



## 2015/16 Budget Consultation Summary

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For the last 6 months the Council, through its Rewiring Public Services Programme has been talking to residents about the way in which the council spends its money and how we can ensure that it is spent on the things that matter most to residents. We have discussed the financial challenges that the council faces and also identified some of the ways that residents and communities can help us to deliver good outcomes for those in the city. More recently officers have spent time at shopping centres and supermarkets to speak to residents about the council's budget and the choices being made. They have also spent time on the bus network capturing people's views. Communities of interest have also been consulted and the team will continue to capture feedback from residents on an ongoing basis around their priorities. Some residents have responded online and all the current feedback is available on the council website.

Over 3000 have expressed opinions and the key themes are set out below.

### **What are the most important issues/services for residents.**

- a) Residents said that the cleanliness of the city was a key priority and that the council needed to continue to invest in services that kept the city looking smart. Residents felt strongly that the council should pay attention to all parts of the city. It was felt that council staff were more prominent in the city centre than the remainder of York. There was a perception from a number of residents that the council could and should do more to enable residents to get involved and this could be through the use of funding for community groups. Businesses, particularly those in the tourism sector reflected that emphasis should be given to creating an attractive, clean city.
- b) Featuring more prominently in 2015 has been resident concerns about safety in the city centre on an evening. Some of this related to prominent campaigns during 2014 such as river safety but there was an increased perception that the level of drinking and subsequent anti social behaviour from some had reached a

point when something new to be done. Residents in the Groves and Micklegate identified that there were issues from people making their way home or to hotels in the evening.

- c) Residents are keen to see the council promote sustainability. They liked the campaigns run around energy switching and insulation. They also recognised the benefit of electric powered transport. Residents thought that the council did not do enough to increase the amount of recycling in the city. Some suggested that this was because the range of items taken for recycling was not wide enough. Some thought that mixed recycling boxes would yield a greater number of items. Residents recognise that some communities/individuals do not recycle at all and asked what the council was doing to challenge and educate residents.
- d) Health & Adult Social Care is a key issue for many. The feedback that was reflected in the Rewiring Programme about access to information and quality services was again expressed.
- e) Local Plan. Residents were much more aware of the debates in the city about the local plan than was the case a year ago. The issue of housing costs is well understood. Rental costs are judged to be too high and many younger people thought that they would not be able to afford to buy a home in the city. Homeowners in some areas were concerned at the impact on property prices should there be a high volume of people. All recognised the complexity of the issues and many felt that more needed to be done to help residents understand proposals (if there are any).
- f) Residents recognised that the council had less money to spend. Residents were told that the council had saved £80m over the last 6 years and this meant that it spent £363 less on each household. Residents said that it was important that the council demonstrated value for money with all its expenditure. The distinctions the council frequently made about ring fenced money, grants, loans were pretty irrelevant to most people who were looking for assurance that it was being spent on what mattered most.

### **What should the council continue funding?**

- a) The priorities that emerged were
  - Street Cleansing.

- Management of anti social behaviour in the city centre that is caused by alcohol consumption.
- Social Care – both Adults & Children
- Recycling
- Roads Maintenance
- Schools and the council’s work to provide support to them.

**What should the council do differently to reduce costs and save money?**

- a) As in 2014, there are areas of council expenditure that residents do not perceive to be a ‘clear cut’ priority. The “20’s Plenty” scheme is supported near schools but it is not understood why it is implemented across much of the city. The council’s capital programme again created debate as did the congestion trial on Lendal Bridge. Residents felt that the council could and should carry out more short consultations to judge whether money should be spent on new projects.

**Where can communities and residents play a greater part in supporting their local area and city?**

- a) Residents were keen to get involved in community projects particularly around parks and other public spaces. Communities also said that more could be done to provide services for younger and older people. Many residents thought that the council should do more to encourage people to check on older people and get involved in initiatives such as casserole clubs.
- b) There were several suggestions around the collection of food waste.
- c) There were several suggestions that residents could help to reduce crime. It was suggested that more be done to encourage residents to sign up for neighbourhood watch schemes.