Have your say on our Budget for 2015/16: Summary of Results

- As part of the budget conversation, a short survey was made available online via the budget pages on the Council website and a number of paper copies were made available to people on request. The survey was open from the budget event on 21 October to 12 December.

- The survey asked two multiple choice questions about the extent to which people felt informed about our approach to setting the budget and the extent to which people agreed or disagreed with the priorities that will guide our approach to delivering services and setting the budget.

- It also asked two open questions. One requesting comments on our guiding priorities, and the second asking for ways to reduce spend, generate income, or do things differently to allow us to continue to provide services whilst maintaining a balanced budget.

- We received 220 responses to the survey though not everyone chose to answer all the questions. The highest proportions of people responding to the survey were aged 40-64, white British, and in employment. The gender split was fairly even.

- Having read the information we've published about our approach to setting the budget, most people felt more informed about our approach to addressing the budget gap.

  ![Graph](Q1.png)

  Q1: Having read the information we've published about our approach to setting the budget, do you feel more informed about our approach to addressing the budget gap?

  (skipped this question) 456

- An overwhelming majority agreed with the priorities that will guide our approach to delivering services and reducing our budget over the next few years.
  - Operating efficiently as an organisation (93.1%)
  - Developing solutions for the long term (91.4%)
  - Taking early action because we know prevention is better than cure (90.5%)
  - Focusing on people with the greatest need (81.4%)
  - Working with our communities to deliver services in a different way (74.9%)
Q2

Over the next few years, our approach to delivering services and reducing our budget will be guided by the following priorities. Please indicate whether you agree/disagree with these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on people with the greatest need</td>
<td>53.4% (118)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing solutions for the long term</td>
<td>50% (110)</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating efficiently as an organisation</td>
<td>65.1% (142)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking early action because we know prevention is better than cure</td>
<td>58.5% (128)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.02%</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with our communities to deliver services in a different way</td>
<td>42.5% (93)</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>4.11%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Over 80 people commented on our priorities. These ranged from frustrations with the survey and the lack of detail provided, to in-depth commentaries on how the priorities should impact on Council services and the budget.
• Issues about the priorities that a number of people commented on included:
  o the extent to which the Council focuses or should focus on those with the greatest need. Opinions ranged from those arguing for areas of greatest need and particular communities e.g. young, vulnerable and elderly, to be prioritised, to those expressing a desire for what they saw as fair distribution across the whole of the city
  o the need for longer term preventative work but also a focus on getting through tough times in the shorter term
  o the need to ensure all monies owed to the council are recovered, further efficiencies within the Council and reductions in management costs and salaries
  o better collaboration with other service providers
  o a range of views on what delivering services in a different way might mean for fair access, and distribution and quality of services
  o support for people taking more responsibility but also concern over the capacity of some communities to do this
  o lack of detail in the survey about what the priorities mean and absence of financial information and costs.

• Over 140 people responded to the request comments on ways to reduce spend, generate income, or do things differently. These ranged from brief comments to extensive commentaries covering a range of suggestions.
• Suggestions for reducing spend included
  o cutting management and staffing costs - numbers and pay, reducing agency staff and reducing pension costs
  o more efficiency reviews
  o more use of digital communications
  o stopping road alterations
  o further reducing libraries
  o encouraging greater recycling and fewer collections.

• Suggestions for generating income included:
  o more proactive collection of monies owed
  o charging market rates for services
  o a local lottery to raise funds for the voluntary and community sector
  o increasing advertising and sponsorship of council assets
  o early payment discounts
  o exploiting student presence
  o increasing council tax
  o exploitation of the tourist economy
  o increase transport charges
  o increase fines for littering
  o being more business friendly and growing business in the city.

• Views on doing things differently included:
  o more local procurement
  o using better products for repairs so reducing false economies
  o getting better value from contractors and reducing outsourcing
  o changing council tenancy conditions to reduce arrears
  o reducing dependency on benefits
  o exploring community sector delivery of services
  o changing local assistance scheme grants
  o better partnership working e.g. health and social care
  o improving SEN provision
  o increase the use of technology.

• The results and full set of responses were shared with Cabinet Members in advance of the budget decision being made.

Policy, Performance and Communications, Sheffield City Council
January 2015