HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET
MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2019 AT 2.00PM

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON THE 2019/20 – 2022/23 INTEGRATED PLAN

Report of the Interim Director of Resources

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1.   Purpose of report

1.1.   To report on the public engagement activities undertaken on the council's budget and spending priorities for 2019/20 and beyond.

2.   Summary

2.1   The results of the key public engagement activity undertaken on the Integrated Plan for 2019/20 are set out in the paragraphs below.

2.2   The IP engagement process has primarily been focused on informing and raising awareness with residents about the financial pressures faced by the county council. This year a variety of techniques have been used to engage with the public. This has included an online survey for residents on budget priorities (24 Oct - 4 Dec), running a stall at an event with the voluntary sector to engage with community leaders on the 30 October and discussions with young people in Hertfordshire as part of YC Hertfordshire's (Youth Connexions) Takeover Day on 23 November 2018.

2.3   This approach is largely a reflection of the fact that with the multi-year financial planning process employed by the county council, any significant service changes will be subject to their own consultation exercises and Cabinet decisions.

3.   Recommendation

3.1   That Cabinet notes the results of the public engagement activity undertaken and takes this into account when considering the proposed Integrated Plan for 2019/20 and beyond.

4.   Background

4.1   The county council has a good track record of consulting and engaging with residents using a wide variety of methods. Ongoing dialogue concerning the financial issues the council faces continues to be promoted through channels such as the council website, and through stakeholder and user groups.

4.2   Specific service-related proposals which affect the integrated plan are each subject to their own individual consultations, the outcomes of which are reported to Cabinet separately at the appropriate time.

4.3   Alongside this consultation activity, the county council has engaged widely with service users and partners to help shape its future spending and service plans. Notable examples of this include:

a)   The council's involvement in the key countywide partnerships such as Hertfordshire Forward, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Hertfordshire and West Essex Sustainable Transformation Partnership and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Hertfordshire Forward's annual conference, held on Wednesday 19 September 2018 invited stakeholders from all sectors to input into building a Hertfordshire 'fit for the future'. This was an opportunity for partners to take part in the conversations on how to plan for the housing and economic growth coming to the county.

b)   Engagement with key partners such as the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Hertfordshire Constabulary, health, the county's district and borough councils, Town and Parish councils, the Highways Agency and the Department of Transport on major transport schemes.

4.4   The following activities have been undertaken for this year's engagement with the public on the Integrated Plan:

4.5   An online survey inviting residents to feedback what is important to them and the priorities they consider the council should be focusing on. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

4.6 A webpage giving contextual information about Hertfordshire's budget, where our funding comes from and service pressures/priorities was made available to help inform residents when completing the survey. This information can be accessed by clicking on:
https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/About-the-council/Consultations/Council-budget/Have-your-say-on-budget-spending.aspx

4.7 Attendance and promotion of the survey at the Voluntary and Community Sector conference 'Connecting lives and combating loneliness' on 30 October 2018.

4.8 An engagement activity with young people from Hertfordshire's Young Commissioners, including members of the Children in Care Council took place on the 23 November 2018 as part of YC Hertfordshire's Takeover day. A summary of this discussion can be found in Appendix B.

4.9 Statutory consultation with the business community via the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce is planned at the beginning of 2019 following the approval of the draft of the Integrated Plan.

5. Online Survey

5.1 An online survey was created and published on the consultation section of www.hertfordshire.gov.uk. This asked respondents to select the service areas in which they thought spending should be reduced/ maintained by the county council in the next financial year. The survey also asked respondents whether they had suggestions on how service spending could be reduced in specific areas and whether council tax should be increased. The survey opened on 24 October 2018 and ran until 9 December 2018.

5.2 To allow for an accurate comparison of results, this survey closely mirrored the previous budget surveys produced by the council since 2014. One further question was added to the survey this year. This asked residents if they would prefer to have council tax increased rather than reduce services, and if so, which particular services would they prefer to see this money to go towards.

5.3 Social media communications were used to encourage people to complete the survey. Social media engagement was high this year, with 387 link clicks being recoded across the social media posts; 250 from Facebook and 137 from Twitter.

5.4 District and Borough councils were contacted, asking them to encourage their residents to complete the survey. As a result, many chose to engage with our social media posts and feature the survey on their homepage.

5.5   An e-newsletter was sent to 1,132 members of the Hertfordshire Citizens Panel, inviting them to take part in the survey. The Citizens Panel is a representative group of Hertfordshire residents who are regularly consulted for their views on how Hertfordshire County Council should deliver its services. Hard copies of the survey were sent to the 439 members of the Citizens' Panel who had requested to be on the postal list.

5.6   Two Update Me articles with links to the survey were sent electronically to the 7,728 members of the public who subscribe to this service.

5.7   In total, including partial responses, 2,021 responses to the survey were received this year. This is up on the number of responses received last year (1,225) and higher than the average response rate experienced during the 4 previous years the council has run a version of this survey (1,010). This is the highest level of response since the survey began in 2014.

5.8   Following the results of last year's survey, where the 75+ population were widely under represented, this year, 150 printed surveys were sent out to care homes across the county, encouraging a response from our older population. As a result, this year, the over 75's made up 5.7% of our respondents, compared to 2.6% last year.

5.9   There are no age limitations for this survey, however, last year only 11 under 18's answered the survey. As well as the takeover day event mentioned later in this report, this year officers also posted a message on the Schools' grid encouraging our younger population to take part in the survey. However, unfortunately this did not result in more under 18s responding - only 5 responses were received this year. Although less completed surveys were received from this age group, the event for Takeover Day did give us an insight into this age groups opinion.

6.   Social Media

6.1   Social media was a big part of our campaign this year. During the time that the survey was open, 14 Facebook posts and 15 tweets were sent from the Council's accounts.

6.2   387 link clicks were recoded across the social media posts, 250 from Facebook and 137 from Twitter. Although this may not be a true indication of the number of people who went on to complete the survey through these links, it does show the engagement level on social media to be high and effective.

6.3   Across the whole campaign, the twitter posts reached 321 engagements and made 35,862 impressions. The Facebook posts had a total reach of 48,492 and 1,933 engagements.

6.4   Comments left on social media posts were not included as part of the comment analysis, however, those who left comments were encouraged to share their views by completing the survey.

7.   Engagement with Community Leaders

7.1   Following feedback from previous events, it was decided not to run a specific community leader's event this year, instead looking for more meaningful methods of engagement. Year on year, the 'Community Leaders Event' became less attended. As a result, officers instead decided to engage at a wider level by attending a conference organised by the council, specifically for the Voluntary and Community sector.

7.2   On the 30 October 2018, members of the corporate policy team attended the Voluntary and Community Sector conference: Connecting Lives and Combating Loneliness. During this event, team members ran a stall encouraging attendees to fill in the surveys and discuss the budget.

7.3   Prior to this event, attendees were sent some background information and the link to the online survey and webpage, and encouraged to visit the stall.

7.4   Attendees were also sent a follow up email after the event to provide them with the survey link if they had been unable to visit us at the conference. Organisations were also encouraged to directly email comments, if they did not want to complete the survey.

7.5   Town and Parish councils were also contacted with some background information on the budget, and encouraged to share their views.

7.6   Although it is not possible to predict the total number of surveys completed by community leaders as the surveys could be completed anonymously online, 19 paper copies of the survey were completed at the Voluntary and Community sector conference. Only 7 out of these 19 left additional comments which cannot be representative of respondents of the survey as a whole, or the Hertfordshire population as a whole.

7.7   A summary of these comments can be found on page 15 of this report.

8.   Youth Engagement

8.1   In conjunction with YC Hertfordshire (Youth Connexions), a discussion on the council's priorities and budget was held on the 24 November 2018. There were 26 participants with representation from Hertfordshire's Young Commissioners and members of the Children in Care Council.
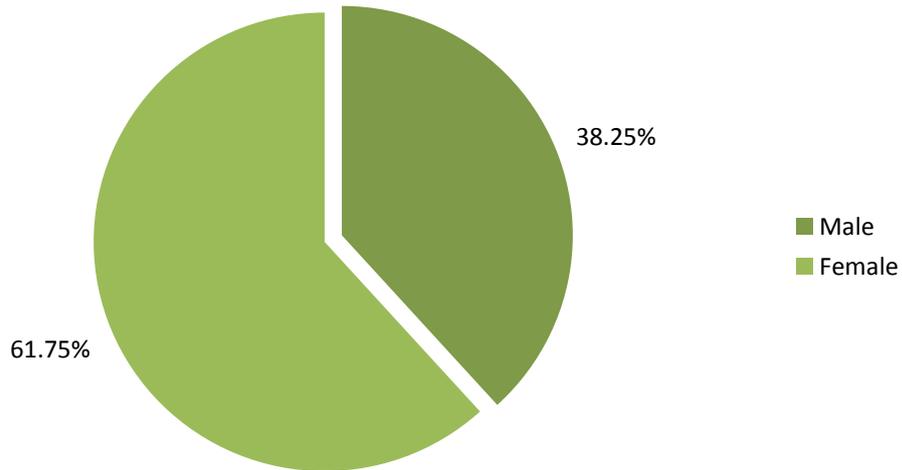
8.2   Attendees took part in three activities. The first a very brief presentation about the budget and how it was spent, secondly a short quiz on the results from last year's survey, their knowledge on the council's current budget, and about Hertfordshire as a county.

8.3   In the final task, the group were asked for their opinions on which services budgets should be maintained/reduced in the next financial year. Feedback highlighted that the services in which the group felt budgets should be maintained mostly included those which kept people safe and provided care and support to vulnerable citizens. This included:

    a) Support for older people and people with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities
    b) Early years and education support
    c) Community protection

8.4   Many of the participants were passionate that these budgets be maintained as it was felt that the services and activities delivered enable people to be empowered, stimulated and offer new opportunities for growth and development.

8.5   More in-depth results from Youth Engagement can be found in point 11 in this paper

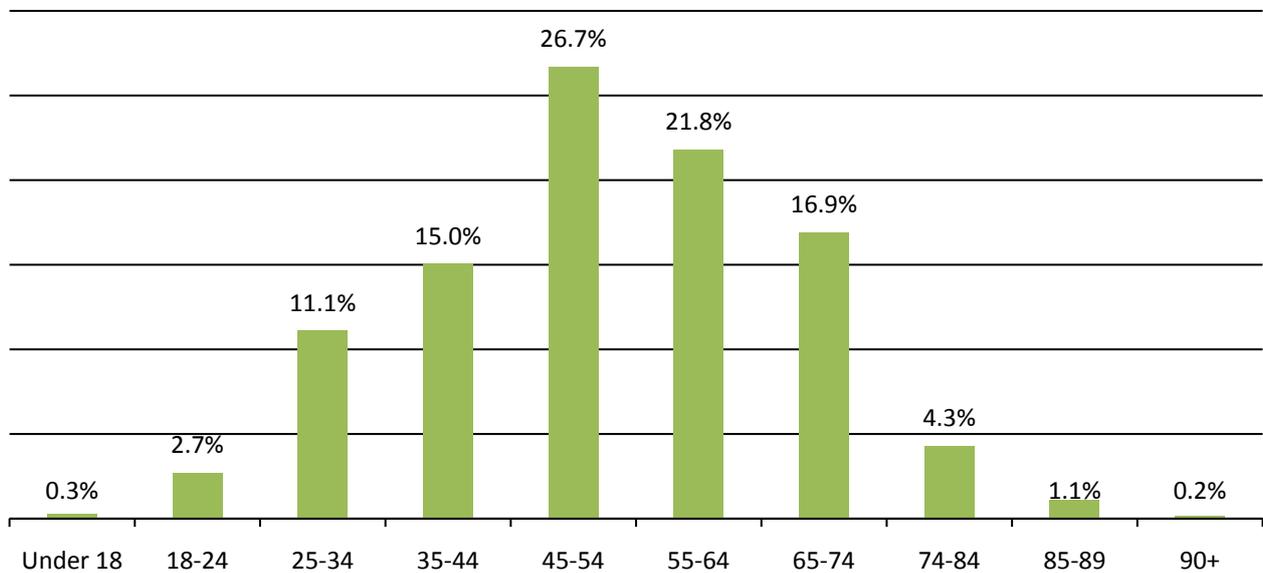**Engagement Results**

9.   Survey results

9.1   This year the group which was most under-represented was 90+ year olds, similar to last year. The age range of most respondents to this year's survey was 45-54, whereas last year it was 35-44. As in previous years there was a larger proportion of female respondents (61.75%), (compared to 48.7% last year) compared to male respondents (38.25%). Please note that these results are not a direct representation of Hertfordshire's population and although some groups were under-represented, analysis of data weighted to correct for this under-representation revealed little or no change to the overall results. Please also note the margin for error in the survey results is +/- 3%.

Graph 1:Representation of respondent's gender

38.25%

61.75%

■ Male
■ Female

Graph 2: Representation of respondent's ages

| Age	Percentage
Under 18	0.3%
18-24	2.7%
25-34	11.1%
35-44	15.0%
45-54	26.7%
55-64	21.8%
65-74	16.9%
74-84	4.3%
85-89	1.1%
90+	0.2%

9.2   The ethnicity of respondents closely mirrors that of the general Hertfordshire population. 85% of respondents were white British/Irish, this compares to the 82% of Hertfordshire residents of this ethnicity. 4% stated they were from 'any other white background', this is compared to the 5% of Hertfordshire residents from a 'white: other' background. 1% of respondents said they were of 'Indian' or 'Any other mixed' ethnicity. 7% of respondents did not wish to disclose their ethnic background.

9.3   In response to the question **"In which service areas do you feel that spending should be reduced?"** the participants answered broadly the same way as they have done in previous years. The most supported areas for spending reductions were **'Council Support Services,**

'Libraries and community services' and 'Environment and planning'.
The full results for this year (compared with results from the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 survey) were as follows[1].

Graph 3: Reprentation of respondents answer to question 'In which service areas do you feel that spending should be reduced?" 2014-2018
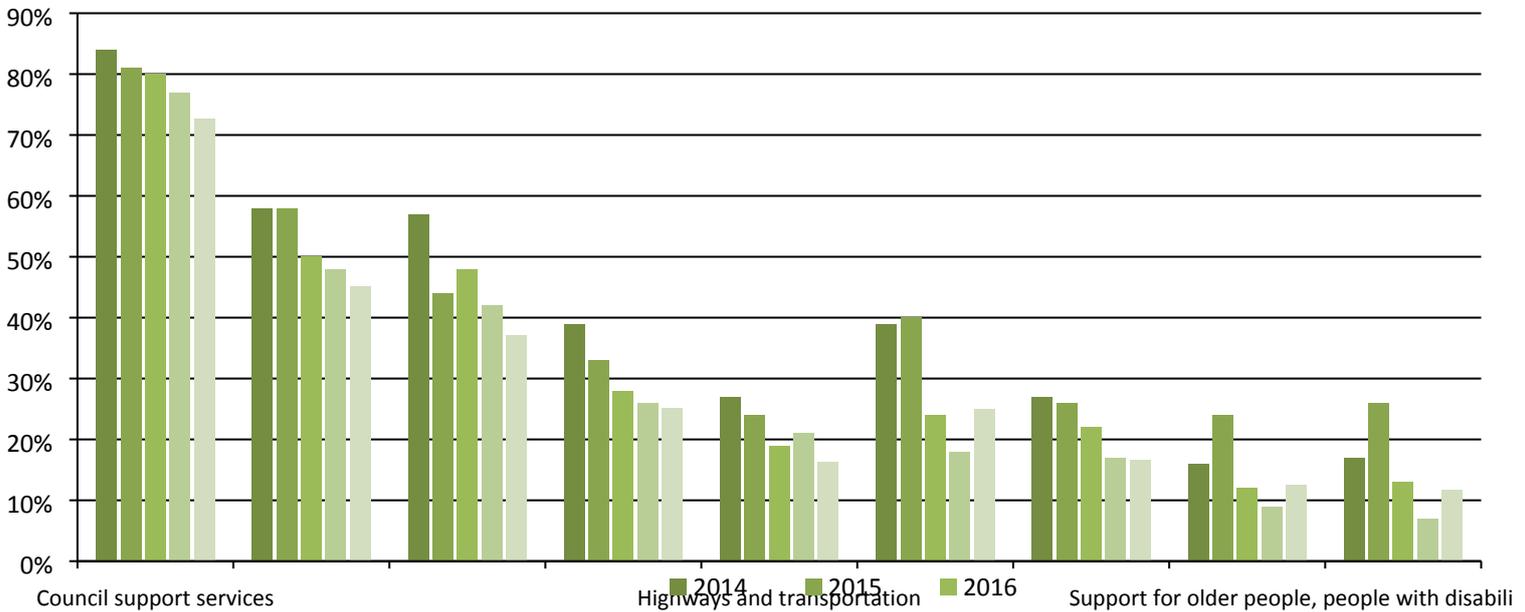
9.4   Although the services where respondents were willing to accept reductions were in a similar priority order to last year, the proportion of people willing to support service reductions is lower this year than last. By comparing the results from the previous years, it shows that this has been a general trend since the survey began in 2014.

9.5   This year, **'Early years and education support',** saw an increase in those willing to support service reductions from 18% to 25% **'Child protection and care for vulnerable children'** saw an increase from 9% to 13% and **'Support for older people and those with disability or learning disability'** saw an increase in those willing to support service reductions from 7% to 12%.

9.6   As seen on the chart below, **'Council support services'** had the largest percentage of people supporting spending reduction, and **'Support for**

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[1] Please note – in the analysis of this question, the percentages are out of the number of respondents that answered each particular question (for example, only 1845 respondents answered the question regarding Council support services in 2018, and 72.65% of these supported reduction in expenditure). The analysis was performed this way in previous years, so this method has been preserved in order for the year-on-year results to be directly comparable.

older people and adults with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities.' Saw the lowest percentage of people supporting a spending reduction at 12%.

Graph 4:Reprentation of respondents answer to question 'In which service areas do you feel that spending should be reduced?" 2018
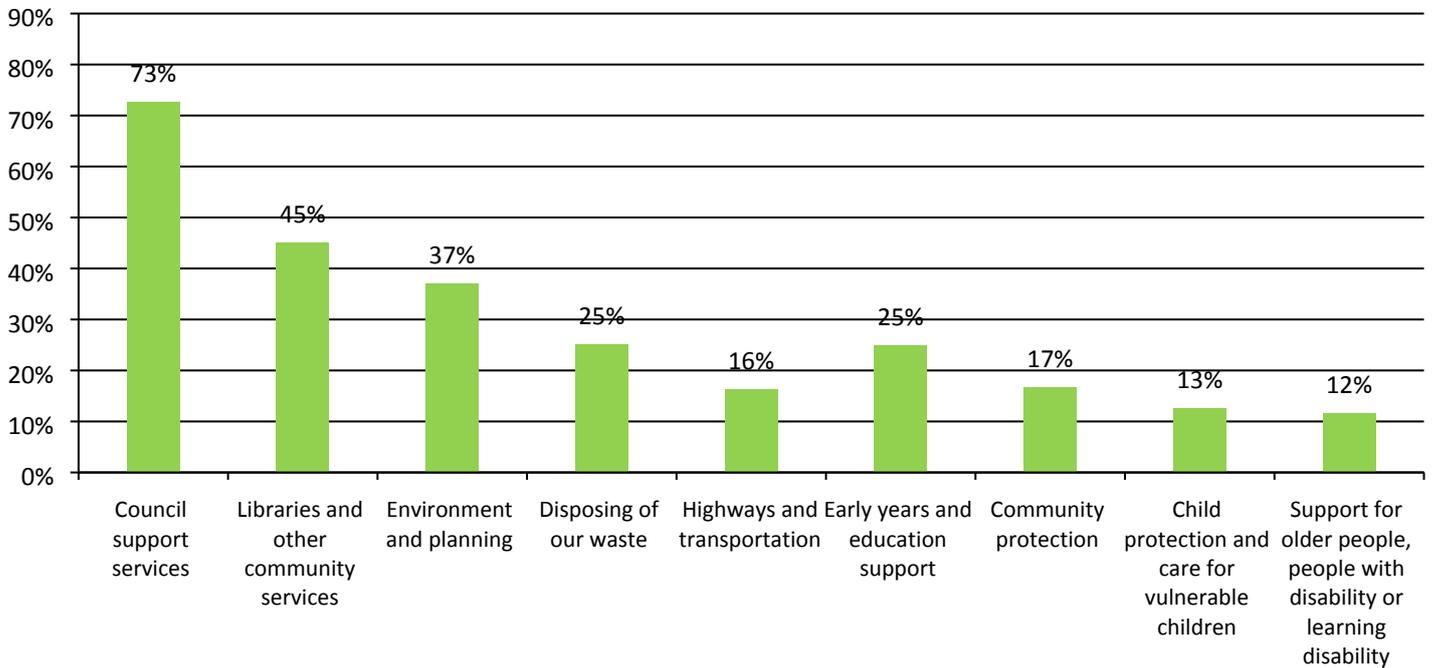

9.7   In response to the question, **"In a choice between service reductions, and further council tax increases, what do you think we should do?"**, results were:

Graph 5: Representation of respondents answers to question In a choice between service reductions, and further council tax increases, what do you think we should do?'

- 32.89%
- 67.11%
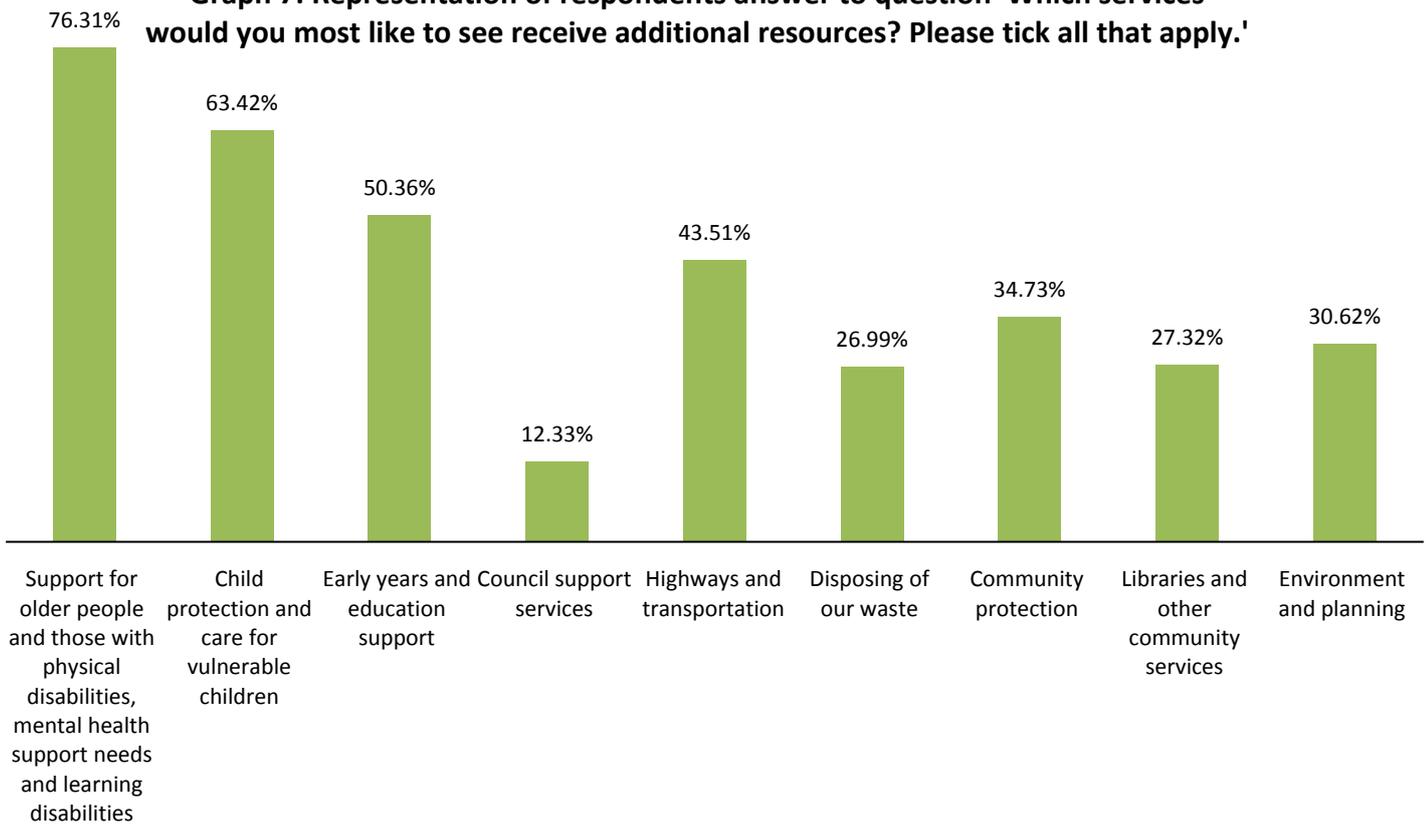- ■ Increase Council Tax
- ■ Reduce Services
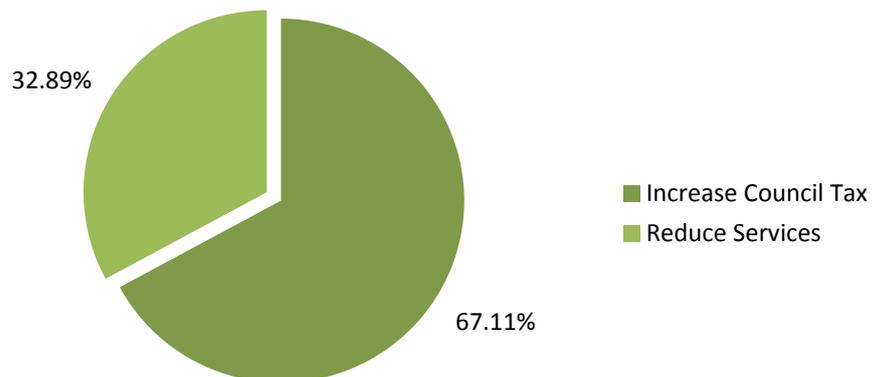
9.8   67.11% of those who answered this question preferred council tax to be raised rather than see reductions in services, which is almost 10% higher than the previous years. The below charts demonstrate how respondents have answered this question over the last couple of years. The amount of people choosing to increase council tax has reduced over the period whilst the amount of people choosing to reduce services has stayed broadly the same at 33%. The responses to this question varied slightly from previous years, as the question was made mandatory this year. Seen on the below graph, no one was able to give 'no response' this year.

Graph 6: Representation of respondents answers to question 'In a choice between service reductions and further council tax increase, what do you think we should do? (2014-2018)
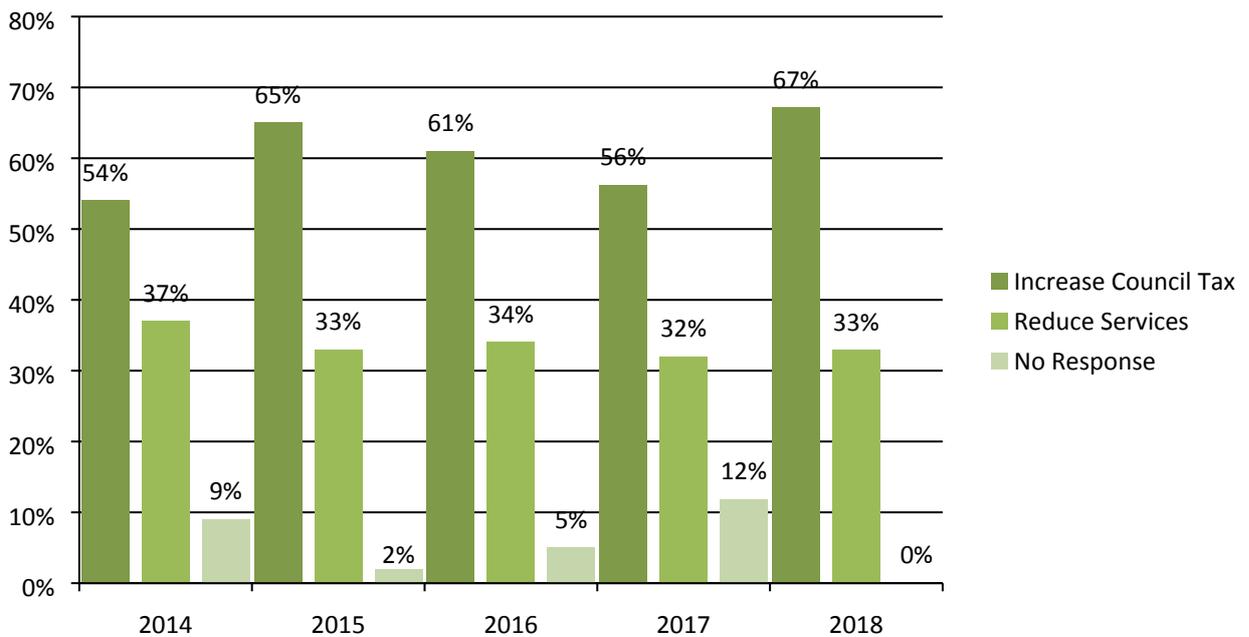
9.9   An additional question was added to the survey this year '**Which services would you most like to see receive additional resources? Please tick all that apply.'** The below chart shows a summary of the answers given. Respondents were only given the opportunity to answer this question if they had chosen to 'increase council tax' in the previous question. Therefore the results below represent the answers of 1,241 people.

Graph 7: Representation of respondents answer to question 'Which services would you most like to see receive additional resources? Please tick all that apply.'

Category	Percentage
Support for older people and those with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities	76.31%
Child protection and care for vulnerable children	63.42%
Early years and education support	50.36%
Council support services	12.33%
Highways and transportation	43.51%
Disposing of our waste	26.99%
Community protection	34.73%
Libraries and other community services	27.32%
Environment and planning	30.62%

9.10   The services that the most respondents wanted to receive extra funding were **'Support for older people and those with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities'** and **'Child protection and care for vulnerable children.'** The categories that were selected least to receive additional funding were **'Disposing of our waste'** and **'Council support services.'** As this question has not been used on this survey before, there is no comparison data available from previous years.

Comments and feedback

9.11   32% of respondents (650) left additional comments covering a wide range of topics. This is significantly higher than the number of comments received last year (361). Many comments covered several different subjects.

9.12   These comments present an interesting snapshot into some residents' views, but it is important to emphasise that they are not representative of the overall views of respondents to the survey as a whole, or residents in the county as a whole. Respondents to the survey make up less than 0.2% of the Hertfordshire population.

Main themes:

9.13   15% of comments concerned the council's staff recruitment and expense. This was the most commonly seen theme amongst the comments. The majority of these called for reductions in senior managers' salaries. Further responses suggested improvements for the efficiencies relating to staff, including having a more thorough review of roles and responsibilities to see if any savings can be made/processes changed. Comments suggested that the council not only needs to pay attention to how many members of staff it employs, but also how they could use their time more efficiently.

9.14   The second most commonly mentioned theme in this year's survey related to areas which are outside the council's control. Around 13% of comments made mention to this. This has been a common area of focus in previous surveys and comments covered a range of services which are delivered by other bodies/organisations. In particular, district councils are responsible for a number of the services which were commented on in this survey. This included improving waste collection and concerns around town growth, housing and planning constraints. There were also comments on services delivered by other organisations such as the NHS and the Police and a number of negative comments relating to legislation/ policy set by central government (such as Austerity) and therefore outside of the county council's control.

9.15   There were a number of comments (6%) specifically relating to the survey. Comments included questions over why there was no option to 'maintain budgets' in the survey, believing there was not enough information presented to make a decision and people finding the survey very difficult to complete as they didn't believe there was any service areas that cuts could be made. Suggestions from respondents included that it would be useful to know how our spending compares to other councils and that savings could be made proportionately from each service area, rather than being asked to select whole services to receive reductions.

9.16   A large proportion of comments made suggestions on how the county council could reduce spending by making efficiency savings. This year a number of comments were indirectly related to the councils 'smart working' initiative. Suggestions were made around the lessening need for fixed office space in the age of modern technology, improving online services for residents so officer time can be better utilised, reducing paper usage and reducing the amount of external communications sent in leaflet/magazine form to residents. There were calls to invest in technology to reduce future inefficiencies and need for spending and for the council to make better use of its own property, through selling this to generate revenue and future income to help balance the books.

9.17   This included suggestions to cut back on street lights. However, there were a number of comments which saw respondents calling for street light

provision to be improved, with arguments that they should be switched on later into the evening to ensure residents felt safe.

9.18   Like previous years, there were a number of comments relating to improving the repair of faults on highways and footpaths. Suggestions included making more permanent fixes by relaying whole roads instead of filling in individual potholes, and putting more time and resources in to fixing issues, so they do not arise again.

9.19   There were also a number of comments that called for more use of shared services and better collaborative working between Hertfordshire and neighbouring counties and councils. Comments referred to administrative services such as IT and HR, and the Fire and Rescue service. In total, all comments relating to efficiency savings from the topics above accounted for 18% of comments.

9.20   Similarly to last year, concerns were raised over the county council's relationships with partners and external contractors. These comments accounted for 6% of responses, and suggested that work completed by external contractors needs to be more closely monitored. A number of comments raised concerns about the contract costs of highways contractors. Comments widely reflected the idea that their work was inefficient and the work they do often needed doing again after a short amount of time.

9.21   Like previous years, around 3% of comments called for a reduction in expenses associated with councillors and council meetings. It was suggested that the number of councillors needs to be reduced and councillor expenses and allowances should also be controlled and reduced.

9.22   From the results above, it is clear that many participants chose 'Increase Council tax' rather than 'Reduce services'. There were a number of comments which support this option, suggesting that vulnerable people would suffer if services were not maintained at their current level. Comments on this topic varied:

- 6% of comments focussed on services not being able to take any more cuts, urging the council to maintain budgets

- 5% of comments called for council tax to be increased by as much as it can, with respondents suggesting they would be happy to pay more tax, but only if they could see that this money was being used effectively

- 2% of comments said a further increase in council tax would put pressure managing their household budget

- Some comments this year also called for the need of the reanalysis of council tax bands, suggesting they were no longer relevant (0.6%)

- Following this, a small number of respondents called for council tax to be increased only for the wealthiest Hertfordshire residents, and for the council to subsidise council tax for those least wealthy residents (1.2%).

9.23 Numerous comments were made this year relating to central government. The majority of these comments revolve around the need for the council to put more pressure on the government to provide local authorities with more money, and stand up to the cuts being made. This theme could be seen in some 4% of comments.

Other comments:

9.24 The specific areas where respondents commented spending should be maintained were mainly those which provide social care/educational services to adults and children. This was seen in 5% of comments, with many people commenting that the most vulnerable Hertfordshire residents should remain a top priority for the council and instead of making reductions in these services, more be done to look at how efficiency savings could be made.

9.25 There were also specific comments on services where spending could be reduced/improved. There were a small number of comments calling for the Highways services to focus on ensuring that sustainable transport options such as cycling and public transport can operate effectively (2%). There were calls for public transport to be increased and made more affordable. Links were made between the loneliness faced by elderly residents in rural areas in the county and the lack of bus services. However, others saw reducing the amount of public transport as an area to make quick savings.

9.26 There were a small number of comments around the disposal of our waste. Although the majority of these comments are focussed on issues that are District and Borough council responsibilities, some comments revolved around the importance of promoting recycling and the potential to create a county wide waste collection scheme that meant bin collection and type did not differ between districts. Comments called for the council to support the banning of single use plastic and encourage local businesses to do the same.

9.27 2% of respondents also commented on the importance of volunteers in the community and the value of creating more volunteering opportunities. They saw an increased number of volunteer positions as beneficial to the volunteers and the community they would be working in. It was suggested that by utilising volunteers, some council resources could be saved.

Social media comments:

9.28   The comments left on social media posts broadly mirrored those expressed in the surveys. This included complaints about roads, staff wages and the need to spend money efficiently.

10.   Results from community leaders

10.1   Comments left by the voluntary sector widely mirror those left by the general public through the survey. As only 7 voluntary sector respondents left comments, these cannot be seen to be representative of the voluntary sector as a whole. From the comments specified below, most were only mentioned by 1 voluntary sector respondent. Where there was more than 1 respondent referring to a particular theme, the number can be found in brackets at the end of the comment. Comments include:

- Savings could be made on external consultancy (2)

- Savings could be made by reducing the salaries of senior and middle managers (2)

- The council needs to ensure people are in useful employment and in the right jobs (2)

- The need to reduce spending on consultation schemes using external services

- The council needs to ask central government for more money

- The council needs to reduce number of libraries and move more towards digital libraries

- The council needs to use volunteers for up cycling projects to save (and earn) money from waste management

- Concerns around decisions already having been made before consulting with the community through this survey

- The survey failing to meet the County's COMPACT agreement, between the voluntary sector and Hertfordshire statutory organisations, by giving the voluntary sector less than 3 months to respond

- Supporting a council tax increase if this went towards front-line services.

11. Results from Youth Engagement

11.1 The following themes were discussed at the Youth Engagement event:

- The proportion of the budget being spent on **'Support for older people and those with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities'** is a huge amount of money, but services still seem to be lacking so much. They saw it as a huge amount of money that still wasn't sufficient.

  One topic that was bought up was the importance of using the budget towards mental health problems, as well as physical disabilities. The commented on the importance of this because mental health issues are a 'big part of lots of people lives.'

- As most attendees were of school age, there was a consensus amongst the group that this budget should be maintained or even increased for **'Early years and education support'**, putting more resources in to education. The majority of the group agreed that their school was having to hold back on what they were doing for trips and projects, which could have aided education and the students a lot. They suggested that this was because their school didn't have the budget to do what private schools could do.

  The group were passionate about the perceived lack of school places in the county. Many told stories about how they or people they know were placed in their second or third choice schools when moving from primary to secondary. Recognising that the county is predicted to grow in population, the group saw the creation of more school places as a huge priority.

- The main body of discussion for transport and highways focussed around public transport, which the group were extremely passionate about. They commented on the high price of public transport being a huge contributing factor for why so many people drive, contributing to traffic and emissions. The group agreed that lowering the price of public transport would encourage them and others to use this as a sustainable mode of transport. They also made a connection between travel and mental health, noting that they were often made to feel stress by having to take public transport to school.

- The group recognised the relevance of the need to tackle increasing homelessness and the housing crisis in the county. Compared to the importance of services like libraries, they would choose to put more money in to planning for new houses from the 'Environment and planning' budget.

11.2   This discussion was voice recorded to allow for more detailed analysis. A wider summary of this discussion can be found in Appendix B.

12.   Consultation with the Business Community

12.1   Following confirmation of the county council's draft Integrated Plan at Cabinet on 21 January 2018, Hertfordshire businesses will be contacted, via the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, to encourage businesses to comment. This timing is in line with requirements under the Non-Domestic Ratepayers (Consultation) Regulations 1992.

13.   Financial Implications

13.1   The financial implications of the Integrated Plan are considered elsewhere on this agenda. This report relates to the public engagement on the Integrated Plan and this activity is delivered within existing budgets.

14.   Equalities Impact

14.1   The equalities implications of the Integrated Plan are considered elsewhere on this agenda.

*Background Information*

County Council consultations webpage:

https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/council-budget/have-your-say-on-budget-spending.aspx

Your Priorities Survey 2018/2019

We want to hear your views on how we should be spending your council tax money over the coming year.

Hertfordshire County Council provides vital services to everyone who lives in Hertfordshire, whether that's providing social care to young and old, maintaining the county's 3,000 miles of road, planning ahead for our growing and ageing population or running the county's fire and rescue service.

The council continues to face significant financial challenges. Since 2010 the Government has been significantly reducing its grant to councils and the number of people living in Hertfordshire has been growing every year. Since this period began we have made savings of almost £315 million from our current annual budget and we must make further savings of £99 million by 2022. Had these savings not been made by the council, the amount of council tax we would need from our residents would be around 50% higher than it currently is. This would equate to a council tax bill at band D being nearly £650 pounds higher per year.
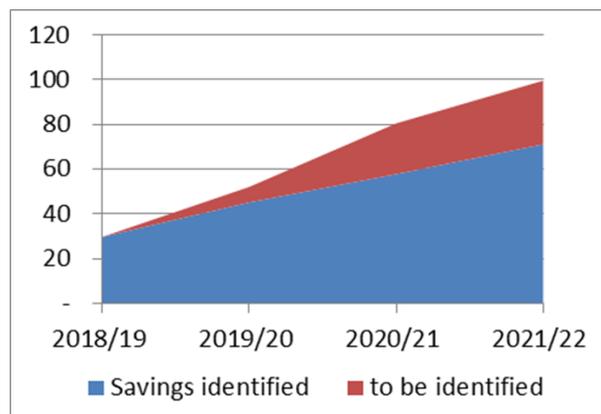
As our population ages and more people require care, more of our budget will be spent on supporting older people. For instance, an additional £10.6 million was needed to support older and vulnerable people this year. We also have a growing number of children in the county who need school places.

This is why it is important that we get your views so we can continue to provide the right services for the right people, making sure we are focusing on

the most that matter most to you and at the same time delivering our services in the most efficient way.

If you live in Hertfordshire, these decisions affect you, so please have your say.

Your feedback will be used to inform our decision-making process; you will be able to follow the discussion as plans develop and find out the final outcome at the County Council Meeting on **19 February 2019**

Have your say by filling out this survey before the end of **9 December 2018.**

The council will continue to explore ways of doing things better.

The services below are listed in the order of how much we spend on them (from largest to smallest).

While recognising there are no easy answers, in which service areas do you feel spending should be reduced? (Please tick at least three areas)

Your feedback will be used to inform our decision-making process; you will be able to follow the discussion and find out the final outcome at the County Council meeting on 19 February 2019.

Support for older people and those with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities

	(£321.7 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
	This pays for things like: – Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse or neglect – Support to help people in need of care and support to leave hospital – Help for people to stay well and independent in their own homes – Help for older people and disabled people with activities such as getting up, washed and dressed – Day activities and other services for adults with disabilities, mental ill health, dementia and for older people. – Residential and nursing care – Information and advice – Support for carers to help them stay well and continue to provide care		

2. Child protection and care for vulnerable children

(£107.8 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
This pays for things like: − Keeping vulnerable children safe within their families − Providing foster carers and residential homes to support our children looked after − Finding new adoptive families for children looked after − Providing support to disabled children and their families		

3. Early years and education support

(£62.2 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
This pays for things like: − Providing 82 Children's Centres delivering early support to children and families − Supporting families through parenting programmes − Continually improving early years nursery education and schools; − Ensuring sufficient school places are available − Ensuring vulnerable young people can access services they need − Working to keep children and young people healthy and happy		

4. Council support services

	(£63.1 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
	This pays for things like: – Financial services – Legal services – Personnel – Information communication technology – Property services – Communications – Support to the democratic process		

5. Highways and transportation

	(£61.2 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
	This pays for things like: – Maintenance of 3,000 miles of roads and pavements – Repairs and resurfacing – Road improvement schemes – Streetlights – Gritting in the winter – Subsidising and supporting bus services – Road safety		

6. Disposing of our waste

	(£43.8 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
	This pays for things like: – Ensuring the waste you produce is legally and safely disposed of in well managed facilities. – Providing residents with a network of household waste		

	recycling centres (tips/dumps). – Making arrangements for the reuse, recycling and composting of waste to reduce the amount sent for disposal (such as in landfill sites). * Your local district and borough council pays to collect rubbish and recycling from your home.		

7. Community protection

	(£35.0 million pounds in 2018/2019) **This pays for things like:** – Fire and Rescue Service – Trading standards (regulating local business) – Emergency planning and resilience	**Maintain budget**	**Reduce budget**

8. Libraries and other community services

	(£9.6 million pounds in 2018/2019) **This pays for things like:** – 46 public libraries (supporting literacy and access to reading, information and online services) – Registrars (registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships) – Hertfordshire Archives (preservation of local historical records)	**Maintain budget**	**Reduce budget**

9. Environment and planning

	(£3.6 million pounds in 2018/2019)	Maintain budget	Reduce budget
	This pays for things like: – Working with district councils to ensure future growth is well planned with the right infrastructure – Ensuring up to date policies are in place from waste and minerals planning – Monitoring the impact of potential airport expansion in the South East and the growth of London – Looking after footpaths, bridleways and the environment – Flood management issues		

Do you have additional comments about how we could reduce spending in some areas?

In a choice between service reductions and further council tax increases, what do you think we should do?	**Please tick one**
Increase Council Tax	
Reduce services	

If you have answered 'increase council tax', please let us know which services you would most like to see receive additional resources. Please tick all that apply

Support for older people and those with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities	
Child protection and care for vulnerable children	
Early years and education support	
Council support services	
Highways and transportation	
Disposing of our waste	
Community protection	
Libraries and other community services	
Environment and planning	

Discussion with young people from Hertfordshire Young commissioners, students from North Herts College and members of the Children in Care Council
County Hall, Hertford, Friday 23rd November 2018

On the 23 November 2018, an officer from the Corporate Policy team hosted an event in conjunction with YC Hertfordshire (Youth Connexions) as part of Takeover day.

Takeover Day is a national initiative, led by YC Hertfordshire locally, which puts children and young people into decision making positions and encourages organisations to hear their views. 30 participants attended and the event shared with them results from previous engagement surveys and tested their knowledge on our budget spending in the current financial year.

Participants were also tasked to select whether they thought specific service budgets should be maintained or reduced in the 2018/2019 financial year and to give reasons behind these decisions. The notes below detail the discussions which followed.

1. Adults and disabilities:

The general feedback on this service area was to maintain the budget as it was, or even increase slightly. Some commented that even though so much money is spent on this area the services still seem to be lacking so much. They saw it as a huge amount of money, that still wasn't sufficing.

One topic that was bought up was the importance of using the money for mental health problems, as well as physical disabilities. The commented on the importance of this because mental health issues are a 'big part of lots of people lives.'

They noted the importance of working with charitable organisations to help those with disabilities and older adults, and understood how the aging population meant that more people are needing more support.

2. Child protection and vulnerable children:

Feedback on this topic demonstrated how all of the participants believed this service's budget should be maintained and if possible increased. Whilst recognising the importance of helping older adults and those with disabilities, the majority of the group felt that the council should be spending more on child protection, because there's a lot of money going on older people comparatively.

3. Council support services:

Feedback on this topic demonstrated that most of the young people were aware that without money going in to 'council support services', we would not be able to deliver the rest of our services. We need help with technology and staff to be able to successfully deliver these.

Some young people felt that this budget should be increased because of how overworked staff are. They made particular reference to social workers and employees who have a lot of contact with the public. Some spoke about the fact that staff that are out doing jobs like social workers are not necessarily seen as 'council workers', so some members of the public might not understand that they are paid out of this budget, and therefore vote to decrease it.

There was recognition amongst the group that as this budget included staff wages, the budget would not be able to be decreased without costing people their jobs. On this matter alone, the majority vote was to maintain the budget.

4. Early years and education support:

As most attendees were of school age, there was a consensus amongst the group that this budget should be maintained or even increased, putting more resources in to education. The majority of the group agreed that their school was having to hold back on what they were doing for trips and projects, which could have aided education and the students a lot. They suggested that this was because their school didn't have the budget to do what private schools could do.

The group were passionate about the perceived lack of school places in the county. Many told stories about how they or people they know were placed in their second or third choice schools when moving from primary to secondary. Recognising that the county is predicted to grow in population, the group saw the creation of more school places as a huge priority.

There were also discussions around how schools could look for ways to be more self-sufficient. Some suggestions were that schools should be hiring space out for sports and doing more fundraising with school fairs.

School curriculums were also discussed, with the group agreeing that they would like to be taught more about current affairs and practical life lessons in schools.

5. Highways and transportation:

There was a mixed response to this service, but the majority agreed that the budget here should be higher. They mentioned the amount of potholes across the county and the possibility of these causing accidents. The group were also concerned about the number of roadworks across Hertfordshire, suggesting these were unavoidable and are causing traffic issues.

There were also discussions on how the council could better use this budget, for example one suggested that we should be thinking about building new roads rather than repairing all the old ones. There were also suggestions of installing a toll booth, the money from which would go towards repairing the roads. Cycling was also discussed as a positive alternative to driving, suggesting that the council encourages more cycling through the installation of more 'cycle friendly' routes.

The main body of discussion focussed around public transport, which the group were extremely passionate about. They commented on the high price of public transport being a huge contributing factor for why so many people drive, contributing to traffic and emissions. The group agreed that lowering the price of public transport would encourage them and others to use this as a sustainable mode of transport. They also made a connection between travel and mental health, noting that they were often made to feel stress by having to take public transport to school. They said this often resulted in them having to get up very early for school, worry about missing their bus or train, and face punishment at schools if they were late because of public transport.

6. Disposing of our waste:

Participants argued that this service was an area where efficiencies and savings could be made. They highlighted how there is too much household waste and it is important for the county council and its partners to continue to emphasise the benefits and need for residents to recycle and reuse.

The majority of discussions here were towards district and borough issues, with comments being made about bin collection, or types of bin.

7. *Community protection:*

Many felt that this budget should be higher, commenting that the council are spending more on disposing of waste than protecting the community. The general consensus was that although this sounded like a very small amount of money, if it's enough money to protect the community sufficiently, then there's no point in increasing the budget.

8. *Libraries and other community services:*

The majority of the group agreed that the current budget seems like a fair amount, with most people choosing to maintain or very slightly reduce. Although noting that Hertfordshire libraries appeared good in comparison to other libraries, the majority of the group said they rarely or never used the libraries.

Those who did said that they had noticed that a lot of libraries running off volunteers, suggesting this as a good way of making saving efficiencies.

9. *Environment and planning:*

All of the group agreed that this budget should be increased, noting that it was very important to plan for transport, especially with a growing population.

The group suggested that the council need safe buildings for new residents to live in, and that more money needs to be spent on making sure buildings are safe. It was suggested that there should be a bigger focus on sustainable development which would allow for the budget to be decreased in the long run.

The group also recognised the relevance of increasing homelessness and the housing crisis. Compared to the importance of services like libraries, they would choose to put more money in to planning for new houses.