

Results of Council Plan Consultation

Summary – Key Points

1. There was general broad support for the aims identified. Some groups and individuals would like to see more on certain issues but there were few clear trends. People said while supporting the overall aims they would like to see more detail and measures. Other trends were
 - Need for greater collaboration with a wide range of partners
 - Reduction of duplication between organisations
 - Prioritisation of core services however they might be delivered.
 - Save money and being more efficient
 - Opportunities to involve residents more for feedback and involvement in groups or in volunteering

2. In terms of omissions it was felt that transport did not come out strongly enough in the plan, it was also felt that housing was under-represented. Environmental issues such as waste and recycling were mentioned in answer to all questions and seen as one area where residents could work with the council to make improvements. While health and social care was rated as one of the most importance services there were fewer comments. However, those that made comments raised issues around mental health provision and more joined up working between the council and the health sector. There was a reasonably equal mix of those saying the council needs to promote the city more and encourage tourism alongside those saying more focus needs to be placed on residents. Online responses were more likely to highlight the importance of tourism to the city.

Background

3. Consultation was undertaken on the draft Council Plan in response to a decision by Executive in June 2015. Questions were decided in consultation with Executive members. These were intentionally broad in order to enable people to make detailed comments if they wished.

Approach

4. In order to get as much input as possible a number of methods and promotion were used. Residents were advised of options via press, social media, libraries, sent to parish councils, residents associations, equality groups, and community contacts and in newsletters. An online consultation was available from 6 July to 26 August 2015. Four facilitated drop in sessions ran at West Offices to enable residents to give views. Comment sheets were also available at all libraries. The consultation was advertised in the Our City newsletter and a freepost address given alongside an email address for comments. As no Ward Committees ran during this period it was not possible to consult residents via that mechanism.
5. A staff engagement event was also held and the Council Plan was discussed at the senior managers Service to City meeting in July. As the Children and Young People's Plan consultation was already being undertaken with final results expected mid September it was decided any emerging issues could be fed into this report.
6. Businesses were encouraged to submit views and the Council Plan was an item on the Economic Partnership Meeting for discussion. In addition other strategic work has been undertaken with businesses on related issues and this will continue. Early suggestions are that businesses would like to see York taking more of a lead role both regionally and nationally.

Findings

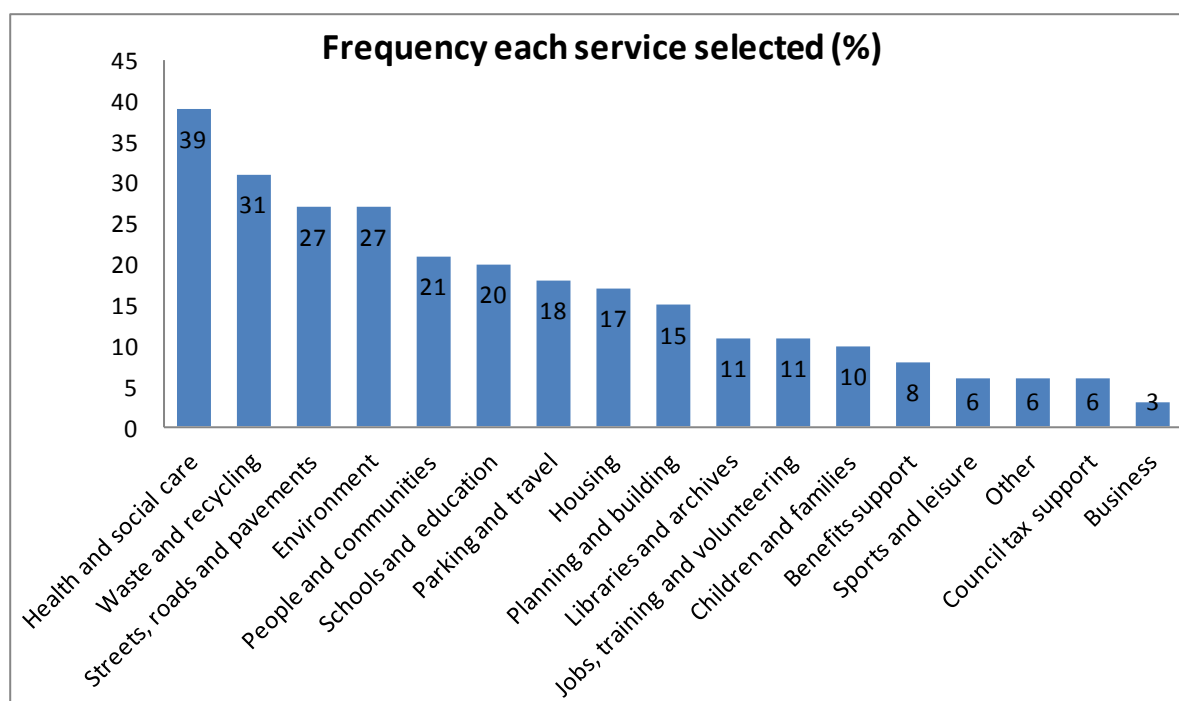
7. Online Consultation

344 responses were received although not everyone answered each question. Numbers answering are detailed in the question responses below. The majority responding were individuals – 299, with 14 representing community groups, 11 business owners, 9 other and 11 who did not say. Other included some parish councils and charity/community groups.

8. The ward breakdown is shown below. There are insufficient numbers to draw any conclusions on differences between wards.

WARD	Count
Micklegate	41
Not known	40
Guildhall	33
Holgate	27
Acomb	22
Fishergate	17
Westfield	16
Wheldrake	16
Clifton	15
Huntington and New Earswick	15
Strensall	13
Heworth	12
Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	12
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe	11
Osbalwick and Derwent	10
Rural West York	9
Haxby and Wigginton	8
Hull Road	8
Heworth Without	6
Bishopthorpe	5
Fulford and Heslington	5
Copmanthorpe	3
TOTAL	344

9. People were asked to select up to three service areas that were most important to them and their family. Across all age groups health and social care came out as the most frequently chosen. Waste and recycling was the next most selected service among all age groups. However if all transport related issues are combined this would come out as the most selected issue.
10. Health and social care was the most chosen service by both men and women. The second most selected by female respondents was waste and recycling (37%) followed by people and communities (27%). For male respondents the next most selected services were streets, roads and pavements (36%) followed by waste and recycling (29%). Benefits support along with sports and leisure was more frequently selected by groups 26-35 and 36-45. The 60+ and 46-60 years selected environment more often than the other age groups. Housing and parking were seen as important for the 36-45 age group.



Protecting frontline services

11. Number of responses 200 (58%). Of those 17 said it was not clear what frontline services meant so they were unable to give a view. Key themes that came out were the need to prioritise better, and to collaborate more. Around 10% felt the council should seek to learn from good practice elsewhere and work more in partnership with others councils, other local partners and voluntary and community groups. As many people thought the council should increase council tax as those that thought it should not. Reducing management, reducing use of consultants and reducing spending were all mentioned. A number thought the council still had some potential to increase income outside of increasing council tax, while a few felt more should be invested in prevention. Despite health and social care being identified as a key service by so many people there were few related comments. Nine mentioned the need to ensure vulnerable people continue to be supported.

A prosperous city for all

12. Number of responses 175 (51%). Themes that came out in responses were; transport (for businesses, residents and tourists), housing (with comments on green belt land but a recognition of the need for affordable housing), ensuring that good quality jobs are

available and encouraging all employers to pay the Living Wage. Business rates and support for small and start up businesses across the city was mentioned as was the need to better promote the city for businesses and tourism. A number of people said York needs to be realistic in understanding its status as a tourist city and working to make more of this. However some people felt that the city focuses too much on tourists and students. 6 people mentioned the importance of health to being a prosperous city.

What residents and others could do to help achieve the aims?

13. Number of responses 153 (44%). Themes and general suggestions included volunteering, promoting the city and giving feedback/engaging. Volunteering was mentioned by 38 (25%). Some said they already volunteered or would consider it and others simply suggested it as a way to help York achieve its aims. 21 were keen to participate by engaging with online consultations or attending ward committees. Promoting the city as a place to live and/or visit was put forward by 10 people although this came out more strongly in relation to the prosperous city theme. 16 people felt there was nothing they could do for a number of reasons, for example the belief that they did enough already or felt it was not up to them. 11 people said they were unable to make suggestions because they could not think of anything or felt the draft Council Plan too vague.
14. Overall there is a core of people that would be keen to get involved while others just want to see transparency and prioritisation of resources.
15. Of the 344 people that completed the survey 217 completed some of the equalities questions. The breakdown of gender was

Male 101, Female 91, prefer not to say 25.

The age breakdown of the 216 people that answered the equalities questions was as follows

18 -25	6
26 -35	27
36 - 45	30
46 -60	57

60 +	66
Not stated	30

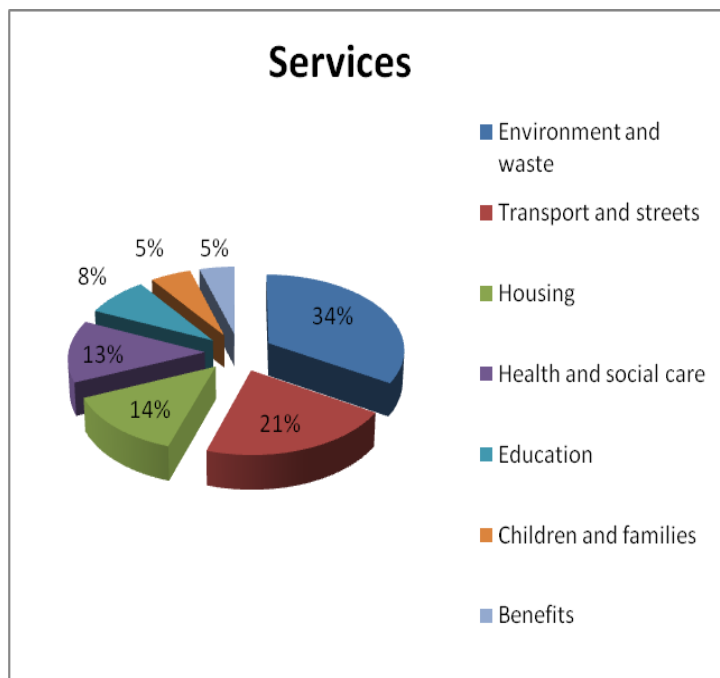
This profile is similar to other surveys undertaken in the past where completion rates of surveys increase with age.

Face to Face Consultation

16. Over the four days that drop in sessions were held a total of 184 people were seen. However, only around a dozen of these had come in specifically to give comments on the draft Council Plan. Several of those took away a draft plan to look at in more detail; they may subsequently have completed the online survey. The others were people coming into the Customer Centre who we approached and asked for views.
17. Some caution needs to be taken with results from the face to face work as the reason people were visiting the Customer Centre may have been reflected in their views on key services. It was noticeable that items in the news such as art gallery, museums and changes to bus services were mentioned frequently. In order to control for this a breakdown of the reasons people came in was obtained.
18. What was clear from discussion was that many people are unclear what the term 'frontline services' means. In some cases they mentioned NHS and police as frontline services rather than council services. A significant number had limited understanding of the services the council provides.
19. The ward breakdown of those spoken to is shown below. There are not a sufficient number from each to draw any conclusions about differences between wards.

WARD across all 4 days	COUNT
Unknown/Not given/non York	26
Micklegate	25
Guildhall	20
Acomb	15
Clifton	15
Heworth	11
Holgate	11
Westfield	9
Osbalwick and Derwent	7
Huntington and New Earswick	6
Rural West York	6
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe	5
Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	5
Fishergate	4
Fulford and Heslington	4
Haxby and Wigginton	4
Hull Road	3
Strensall	3
Copmanthorpe	2
Heworth Without	2
Bishopthorpe	1
Wheldrake	0
TOTAL	184

20. The Services people mentioned as most important to them across all the four sessions is shown below.



The reasons for visit to the Customer Centre on the days that the consultation took place showed a link with transport and travel coming out in both. Housing issues were mentioned in comments and were also a key reason for visits to the council.

21. In terms of **protecting frontline services** those that commented were in favour of the council looking at staffing, reducing managers and planning better in future. Some felt as an organisation the council could change to meet needs by working more flexible hours and working more with other organisations.
22. On **prosperity** most important theme was around jobs, Living Wage and ensuring young people were skilled to take on opportunities. Other issues highlighted were the need to promote tourism and the city better alongside the need to do more for residents. There was a reasonably equal split on tourism/residents. Parking came out strongly (but this may be due to reasons for coming to Customer Centre)
23. In terms of **residents helping to achieve the aims** the most frequent answer was volunteering, with people reporting they already volunteer or that they would be interested in doing so (33). 11 mentioned they would like to be involved in giving more feedback to the council, 7 said they could recycle more and 3 said

they could better promote the city. 7 said this was a council responsibility.

Children and Young People

24. The emerging issues from the consultation on the Children and Young People's Plan fit with the Council Plan aims around access to opportunities. Children raised some of the same issues as adults with many wanting improvements to the cleanliness and condition of roads and pavements in their local area. Transport around the city was highlighted as an issue; particularly traffic and the cost of transport to access activities or services. Young people said that they wanted to be able to play a bigger part in their community and to have access to more volunteering opportunities. Generally young people, parents and carers felt that York is a safe place and a good place to live and grow up, however a few raised issues about the city or local area.
25. Other issues mentioned by children which relate to the Council Plan included
 - **Health and wellbeing** - This ranged from access to sporting facilities, healthy eating, inclusion of disabled children and young people, the importance of friendships, places to just be with friends, bullying and mental health. Disabled children and young people and their parents and carers identified they would like to see York become a more inclusive city.
 - **Early Help** - The priority of early help was strongly endorsed by families and practitioners. Children, young people, parents and carers all valued strong and supportive communities. Particular value was placed on the importance of access to activities and parks and open spaces.
 - **Supporting all** - young people said they did not want to be labelled (e.g. young carer, looked after child, disabled) rather than seen first as a person with hopes, dreams and aspirations. They highlighted that they want support to make sure they are ready for the future at key transitions and into adult life. As well as thinking about tomorrow, children and young people also said that they want help and support with their lives now to help them to achieve and be happy.

Additional Comments

26. Comments were received from the following organisations YREN, York Civic Trust, Theatre Royal, York Older People's Assembly, Elvington Parish Council, Strensall Parish Council, Church of the Holy Redeemer Parochial Church Council, York St Johns University, York Green Party. While all were supportive of the aims they felt more detail was needed. Many of them thought we could involve organisations like theirs to a greater degree going forward. A further 24 comments were sent in from residents direct and 2 from staff. These matched other comments received online and face to face.

Staff Engagement

27. Twenty staff with a mix from frontline and other services attended the engagement session. Overall they felt that the aims were very broad and did not explain what is statutory and what is not. They felt there were some omissions around; transport infrastructure other than bus services, affordable housing, and equality/inclusion. There was some discussion whether prosperity is a suitable word to use as it sends a message that York is a rich city and people can be disconnected from this.
28. Staff thought we need to stress engagement with residents rather than listening to residents as we can't meet all expectations. In future residents will need to do more for themselves and the council needs to be more open both about this and about the financial challenges we will continue to face. A first step would be to outline the responsibilities of the council and individuals. Better communication was stressed in explaining to people what the council does.
29. At the senior managers session staff made comments that more focus needed to be placed on partnership working. They also stressed the need for residents to be made more aware of the clear financial and resource challenges the council faces. Both groups of staff felt the council could take more of a role in leading work with other organisations such as working across borders. Both highlighted the need to link budget plans, workforce strategy and financial strategy to the Council Plan.