCS26: Cultural services (libraries) – reduction in supplies and services expenditure, plus vacancy management.	72	47

24CCCS27: Cultural services (leadership team) – temporary recruitment freeze.	38	12
24CCCS28: Cultural services (registration) – increase in service income.	38	12
24CCCS29: IT service efficiency savings.	47	15
24CCCS30: The licence for Microsoft Premier support which provides 24/7 support and proactive training sessions will not be renewed.	51	22
Other comments		90
Total for directorate	125	173

Other views on customers, culture and corporate services budget proposals

123. All respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any other budget proposals for environment and 90 people chose to do so. A wide range of comments were made, the key themes emerging were:

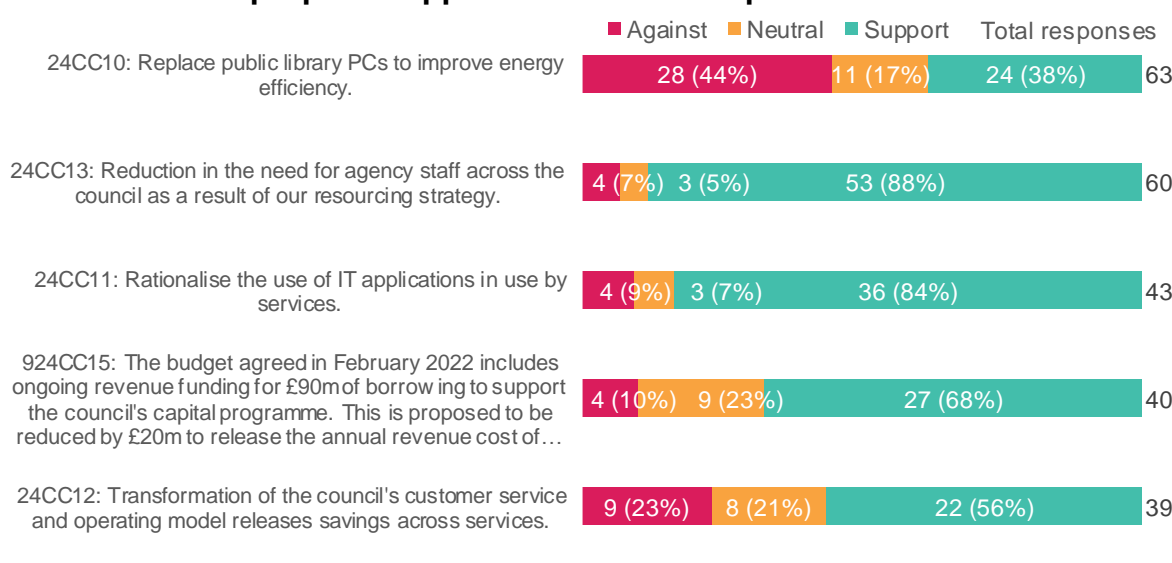
- Fourteen people suggested the council consider reducing staffing costs with one suggesting more staff are needed.
- Ten people expressed concern about cuts to libraries and cultural services.
- Nine people suggested the council should make better use of its buildings to save money.

124. Although not relevant to the question, five people used the space to express disagreement with the council's traffic management measures.

Views on other corporate services savings proposals presented

125. Five other savings proposals were presented for detailed views for corporate services and the sentiment towards each is shown in chart 8. The number of people commenting on different proposals was low ranging from 63 to 39, with people most engaging with savings proposals 24CC10 (63 people engaged) and 24CC13 (60 people engaged).

Chart 8: views on proposed approaches in the Corporate Services directorate



126. All of the savings' proposals presented in this section of the survey had more people supportive or neutral towards them as opposed to against, although very few people engaged. All, with the exception of **24CC10: saving £84,000 - replace**

public library PCs to improve energy efficiency, all savings proposals had majority support.

127. With regards to savings proposal 24CC10, reviewing the 24 comments for those against this saving, people were sceptical about the savings figure quoted whilst others wanted the machines to be used until the end of their life.
128. The number of comments people made to support their views on each savings proposal is shown in table 12. The detailed comments will be available on deposit for all councillors to read.

Table 12: summary of engagement with other corporate services savings proposals presented

Saving	Response	Comment
24CC10: Replace public library PCs to improve energy efficiency.	63	40
24CC11: Rationalise the use of IT applications in use by services.	43	9
24CC12: Transformation of the council's customer service and operating model releases savings across services.	39	13
24CC13: Reduction in the need for agency staff across the council as a result of our resourcing strategy.	60	39
924CC15: The budget agreed in February 2022 includes ongoing revenue funding for £90m of borrowing to support the council's capital programme. This is proposed to be reduced by £20m to release the annual revenue cost of financing that element of the borrowing. Depending on the funding available by then, this is expected to be reinstated in 2026/27.	40	14
Other comments (Corporate Services)		42
Total for directorate	96	109

Other views on other corporate services budget proposals

129. All respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any other budget proposals for environment and 42 people chose to do so, including 11 people who gave overall support to the savings offered in this area '*all these proposals look sensible*'. Only one other theme received five or more mentions, and this was invest in staff / people / buildings (6 mentions).

General comments on the budget

130. Section three of the survey invited other comments on the county council's budget and 155 people engaged with this opportunity. Several of the comments could not be put into themes and were mentioned by five or fewer people.
131. Of the themes emerging, 21 people said the council shouldn't raise council tax in the current economic circumstance, while conversely 12 people said they supported an increase in council tax. Seven people made direct comments about inadequate central government funding for local government.
132. Fourteen people explicitly said front line services should be protected. Twenty-two comments were ideas for suggested efficiencies including nine people who said the council should reduce staff costs and five people said the council should reduce councillor expenses. Four people said they don't think the council listens.

133. Again, a proportion of respondents (48 people) took the opportunity to express their views on traffic management matters. Nineteen people made negative comments about low traffic neighbourhoods, there were nine negative comments about traffic filters and five negative comments about speed limits.

Other ideas for savings

134. Section four of the survey invited ideas for how the council can make savings. Participants were reminded of the council's financial situation as a prompt and overall, 207 people responded.
135. Fifty-nine people proposed ideas for efficiencies. These included: privatising more services, reducing spend on external consultancies, making better use of council properties, sharing more services with district councils, and digitising services and interactions where appropriate. Twenty-four people said the council should reduce staffing costs.
136. Fourteen people suggested measures for income generation. Ideas included: charging more for some services including weddings, better enforcement of parking and traffic violations, charging for parking permits in more areas, and renting out unused council-owned office and meeting space.
137. Twenty-one people commented on council tax, with ten of those people supporting an increase for some bands or an increase in council tax across all bands.
138. Over a third of respondents (78 people) used this section of the survey as opportunity to express comments on traffic management issues. This included 27 people who made negative comments about low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), 16 people who made negative comments about traffic filters and 13 people made who made negative comments about 20 mph speed limits.
139. This section of the survey was also used by people to make critical comments about the council on other matters including the council's climate action approach and how well it listens to people and communities more generally. Six people made negative comments about the council and more generally about matters related to inclusivity and diversity.

Budget proposals respondent profile

140. Ninety-five per cent of survey respondents (506) identified themselves as Oxfordshire residents and two respondents said they were members of the public living elsewhere. The remainder five per cent (25) identified as stakeholders: district, city or county councillors, parish or town councillors or representatives, business representatives, council employees, groups/organisations or as another type of stakeholder.
141. Collectively these respondents are referred to as stakeholders in the report (as opposed to residents). A breakdown of who responded to the survey is shown in table 6 below and a detailed respondent profile is set-out later in this section of the report.

Table 13: How people responded

	Number
As an Oxfordshire resident	506
As a member of the public living elsewhere	2
As a parish meeting representative, parish councillor or town councillor	3
As a county council employee	11
As a county councillor	2
As a district or city councillor	1
As a representative of a business	1
As a representative of a group or organisation	5
Other	2

Awareness of consultation

142. Respondents were most likely to have found about this consultation through a direct email from the council (231 mentions) or on Facebook (129 mentions).

Table 14: source of awareness of the consultation

	Number
Facebook	130
Twitter	27
Instagram	1
LinkedIn	4
NextDoor	62
Oxfordshire.gov.uk website	42
Email from Oxfordshire County Council	233
Local news item (newspaper, online, radio, tv)	5
Oxfordshire county councillor / District councillor	10
Parish or town councillor	12
Local community news item	7
Poster / information in local library / local community group / organisation	2
Friend/relative	15
Other (please specify)	7
Base: All respondents selecting all that apply (533)	

Geography

143. The consultation received at least one response from each postcode district in Oxfordshire except OX27 (north of Bicester). Proportionally however, those living in postcode districts OX1 – OX4 (Oxford and surrounding areas) were the most likely to participate (233 people – 44%).

Map 1: respondent profile by postcode district

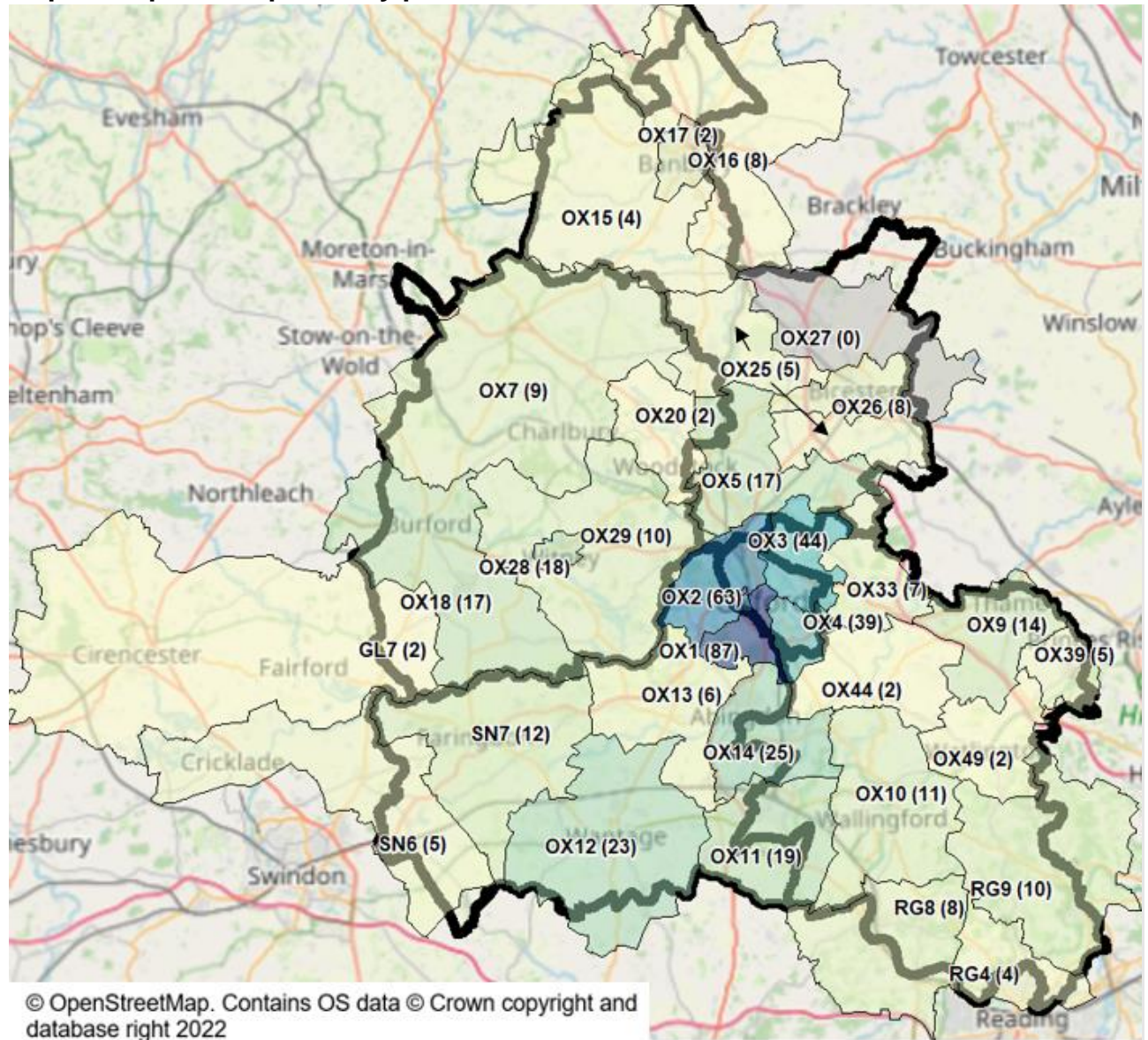


Table 15: respondent profile by postcode district

Main settlement	Postcode districts	Number
Oxford	OX1	233
	OX2	
	OX3	
	OX4	
Abingdon	OX14	25
Wantage	OX12	23
Didcot	OX11	19
Witney	OX28	18
Kidlington	OX5	17
Thame	OX9	14
Faringdon	SN7	12
Wallingford	OX10	11
Bicester	OX26	8
Banbury	OX16	8

Other Oxfordshire	Number
GL7	2
OX7	9
OX13	6
OX15	4
OX17	2
OX18	17
OX20	2
OX25	5
OX29	10
OX33	7
OX39	5
OX44	2
OX49	2
RG4	4
RG8	8
RG9	10
SN6	5

Blank/non-Oxfordshire
45

Age

144. All age groups (under 16 years - 75 years and over) were represented in the respondent profile, however a large majority of survey respondents (92 per cent or 433 people) were aged over 35 years and only eight per cent (40 people) were aged under thirty-five. We had one young person aged under 16 years respond.

Table 16: respondent profile by age

	Number
Under 16	1
16 - 24	7
25 - 34	32
35 - 44	79
45 - 54	91
55 - 64	107
65 - 74	100
75 or over	56
Prefer not to say	45
Blank	15
Base: All respondents (533)	

Sex

145. Slightly more men (238) than women (205) completed the survey.

Table 17: respondent profile by sex

	Number
Female	205
Male	238
Prefer not to say	68
I use another term	2
Blank	20
Base: All respondents (533)	

Gender reassignment

146. Most survey respondents said their sex was the same as registered as birth. Four people said it was not.

Table 18: respondent profile by sex registered at birth

	Number
Yes, same as birth	437
No, not same as birth	4
Prefer not to say	68
Blank	24
Base: All respondents (533)	

Sexual orientation

147. Most survey respondents identified as straight/heterosexual (348) and 35 identified as another sexual orientation.

Table 19: respondent profile by sexual orientation

	Number
Straight/Heterosexual	348
Bisexual	13
Gay or Lesbian	15
Prefer not to say	127
Other	7
Blank	23
Base: All respondents (533)	

Race

148. Most survey respondents (379) identified as white British, Irish, or any other white background, whilst 32 respondents identified as having another ethnic group or background.

Table 20: respondent profile by ethnic group or background

	Number
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)	11
Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)	3
Chinese	1
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)	7
White (British, Irish, or any other white background)	379
Prefer not to say	98
Other ethnic group or background	10
Blank	24
Base: All respondents (533)	

Religion

149. Two hundred and seventeen survey respondents identified as having a current religion with most stating that their current religion was Christian (192 people).

Table 21: respondent profile by religion

	Number
Buddhist	4
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	192
Hindu	4
Jewish	2
Muslim	5
Sikh	0
No religion	185
Prefer not to say	107
Any other religion	10
Blank	24
Base: All respondents (533)	

Disability

150. One in five respondents (97) identified as having a long-term illness, health problem or disability that either limited their day to day activities a lot (29) or a little (68).

Table 22: Respondent profile by long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months

	Number
Yes – day-to-day activities limited a lot	29
Yes – day-to-day limited a little	68
No	345
Prefer not to say	70
Blank	21
Base: All respondents (533)	

Carer

151. Fifty-two respondents identified as a carer.

Table 23: Carer status

	Number
Yes	52
No	391
Prefer not to say	65
Blank	25
Base: All respondents (533)	

Marriage and civil partnership

152. More than double the number of respondents identified as being married or in a civil partnership (288), than not (120).

Table 24: Respondent profile by marriage or civil partnership

	Number
Yes, to being married or in a civil partnership	288
No	120
Prefer not to say	93
Blank	32
Base: All respondents (533)	

Pregnancy and maternity

153. Thirteen respondents identified as pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave.

Table 25: Respondent profile by pregnancy and maternity

	Number
Yes to being pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave	13
No	409
Prefer not to say	80
Blank	31
Base: All respondents (533)	

Summary of stakeholder views to the budget proposals consultation

154. Although these views are counted in the sections preceding, below is a high-level summary of the feedback from councillors, businesses, groups and organisations. It does not include the two responses from county council staff members or from people who identified as stakeholders generally.

155. The key messages from these stakeholder groups identified above are as follows:

- One councillor commented generally on the council's budget proposals for adult services, stating that it doesn't feel right to cut adult services at all. They felt that the list of proposed reductions was reasonable and hoped they materialise without negative impacts on vulnerable and older adults.
- Two groups/organisations commented generally on the budget proposals for adult services stating how important collaboration is with the third sector to deliver efficiencies and that they would welcome dialogue. One organisation also suggested the council should increase council tax to fund social care.
- One councillor commented on proposal **24CS12: saving £150,000. Reduce expenditure on legal costs in children's social care.** They felt that cuts to legal services might leave children without mechanisms to resolve and improve their situations.
- Three councillors commented generally on the council's savings proposals for children's services. One was deeply concerned about cuts in services as had parishioners trying to access services (possibly a EHC assessment) and finding it difficult. Another recognised the existing challenges around funding for SEND and that any savings from efficiencies should be channelled back into services and felt central government should be challenged regarding funding. The third recognised it is horrible to have to make reductions in staffing and training and recognised that it had been 'forced on the council'.

- One business responded to savings proposal **24EP12: saving £2.25 million. One-off draw down of funding held for the future maintenance of highways in Oxfordshire. This reflects expenditure on highway maintenance associated with development works needing repair over recent years.**) They were critical of the state of the county's roads based on their professional experience. They also expressed their dislike for the 20mph schemes and low traffic neighbourhoods.
- The same business commented on proposal **24EP13: saving £200,000 Reduction in the revenue investment needed for the mobilisation of 20mph speed limits. A three-year implementation programme is included in the council's capital programme**), requesting that all spending on 20mph limits is stopped immediately.
- One group of businesses responded to savings proposal **24EP15: saving £150,000 Anticipated increases in on-street parking income.** Their response is captured earlier in the report.
- One councillor commented generally on the council's budget proposals for environment and place services, stating you need to spend more, not less on things.
- Two councillors commented on proposal for **public health and community safety, 24PHCS2: saving £800,000. Cancel annual contribution to the reserve holding future funding for the replacement of fire appliances on a one-off basis in 2023/24.**) One questioned, would this increase the increase the chances of non-working fire appliances and the other questioned where will the money come from in future to resume this reserve contribution.
- Two councillors commented generally on the budget proposals for customers, culture and corporate services. One stated that the reduction in office-based working gives the council and opportunity to dispose of sites that could be used for housing and work with districts and towns councils on shared office accommodation in local centres. The other stated we need more staff, not fewer.
- Four councillors made general comments on the council's budget proposals. One stating that we should be increasing spending to address growing needs, but recognises the council is not at fault. Another recognised the impact of government cutbacks on communities, and another felt the system was the wrong way round with regards to how funding is awarded. The fourth recognised the difficult position the council is in with having to making savings.
- One business used this section to criticise speed limits again and low traffic neighbourhoods.
- One organisation referenced that adaptation to climate change did not feature in the council's budget proposals.

156. We also welcomed feedback in writing as part of the consultation on the council's budget proposals. Twenty-one email responses from members of the public were submitted and a further four responses from stakeholders. Their key messages from these are summarised below.

Email submissions from members of the public

157. Of the 21 email responses, a majority (16) submitted **negative comments about transport and traffic restrictions** (including low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), 20mph speed limits, traffic filters and housing infrastructure fund 1 (HIF1)). People expressed that abandoning transport proposals and existing schemes could reduce the budget deficit or reduce council tax increases. Some people felt they had no benefit to local people and damage businesses.
158. The remaining five responses cover:
- New homes and questioning why developers are not obliged to pay the council in return for housing developments.
 - Council tax increases and the negative effect on people's finances.
 - Adult social care and support for learning disabilities – reductions in budgets having a huge impact on the lives of those with disabilities and their carers.
 - Early years services should be prioritised - investing in early years is to the long-term benefit of everyone.
 - The need to modernise the council, reduce expenditure on senior management and reduce salary costs.
159. There is also criticism of the budget consultation itself regarding its complexity and the ability to understand many of the proposals.

Email submissions from stakeholders

Submission one:

Parish transport representative”

States that over the last few years there have been reduced bus passenger numbers because of covid and bus subsidies that ended in July 2016. With public transport as a County Council priority area, has a suggestion to create a levy (between 5p-10p) on commercial bus routes, in addition to the current fares. Considers this money should be ring fenced to put back into areas that need/have subsidies removed. Feels this proposal would help the reduction of bus routes, particularly in the villages.

Submission two and three

A young carers charity

Trustee: Considers that the growing numbers of young carers are not acknowledged within the budget consultation, failing to make provision for this demographic. States that as a group they have poorer outcomes and are at risk of developing long term needs. Asks if the statutory responsibilities of county council and its strategic partners have a more specific profile in the council’s planning for this group of Oxfordshire residents.

“Independent strategy & development consultant” and trustee: Considers that Oxfordshire County Council and partners are failing to make provision for young carers. States that in their opinion, the council’s budget proposals not only risk failure to meet statutory duties under the Children & Families Act (2015), but also fails the national direction of travel to tackle health inequalities. States that within these households there are multiple needs to both the young carers and those they care for, all of which fall into the protected characteristics. This is illustrated in the NHS Core20Plus5 reports. Feels that the public would have to look very hard to find glean the council is out of step with the national picture, from the consultation materials provided.

Submission four:

Rail specialist interest group

States that the group strongly support priority 5 of the council’s vision. While the group recognise the financial pressures the council is under, they consider it vital that none of the budget changes inhibit this and maximum effort must continue into leveraging in funds from DfT and other parts of central government to further this aim. The group strongly supported the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study produced by Network Rail in consultation with county council and others which set out a number of vital investments at Cowley, Hanborough, Didcot and Wantage/Gove and “we welcome the work started, with the support of the county council, into reinstating a rail line to Eynsham, Witney and Carterton”.

The group is very pleased to see the provision of £250,000 in the 2022-23 budget towards progressing these schemes including the development of business cases. The group

considers any underspend should be carried forward to contribute to the similar Government funding initiatives. However, the group is against the 2023-24 budget proposal 24EP18 to reduce funding for this work by £50,000 as it may impact on the continuation of this development work on the priority rail schemes for Cowley, Hanborough, Wantage/Grove station and the Witney/Carterton branch.