

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Northumberland County Council

# **CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED BUDGET 2015/2016**

**26 November 2014 to 23 January 2015**

## **FEEDBACK REPORT**

**28 January 2015**

## Introduction

Northumberland County Council is facing a financial challenge like no other. Along with other councils across the country, the money we receive from central Government, to help provide public services, has been severely cut. If we are to balance our books, which we must do, then we have to reduce our operating costs by 6.5 per cent. This means saving £44 million over the next two years. We have already had to make in excess of £160 million savings since 2009 so this level of saving cannot be made from efficiencies alone.

In order to meet these saving targets the council have been looking very carefully at how we can reduce expenditure, increase income and make savings while minimising the impact on residents, frontline services and council staff. Despite the financial challenges, we have high ambitions and expectations for our county. Our council remains firmly committed to delivering quality, first class services. We will focus on our priorities and on value for money. We will work with key partners and look for new and innovative ways of working.

Protecting frontline services has, and always will be, a top priority for us. We are committed to capital investment in new infrastructure and continued funding of key services such as highways, housing, education and health will remain strong.

These proposals have been the subject of a public consultation exercise, further details of which are accessible through the following link: [budget.northumberland.gov.uk](http://budget.northumberland.gov.uk)

## Findings

In total the budget consultation information provided on the Council's website was viewed; 2,577 times, with a total of 88 individuals/organisations choosing to submit responses to the Council's budget survey. This section provides the key findings from the website survey, and the results of the presentation to area committees, as well as the budget related correspondents received during the consultation period.

### Overall results from the online survey

The consultation survey based on 88 respondents provided the following quantitative data:

Question	Quantitative Results
1. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?	4 Organisations 84 Individuals
2. Are you a resident of Northumberland?	92% Yes 8% No
3. Do you work for Northumberland County Council, or an organisation which receives funding from Northumberland County Council?	55.2% Yes 44.8% No
4. Do you work in Northumberland?	77.3% Yes 22.7% No
5. After having read the budget proposals information we've published, do you feel more informed about the approach to addressing the budget gap?	64.7% Yes 35.3% No

The table indicates that most respondents to the survey reside in Northumberland with over half of respondents working for either Northumberland County Council or one of its partners. What this consultation exercise has been successful in delivering is a raised awareness of the issues facing the Council and how the Council plans to tackle these issues. 64.7% of respondents feel more informed about the approach to addressing the budget gap having read the budget proposals.

## **Key issues emerging from the consultation**

### **Area Committee Presentations**

The area committees were attended by a Northumberland County Council's Executive Director, at the area committees the Director gave a detailed presentation regarding the council's budget position (*The full transcript of the area committees is available on the Councils website with a summary included as part of Appendix A*).

- Mr Steven Mason, Lead Executive Director – Attended South East Area Committee
- Mrs Daljit Lally, Executive Director of Well-Being and Community Health – Attended North Areas Committee
- Mr Barry Rowlands, Executive Director of Local Services – Attended West Area Committee

Key details of the presentation included how the budget was split into capital and revenue costs, the differences between the revenue and capital budgets, statutory and discretionary services, sources of funding, the funding gap and extent; the principles of balancing the budget, the savings proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17, Council Tax proposals, and impact of the savings.

The Area Committees recognised the scale and extent of the challenge facing the County Council, and as such focused their debates on the potential impact of the proposed budget on service users and the residents of Northumberland.

Issues highlighted included:

- Support was expressed for the reasons for developing a 2 year budget. It aligned the budget setting process with the lifetime of the current Administration and included a provision of £15 million in 2017/18 to allow the incoming Administration time to develop its financial strategy.
- Impact on front line services. The 2 year budget largely protected front line services. The results of the General Election in May 2015 would determine year 3 and beyond.
- Consideration of all options for the future of housing provision in Northumberland.
- Identification of controversial proposals. £8 million savings were proposed through the generation of additional income either in new areas where charges previously did not exist or increasing charges in line with other local authorities.
- Defence of the proposed Council Tax increase and the long-term consequences of not doing so.

### **Correspondence**

Four organisations expressed their views on the proposed budget in letter or email format (*full copies of these correspondence are available as part of Appendix B*).

A number of the organisations that responded acknowledged the difficult position that Northumberland County Council was in, comments included:

“The Parish Council accepts that as the largest employer in Northumberland, the County Council faces significant challenges in the years ahead to maintain the levels of services that the public across the County rightly deserve and expect”  
*Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council*

“We share the frustration of you and your colleagues in having to make such challenging cuts in expenditure and services. Ever since LGR, there has been no respite and there is no sign of things getting any better in the shorter-term”  
*NALC*

“English Heritage understands Northumberland’s challenging financial position and appreciates that difficult budget choices have to be made in order to achieve a saving of £44 million over the next 2 years”

*English Heritage*

The correspondence received from organisations also made reference to the proposed cuts. All were opposed to the cut, comments included:

“Headings such as ‘Withdraw funding for support schemes’, ‘Review of Youth Service’, ‘Increased productivity’, ‘Review of services’ etc presumably will have implications for local areas, but the budget papers do not give the sort of detail which would enable a clear response”

*NALC*

“There is an acceptance that finite resources ultimately need to be deployed where they are needed most urgently. However little, if anything, is being done to ensure that the existing apparent inequality in the division of those resources across the County does not widen. The Parish Council would like to see a more equitable distribution of the County Council’s resources to ensure that the residents of Tynedale are not disadvantaged”

*Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council*

“Hexham Town Council wishes to express its concerns at the intended cuts in the: provision of markets management; public toilets; libraries and Youth services”

*Hexham Town Council*

“We would hope that any future service redesigns in areas such as health, social care and children’s services to “manage demand” do not limit the ability of Northumberland to make optimum use of its local heritage assets to support health and wellbeing for the greater benefit of local people. We recommend that the Council looks laterally and imaginatively across service boundaries to make the most of potential synergies across different service areas.”

*English Heritage*

The organisations also made the following comment regarding the consultation process:

“We have greatly appreciated the additional documentation which has been made available this year, which has provided both a clearer and more-informative rationale for the proposals, and also a clearer invitation for people to make a response to the consultation”

*NALC*

“Local councils continue to be concerned and disappointed that the County Council is with-holding what is perceived to be the ‘parish share’ of the Government’s Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant. Even if our views differ from those of the County Council, it is regrettable that the Council’s intention is not the subject of a clear proposal within the current consultation, as part of the budget process”

*NALC*

### **Online Survey**

The online survey was completed by 88 respondents, 84 of those respondents were individuals, with the other 4 respondents representing an organisation.

Having reviewed the Council’s savings proposals respondents were asked for their comments relating to the following five questions:

- Driving Efficiencies - How else do you think we could do things differently to make us more efficient?
- Managing Demand - How else do you think we could do things differently to better manage demand?
- Income Generation - How else do you think we could do things differently to generate more income?
- Cuts in Services - How else do you think we could do things differently when cutting/reducing services?
- Control Inflation - How else do you think we could do things differently to reduce the impact of inflation?

The comments overleaf represent a sample of the responses received that relate to recurring themes (*Full details of all respondents comments are available in Appendix C*).

## Driving Efficiencies - How else do you think we could do things differently to make us more efficient?

Recurring Suggestions	Sample Comments
Supportive of Proposals	<p>"These proposals seem sensible in the circumstances"</p> <p>"I have found your proposal very interesting and refreshing and I very much hope you are able to meet your obligations"</p>
Use of Consultancy/ Agency Staff	<p>"Stop employing consultants, as the staff already employed do have the skills"</p> <p>"Restrict use of consultants on inflated salaries"</p>
Review of Senior Management	<p>"Reducing the number of senior manager"</p> <p>Centralise all services, Less higher and middle management.</p>

## Managing Demand - How else do you think we could do things differently to better manage demand?

Recurring Suggestions	Sample Comments
Local Solutions	<p>"Understand the needs of the whole county, not just the SE - what works in Ashington does not necessarily work in Alnwick. People in rural communities have different pressures and costs (esp. travel and access to public transport and other services). Demand needs to take in to account how people are able to access services"</p> <p>"Continue to support the LMAPs groups and enable targeted funding to be made available to reduce or remove issues within communities"</p>
Partnership working	<p>"Encourage more self-help and volunteering in communities. Promote a culture change where people take responsibility instead of everything being 'the government's fault'. Eradicate the blame culture. Work more closely with parish councils and local community groups"</p> <p>"All public sector organisations are facing similar financial challenges and strengthening partnership working is vital to enable all parties to focus on what preventative and early intervention strategies they can provide"</p>
Prevention Activities	<p>"Maintain those professionals who are in contact with young people on a regular basis who deliver effective prevention work - to identify problems/issues - before they escalate into a really expensive drain on other valuable resources"</p> <p>"Look for early intervention to ensure problem areas are dealt with early thus reducing costs"</p>

## Income Generation - How else do you think we could do things differently to generate more income?

Recurring Suggestions	Sample Comments
Reinstate parking charges	<p>"Evaluate the extent to which the free car parking disks, introduced within the county in April 2014, have generated income within wider the local economy, as compared to the income generated by historical car parking charges (and fines)"</p> <p>"Reintroduce parking charges across ALL council car parks. People do not begrudge paying for parking (as long as it is reasonable) if it is applied equally across all parts of the region"</p>
Trade/Charge for services	<p>"Offer different/new services offer services to neighbouring authorities/private companies"</p> <p>"Ask Parks Department to offer a garden service to local householders throughout all the locality areas. This will maintain jobs and help a wide range of people. I think busy working people would be willing to pay for a reliable trustworthy service. Charge people for grit boxes on non-public roads Start a county-wide broadband/phone provider business - I would definitely sign up! (ditto power supplies)"</p>
Promote economic development	<p>"Provide incentives for business to locate in Northumberland"</p> <p>"Support and fast track big planning applications to attract jobs and housing and increase income. Target major companies that would be an asset to Northumberland. Be bolder in making Northumberland open for business"</p>

## Cuts in Services - How else do you think we could do things differently when cutting/reducing services?

### Recurring Suggestions    Sample Comments

Partnership Working	<p>“Share buildings with other depts, police, NHS, fire, CAB, community ventures other agencies to get better use out of the space encourage channel shift to online, end to end processes into back office systems, no manual intervention required, remove wasteful processes front line staff trained in more than one service”</p> <p>“Savings can be made through a variety of methods through reducing provision in areas of no need, or working in partnership with voluntary sector to save share the costs of the provision or even commission all together to the voluntary sector”</p>
Consultation	<p>“Consult Northumberland residents. If we knew which services were at risk we might be open to paying more taxes to keep them”</p> <p>“I believe that if you keep people well inform, they accept changes better, so communication is the answer, getting it out there”</p>
Local Solution	<p>“Use local knowledge especially that of staff to guide decisions - in some cases it may be best to close smaller services such as small branch libraries instead of stretching staff across several locations, so that the larger locations can provide a better service. Looking at demand and being proactive rather than reactive”</p> <p>“Identify need and re allocate funds to areas of need. - Look at staffing levels and youth worker allocation and funds by area and the level of partnerships that are delivered. - Look at what the voluntary sector delivers and compare the cost and effectiveness and outcomes for the community”</p>

## Control Inflation - How else do you think we could do things differently to reduce the impact of inflation?

### Recurring Suggestions    Sample Comments

Pay/Salary Freeze	<p>“Wage freezes, better to have a lower salary than no job”</p> <p>“The removal of percentage salary increases should also be considered as this only increasing the gap between front line services and top end staff”</p>
Out of our control	<p>“I am finding difficult to comment of my opinion of how I could do things differently to reduce impact of inflation. Can we influence inflation”</p> <p>“Inflation is difficult to control and reducing the impact is probably as difficult”</p>
Contract negotiations	<p>“Buy products/systems/services as a group - get more units for your money- all local authorities/NHS/police/other businesses/charities club together”</p> <p>“Change the role of council to that of a commissioner of services, in the same way that it is for the NHS (&amp; could use their skill sets in commissioning and monitoring)”</p>

## Next Steps

The Council will consider the budget for 2015/16 and 2016/17 proposed by the Labour administration at its next meeting on 25 February 2015, having taken account of the feedback gathered from this consultation process.

# Appendix A

# Area Committee Budget Consultation

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# 1 Area Committee Budget Consultation – North Area Committee (D Lally)

## STATE OF THE AREA DEBATE AND 2015/16 BUDGET

Executive Director of Well-being and Community Health Mrs D Lally provided the presentation. During the presentation key details included how the budget was split into capital and revenue costs, with capital spend proposed of £352 over the following two years, and £670 each year for revenue costs; details of the net budget and gaps in funding due to a reduction in grants from the Government; work to balance the budget; savings proposals, the proposal for a 1.99% Council Tax increase; the impact of savings and consultation work planned before the decision was taken by Council in February. It was also noted that paper copies of details of proposed service cuts were available as at the meeting.

Discussion followed of which of key points were:

- In response to Councillor Symonds' concerns about the proposed cut in public conveniences, members were advised that discussions would take place soon. They were costly to maintain but there would be an option of providing financial contributions to parish/town councils to provide the service more effectively. Councillor Symonds replied that he would look forward to early consultation on the issue
- A resident queried whether there was a proposed 75% cut to the library service, and the effect on outline for areas without Superfast Broadband? Members were advised of plans to organise greater library stock rotation, so rather than buying more books, there would be a better use of books in stock, many of which might have been unused in their current locations. This would result in a better use of resources. An 8% cut was proposed for the library service for service provision/location/ management costs; the 75% figure referred to the proposed reduction in purchases of books/DVDs. Consideration was also being given to ways to have more multi use libraries and linking with IT usage.

Mrs Lally was thanked for her presentation and it was then:

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted and comments submitted for the State of the Area Debate discussion at County Council in February.

## **2 Area Committee Budget Consultation – West Area Committee (B Rowlands)**

### STATE OF THE AREA DEBATE AND 2015/16 BUDGET

The Executive Director Local Services gave an update on the 2015/16 budget and the background position faced by the Council. The discussion from the Area Committee would be fed into the 8 week public consultation process prior to consideration of the final budget proposals at the Council meeting in February 2015.

He explained: the differences between the revenue and capital budgets, statutory and discretionary services, sources of funding, the funding gap and extent; the principles of balancing the budget, the savings proposals for 2015/16 and 2016/17, Council Tax proposals, and impact of the savings.

Issues raised by Councillors and members of the public included:

- Support was expressed for the reasons for developing a 2 year budget. It aligned the budget setting process with the lifetime of the current Administration and included a provision of £15 million in 2017/18 to allow the incoming Administration time to develop its financial strategy.
- Impact on front line services. The 2 year budget largely protected front line services. The results of the General Election in May 2015 would determine year 3 and beyond.
- Consideration of all options for the future of housing provision in Northumberland.
- Identification of controversial proposals. £8 million savings were proposed through the generation of additional income either in new areas where charges previously did not exist or increasing charges in line with other local authorities.
- Defence of the proposed Council Tax increase and the long-term consequences of not doing so.
- Concessionary fares. Approximately £4.5 million was allocated for concessionary fares and there were no plans to reduce support.
- Possible positive impact of the price of crude oil which had decreased dramatically in recent weeks / months and impacted on many areas of the budget.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and comments be submitted for the State of the Area Debate discussion at County Council in February 2015.

### **3 Area Committee Budget Consultation – South East Area Committee (S Mason)**

#### STATE OF THE AREA DEBATE AND 2015/16 BUDGET

Steven Mason, Lead Executive Director, attended the meeting to give a presentation on the State of the Area Debate and 2015/16 budget. It was noted that more details were available on the Council's website and that a consultation form was available at the end of the meeting should anyone wish to make alternative views to be taken to Policy Board and then to Council for consideration.

Key details of the presentation included how the budget was split into capital and revenue costs, with capital spend of £352 million proposed over the next two years and £670 million each year for revenue costs; the net revenue budget (£440 million) after specific grants had been taken out; the reason why there was a gap, the extent of the gap, balancing the budget, savings proposals, Council Tax proposals, the impact of savings and details of the planned consultation.

Issues raised by Councillors and members of the public were as follows:

- In response to a question regarding the national debt crisis, the Lead Executive Director stated that evidence suggested that the position was deteriorating not improving.
- In response to a query regarding Arch, the Lead Executive Director stated that next year some of the profit would be paid back to the Council as dividends and that would be classed as income. A dividend of £1 million would be paid back to the Council in the next financial year.
- A member pointed out that no members of the opposition were in attendance that night to explain why the Government was putting this pressure on local Councils.
- The Leader stated that the Lead Executive Director was also the Treasurer of the Council and he thanked him for his help in putting the budget together. He said the Council would be blamed for the cuts even though it was not its fault and he believed this budget was the best way forward.
- A member of the public said he was pleased that the culture of the Council had changed to look after people by investing money into people.
- A member said the Leader and his team deserved to be complimented for all of the hard work they had put into setting the budget.
- The Deputy Leader stated that the consequences of not setting a legal budget were severe, all services would be run by a commissioning body and many jobs would be lost. In the last 5 years money had been wasted and 1600 staff had lost their jobs. He stated that the 1% financial incentive taken by the former administration was non-recurring and the more times it was taken the more money was lost.
- A member stated that as a result of the last administration not putting Council Tax up, the Council had lost £15 million pounds per year which it could not get back. That equated to 450 people in Northumberland losing their jobs.
- In two years' time unless something changed there would be serious problems.
- The Deputy Leader said if anyone had any suggestions please let them be known through the consultation exercise so that ideas could be looked at and examined.

The Chair thanked the Executive Lead Director for his presentation.

RESOLVED - that the information be noted and comments submitted for the State of the Area Debate discussion at County Council in February.

## **Appendix B**

# Budget Consultation responses from Town/Parish Councils and other Stakeholders

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## Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council

Steven Mason  
Lead Executive Director  
Corporate Resources  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
NE61 2EF

20 January 2015

Dear Mr Mason

### **Northumberland County Council's Proposed Budget 2015-16 to 2016-17**

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council have considered the documents circulated as part of the public consultation in respect of the above matter. The Parish Council accepts that as the largest employer in Northumberland, the County Council faces significant challenges in the years ahead to maintain the levels of services that the public across the County rightly deserve and expect. It is disappointing that the public debate becomes so polarised on party political issues. Of the many issues debated by the Parish Council, there are three main points councillors wish to make.

There is an acceptance that finite resources ultimately need to be deployed where they are needed most urgently. However little, if anything, is being done to ensure that the existing apparent inequality in the division of those resources across the County does not widen. The Parish Council would like to see a more equitable distribution of the County Council's resources to ensure that the residents of Tynedale are not disadvantaged.

The proposal to relocate the County Council's headquarters from Morpeth to Ashington appears unwise. Whilst the redistribution of staff across the County so they are more closely aligned to the areas they serve is welcomed, the consequence of such a move mitigates the need for a large centralised headquarters. Northumbria Police is one such example of a large organisation that has realised the dispersal of staff across the County can result in significant savings by removing the need for a large headquarters premises. It is unsurprising that some are making political gain from such a decision which seems to fly in the face of logic.

Finally there is some despair that the majority of cuts appear to be at the coal face. The preponderance of extremely highly paid and very senior staff within the County Council seems out of balance considering the extent of savings needed to be made. The Parish Council is of the view that greater consideration should be given to the potential to make savings from a restructuring that involves a reduction in the numbers of senior managers.

Yours sincerely

Nick Spencer  
Clerk

## Appendix B – Budget consultation response from Hexham Town Council

Dear Ms Hessey,

Hexham TC has noted this matter and it wishes to express its concerns at the intended cuts in the: - provision of markets management; public toilets; libraries and Youth services.

Regards,

*Derick Tiffin.*

Clerk of the Council

Hexham Town Council  
Council Office  
St Andrews Cemetery  
West Road  
Hexham  
NE46 3RR

T: 01434609575

F: 01434609575

E: [clerk@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

W: [www.hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Derick Tiffin, Clerk of the Council 07710055051

Steven English, Cemetery Superintendent 07891101236

David Boaden, Cemetery Manager 07710053732

Councillor T Robson, The Mayor 07941526656

Councillor T Cessford, The Deputy Mayor 07837300542

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## Appendix B – Budget consultation response from English Heritage



### ENGLISH HERITAGE NORTH EAST REGION

Democratic Services,  
Northumberland County  
Council,  
County Hall,  
Morpeth,  
Northumberland,  
NE612EF  
NE8 1HH

**Our ref:** Northumberland Budget  
**Telephone:** 0191 269 1207  
**Email:** Nicola.Harrison@English-  
Heritage.org.uk  
**Date:** 21st January 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **NORTHUMBERLAND BUDGET CONSULTATION 2015**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the proposed cuts to Northumberland County Council's budget for 2015. English Heritage has responded to the consultation via the consultation website. However, we also thought it would be helpful to submit our response by email to ensure that our views are represented in their entirety. As no contact information was provided with the consultation, we have sent this response to Democratic Services in the first instance. If this is not the right point of contact, we would be grateful if you could forward our response onto the appropriate department.

#### **1. Driving Efficiencies**

##### **How else do you think we could do things differently to make us more efficient?**

English Heritage understands Northumberland's challenging financial position and appreciates that difficult budget choices have to be made in order to achieve a saving of £44 million over the next 2 years. However, we would also like to stress the wider benefits that can be gained from caring for Northumberland's historic environment and the role played by heritage in creating better places to live, work and visit.

Heritage assets provide a unique sense of place which contributes to the area's attractiveness to both residents and investors alike. Research has shown that independent and creative businesses value historic properties for their unique character. This shows the flexibility of local heritage assets and how they can continue to play a positive role in creating jobs and appealing places to live and work.

#### **2. Managing Demand**

##### **How else do you think we could do things differently to better manage demand?**

Local authority heritage assets support quality of life through their culture, education and leisure use and both culture and heritage offer great value for money. There are few other service areas that make such a wide-spread contribution in terms of supporting economic growth, attracting tourists and investors, improving health and wellbeing and promoting inclusion.

English Heritage does not have any substantive comments to make in relation to managing demand for health, social care, children's services and educational provision. We would instead like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the particular role played by heritage in supporting health and wellbeing.

The most recent Heritage Counts report showed that a massive 79% of people in the North East had visited a heritage site in the past year - the highest levels since official records began. It also looked at evidence on the value and benefits of this heritage participation and found that visiting local heritage sites can have a positive impact on life satisfaction and wellbeing.

For the average heritage visitor, the monetary value of this impact on wellbeing was calculated at £1,646 per person per year. This valuation technique was based upon the amount of money you would have to take away from someone who'd visited a heritage site to return them to the level of wellbeing they would have been at before their heritage visit.

We would therefore hope that any future service redesigns in areas such as health, social care and children's services to "manage demand" do not limit the ability of Northumberland to make optimum use of its local heritage assets to

support health and wellbeing for the greater benefit of local people. We recommend that the Council looks laterally and imaginatively across service boundaries to make the most of potential synergies across different service areas.

### **3. Income Generation**

#### **How else do you think we could do things differently to generate more income?**

Northumberland has a strong reputation for excellence in cultural regeneration and tourism and has seen significant success in places like Berwick, where heritage has been a key element in the town's rejuvenation. These types of project have contributed towards the economic and social vitality of the county and have attracted significant levels of investment from heritage organisations like English Heritage.

In the past ten years, English Heritage has offered investment worth more than £4.7 million for projects in the Northumberland area, often to tackle Heritage at Risk. Many of these complex projects at historically sensitive sites have relied upon the valuable support and advice provided by Northumberland's Conservation and Archaeological Services. This expertise is vital for addressing specific issues at local Heritage at Risk sites and without these functions Northumberland's ability to secure future resources from heritage funders may be compromised.

We would also urge Northumberland to take into account the on-going management needed to protect past heritage investment when reviewing its capacity and resources. The Council will need to identify and continue to fulfil contractual obligations that are associated with past grant aid from heritage funding bodies, which usually include provision for long-term maintenance.

We are pleased to note that the Council plans to continue to invest in its public parks with plans to use its capital programme to lever in grant funding from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will enable the refurbishment of these important community assets as has been achieved with the successful Berwick Parks Project. However, we would also remind Northumberland that this type of funding requires provision for the parks to be maintained in the longer term. Therefore plans to reduce parks maintenance budgets may prove contrary to the conditions of these funding streams.

In terms of income generation, Northumberland also has considerable potential to further develop its tourism economy. The county has also demonstrated good leadership in setting up destination management structures such as Northumberland Tourism, in leading on the coordination of the management of the World Heritage Site, and its work to sustain and develop the partnership along Hadrian's Wall (an international visitor brand).

Maintaining and developing these approaches will be important to secure future sustainable economic opportunities. However, it is unclear from the consultation how these aspects (and their coordination) will be affected by proposals to transfer responsibility for culture and tourism delivery to the new Active Northumberland Trust.

### **4. Cuts in service**

#### **How else do you think we could do things differently when cutting / reducing services?**

Local councils like Northumberland are at the forefront of protecting, managing and improving the historic environment. The ability of councils to positively shape the quality of the historic environment rests upon the valuable knowledge and expertise of the Archaeologists, Conservation Officers and Planners who know the individual sites; the styles, techniques and materials that are characteristic of those places and their potential for re-use, conversion and adaptation.

English Heritage believes that effective planning is crucial to shaping attractive places. As well as having creative, efficient and robust development management based on clear strategic priorities, effective planning requires strong specialist advice on the historic environment, good enforcement and a joined-up approach across the Council.

Northumberland County Council currently has responsibility for managing a wealth of historic assets and has more sites of national importance than any other local authority in the North East. Northumberland boasts a total of 5,564 Listed Buildings (45% of the region's total), 968 Scheduled Monuments (70% of the region's total), 18 Registered Parks and Gardens (33%), 4 Registered Battlefields (67%). The Council also has responsibility for plus 69 Conservation Areas and 1 World Heritage Site. For more information, please see <http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/HC-regional-summaries/HC-North-East/>.

Northumberland County Council has a statutory duty to protect its Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeological remains and to take these into account when considering site allocations or proposals for planning development.

All local planning authorities are also required to have access to the specialist Archaeological and Conservation advice they need to fulfil their statutory planning duties. For Northumberland, this provision is currently met through specialist in-house Conservation and Archaeological provision across the county that is based within the Councils planning and building functions. This arrangement enables the Council to discharge its statutory functions in relation to historic environment planning.

We have noted proposals in the Schedule of Efficiencies for a budget reduction of £45,000 affecting Planning, Economy and Housing Services in 2015-16. However, we have found no information in the budget consultation materials to indicate that any specific change is proposed for historic environment service provision within the authority. We have therefore assumed that current levels of service provision will remain the same. If this proves not to be the case, then please let us know.

We will therefore take this opportunity to caution that any reduction in historic service provision would directly affect the Council's ability to process development management and building control applications affecting nationally important archaeological remains, listed buildings, conservation areas and other heritage assets recognised by the NPPF.

It would reduce the Council's capacity to use statutory tools such as enforcement and other planning functions to improve the amenity of a place. It would also affect the Council's ability to designate and duty to manage its conservation areas under powers granted in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 (sections 69-80). Furthermore, it would reduce the Council's ability to make informed choices regarding site allocation in Development Plan documents as well as robust Development Management policy.

Any reduction in historic environment service provision would also have the potential to reduce the overall quality of Northumberland's historic environment. It would affect the Council's ability to provide timely advice on planning applications and its ability to achieve aspirations for economic development. It would also increase the potential for legal challenge. This is due to an increased likelihood of damage to nationally significant heritage assets through poorly informed planning decisions and increased levels of risk for developers working in historically sensitive areas without adequate local authority support.

For these reasons, we would therefore caution against any reduction in Northumberland's essential in-house expertise on historic buildings, areas and archaeology. Northumberland needs a robust, expert and well-informed planning service, from strategic planning, through to development management, enforcement and specialist expertise. All are essential parts of the package.

## **5. Control inflation**

### **How do you think we could do things differently to reduce the impact of inflation?**

It seems that one of the ways that Northumberland is planning to reduce the impact of inflation is to reduce its running costs by reducing its property portfolio, with plans for a smaller property footprint that can be maintained to a higher standard and a relocation of office headquarters from County Hall to Ashington.

English Heritage is concerned about the potential impact of reduced resources upon Northumberland's ability to repair, maintain and enhance any Council-owned heritage assets. Local authority-owned historic buildings and other heritage assets reflect the history of the local communities and services associated with them and make a crucial contribution to local identity and distinctiveness. They also provide opportunities for Council income generation, through rental receipts for example.

English Heritage has produced guidance on council-owned heritage assets entitled "Managing Local Authority Assets, Some Guiding Principles for Decision Makers", which you may find helpful. This is available to download from our website at: <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/managing-local-authority-heritage-assets-document/>. We understand that in some circumstances, the future funding and management of these assets will be better achieved outside of local authority ownership. In order to review and rationalise council-owned property and provide opportunities for their future funding and management, it is essential to have full information on the extent, nature and physical condition of the estate.

If any heritage assets are affected by this rationalisation programme, we would therefore urge Northumberland to ensure that it has up-to date information on its historic estate to inform such decisions and a positive strategy to secure the future of these sites and prevent them from being placed on the Heritage at Risk register.

## **6. Your ideas**

### **How else do you think we could do things differently to save money?**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the proposed cuts to Northumberland County Council's budget for 2015. English Heritage does not have any further comments to make on this consultation.

Yours faithfully,

**Nicky Harrison**

**Local Engagement Adviser - [Nicola.Harrison@English-Heritage.org.uk](mailto:Nicola.Harrison@English-Heritage.org.uk) - 0191 269 1207**

## Appendix B – Budget consultation response from Northumberland Association of Local Councils

Dear Grant

Thank-you for the invitation to comment on the draft budget proposals for the year ahead. NALC's County Committee discussed this at their meeting last Saturday. We hope the following comments are of help and interest:

- 1) General: we have greatly appreciated the additional documentation which has been made available this year, which has provided both a clearer and more-informative rationale for the proposals, and also a clearer invitation for people to make a response to the consultation.
- 2) Outlook: we share the frustration of you and your colleagues in having to make such challenging cuts in expenditure and services. Ever since LGR, there has been no respite and there is no sign of things getting any better in the shorter-term.
- 3) Schedule of Efficiencies: inevitably, it is the proposed cuts (Appendix 5) which are of particular interest to local councils in Northumberland, and in particular the impact which these may have on local areas. Successive versions of the Local Councils' Charter have included a commitment by NCC to engage with and consult local councils on proposals which will impact on their local areas. In practice, this has rarely happened, since 2009, due in part to the externally-imposed timetable on which the Government operates. However, local councils continue to experience difficulties in interpreting the local impact of the proposed cuts. Headings such as 'Withdraw funding for support schemes', 'Review of Youth Service', 'Increased productivity', 'Review of services' etc presumably will have implications for local areas, but the budget papers do not give the sort of detail which would enable a clear response.
- 4) Individual services: NCC staff are working with the local councils concerned to explore solutions to cuts that are having to be made in the provision of public toilets. It would be very welcome if this sort of approach could also be undertaken with other locally-based services such as (for example) libraries and youth clubs, preferably at an early stage in the budget-making process, to enable local councils to make provision in their own budgets, if they wish.
- 5) Government grant: local councils continue to be concerned and disappointed that the County Council is with-holding what is perceived to be the 'parish share' of the Government's Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant. Even if our views differ from those of the County Council, it is regrettable that the Council's intention is not the subject of a clear proposal within the current consultation, as part of the budget process.

Although not specifically part of this current budget-making process, there are clearly all sorts of opportunities for local councils to work productively with the County Council, not only on the implementation of budget changes but also more positively on the development of new initiatives and approaches, such as town centre management, affordable housing, Broadband improvements, public transport, countryside access etc. We look forward to working with you to develop this productive relationship, over the year ahead

Best wishes

David Francis  
NALC

Northumberland County Council have classified this Email as PROTECT

# Appendix C

## Driving efficiencies (saving around £26.2 million over two years)

We will find innovative and more improved ways of working to avoid duplication or waste.

### What we are doing?

Restructuring the organisation to make it more efficient.

Renegotiating contracts and spending with our major suppliers.

Improving our website and increasing our range of online services.

Investing in technology to work more efficiently.

Making better use of our many buildings to reduce the number of properties we own and the costs that come with them.

Looking at new and innovative ways of working. For example all our leisure, culture and arts services will be managed through a new charitable trust, Active Northumberland.

How else do you think we could do things differently to make us more efficient?		
Ref.	Comment	Category
4	Release all agency staff (massive cost savings) and stop re-employing staff who have taken redundancy or early retirement - these are the biggest issues for morale among the workforce	Agency Staff
5	Filter staff into other buildings used by Council services and not spend money on the development of a replacement County Hall. Allow staff the opportunity to source cheaper alternatives to ordering consumables (designated suppliers can be far more expensive in the long run than local shops that provide resources at a competitive rate). Disband unnecessary town councils that pay local councillors a lot of money to sit around talking about why they can't help local towns, and paying a large amount of rent in the process. Do not permit Cramlington Town Council to waste money buying an expensive, inaccessible office headquarters in Cramlington Village, the house proposed has a large garden that would not be utilised by the council, and should belong to a private resident who would appreciate the premises for its historical status.	Don't relocate HQ  Remove Town/Parish Councils
6	Less senior managers and heads of departments on salaries larger than gov't ministers don't waste money on another new website don't spend money on new IT equipment unless absolutely necessary sell unused props do not give away county assets, be careful who you approach to manage active Northumberland.	Reduce Mgmt  Dispose of unused Assets
8	Your 14 strategic streams are geared towards improving the health and well-being of the community and improving the areas we live in and I have no issue with your plans. I have certain suggestions in relation to the field that I have an interest in to provide my opinion and maybe suggest efficiencies. In my opinion there are hundreds of thousands of pounds that can be saved on an annual basis through measuring the effectiveness of the service or the provision and acting accordingly.	Supportive of Proposal
9	The county street lights are repaired by Newcastle City Council, at what cost I don't know. Why can't this service be brought 'in-house' like the proposal to bring back the Housing Services!	Bring services back in-house
11	Stop employing consultants, as the staff already employed do have the skills.	Don't hire Consultants
12	Cut the salaries of grossly overpaid CEO and Senior Managers	Reduce Mgmt
13	Reducing the number of senior managers	Reduce Mgmt
15	Support driving efficiencies (literally!) I would suggest a concentrated effort on people working in their local communities as much as possible across the cluster areas (particularly in the North and West areas which are vast in size) This would reduce waste in 3 areas: people's time when they should be working, the expenses budget and the environment. One round trip to County Hall is close on 100 miles and takes over 2 hours to do, not including the meeting!	Flexible working (home, local town)
16	These proposals seem sensible in the circumstances.	Supportive of Proposals
17	Restrict use of consultants on inflated salaries, correct management of staff - why do I always see county council vans parked up on the roadside with people sitting around doing nothing?	Don't hire Consultants
18	If restructuring means spreading oneself too thinly then it is a false economy - a	Ensure services

	guarantee needs to be made that services and support will not be reduced as a result of restructuring.	have enough staff to function effectively
19	I believe that restructuring the youth service is not a bad thing as in my opinion there are thousands of funds that are wasted within the youth service especially in Seaton Delaval and Cramlington. The allocation of funds between the three areas has not been fair and deprived and needy young people have been deprived from county funding as it has been spent on non-beneficial and non-productive projects with young people who did not need that support	Supportive of proposal
20	You definitely need to think of managing your services differently. Your re organisation of the county youth service provision is a good idea and the £240000 reduction in the youth service budget may have implications to services in Blyth especially if it negatively affects County youth workers who are seconded to a variety of voluntary sector organisations. However, although I think there may be implications, re organisation and evaluating county youth provision and expenditure will provide you with sufficient savings to compensate for the reduction in proposed budget reduction. Look at what is on offer across county and what is beneficial to young people and can be evidenced and ensure that specific provision is funded. There is enough innovation in the voluntary sector that can be utilised by commissioning and that will be used across other sectors so why not the youth service. Your decisions to concentrate limited resources to deprived estates, communities and areas of deprivation need to be applauded, as it should have happened years ago. Here is Blyth, our expertise and innovation has allowed us to raise in excess of 300k per year and that has allowed the continuation of effective youth provision, however, take that away from the equation and County's contribution to Blyth compared to other areas in quite minimum. So the readdressing of this inequality of allocation and to concentrate in allocation of funding in areas of poverty and deprivation will be welcomed in t	Supportive of proposal  Identify best practice
21	Have you calculated the cost of restructuring as compared to the expected savings or will this be another instance where savings are in the distant future with all the costs up front? What does "Investing in Technology to work more efficiently mean"? Too often councils end up employing more people to deal with the increased admin and paperwork.	Are savings realistic
23	Don't; pay for consultants and if someone leaves a well-paid post then don't let them come back as a consultant on big money	Don't hire Consultants
24	Review senior management structures	Reduce Mgmt
25	scrap proposed HQ move	Don't relocate HQ
26	Get rid of top line management & people doing the same job. Why does it take so many workers to do road repairs etc. There always seem to be workers just standing around doing nothing.	Reduce Mgmt
27	deliver more than one service from each building involve users when negotiating contracts - ensure it meets business needs base decisions on business intelligence become paperless redesign web site - easy to use wi-fi for staff in all locations video conferencing	Work Smarter
28	Remove catering from County Hall - give staff the responsibility to feed themselves and direct money into the local food/drink economy - perhaps rent out space to a local food/drink outlet which in turn would generate income. Assign staff the responsibility to clean their own office spaces - it takes two seconds to wipe a desk! Charge staff to park that live within a certain radius of their place of work if they do not use a car for work/live on a bus route, etc. Locate full recycling facilities at County Hall. Prevent internal remodelling of current Council buildings (e.g. County Hall) until decisions have been reached on accommodation. Develop a central equipment directory to enable re-use of desks, chairs, furnishings. Sell-off or donate old equipment to community organisations etc.	Lease out spare space in council buildings
29	Northumberland needs to invest more in its own. Why refer learners and training to Newcastle college and other providers when we have our own college and adult learning service. Supporting our own will keep people in jobs and keep them paying their taxes and contributing to Northumberland. Better partnerships working to avoid learners studying outside of the county- schools working more closely with college and adult learning to promote Northumberland services first. Hitting and exceeding learner targets will allow growth funding from government. Apprenticeship vacancies should favour Northumberland based providers first, bulletin shows local vacancies are going to providers in Newcastle, Gateshead, South & North Tyneside, Stockton and Middlesbrough, all reducing our growth fund opportunities and building it for other councils (Stockton has just been given an extra £1 million growth fund to deliver English, maths & employability, advertising in our area). Why do, County staff need to	Promote N/Land businesses

	have computers refreshed every 3 years? PCs can last longer than that which would surely reduce costs.	
30	Ensure that the Council is not continuing to pay for consultancy fees and people on extremely high salaries who are in interim posts either employ them on proper council pay scales or get rid of them. Surely the council has the capacity within its own staff to carry out all functions	Don't hire consultants
31	Cut councillors salaries and expenses Any services devolved from county to the parish should involve money transferred from the county council tax to pay for them. Total increase of council tax in my parish for the year 2014/2015 was nearly 5% this is including parish precept increase, because of monies withheld from the county and should have generated a referendum. Accept the governments grant not to increase the council tax.	Do not increase C.Tax
33	I have found your proposal very interesting and refreshing and I very much hope you are able to meet your obligations. I do appreciate that it is also difficult to balance need and funds allocations and it is very interesting to noting that you are looking to redirect funds to areas of deprivation and poverty. As far as efficiency is concerned I would look at different department and scrutinize their spending and evaluate effectiveness and cost. My predictions are that there are savings to be made those areas as well.	Supportive of proposals
34	a) restructuring !!!! This is internal, nobody knows the departments better than management .DO NOT EMPLOY CONSULTANTS b) renegotiating !!!! Work rate on the sub-contractors you use are pathetic, introduce penalties for late completion. Negotiate harder. c) online !!!! The services do not need to be expanded at this time and would be more unnecessary capital. d) investing in technology !!!! This is a terminology to cover up unnecessary capital expenditure covered by (C). e) properties !!! The costs in running most of the properties is down to educating the staff and the waste they create. f) I am aware of the sports/woodhorn, where is the culture and arts run by Northumberland CC	Don't hire consultants  Include penalties in agreements with contractors
35	I agree with the proposals suggested, but would need further information to make an informed comment.	Supportive of proposals
36	1) Allow more services to be provided by arms-length companies. This will allow services to be delivered more 'dynamically' i.e. service provision can adapt quickly without the constraints of the larger NCC parent company. 2) Poor building maintenance has resulted in a huge loss to the value of a large number of assets which we now need to replace or refurbish at great cost (i.e. County Hall). More intelligent spending on building maintenance is needed.	More services to be provided through ALMO's
37	Cutting transport to school for children who have moved into rural areas where there was no school at their time of moving. End these historical arrangements. Cut Library mobile services completely and if this is not legally possible provide service to main villages only and not door to door. Cap mileage claims for managers and non-essential users have a database of all staffs regular journeys and make it car share. Use conference calls more, change payments for highways staff called to grit roads during the winter.	Cut services. Inc home to school transport and mobile library
38	Centralise all services, Less higher and middle management.	Reduce Mgmt
39	I appreciate that there is limited space to describe how things will be done, however to take the above literally... Restructuring..., investing in technology..., etc. will not in and of themselves necessarily make the differences we require. Unfortunately too many times I have met with NCC staff who simply want to get the job 'ticked off' rather than completed to a satisfactory standard (i.e. the standard we would look for if we owned the issue or were having work done privately). This needs addressing from the top down! As for the website... can it really be that important to consider it as a separate item along with the rest of the above?	Ensure proposals are deliverable
40	Re-introduce car parking charges. It seems absurd to be the only authority in the Country that does not raise income through car parking.	Re-introduce car parking charges
41	Cut number of councillors, reduce their trips and expenses.	Reduce number of Councillors
42	It is disgusting that natives of Northumberland, some forced to use food and clothing banks, and not one county councillor has taken a pay freeze or cut. Grant Davey, "no one enters politics to make cut backs". He is correct when it comes to looking after councillors. Your input and expenditure calculations don't add up, but any increase in council tax will be the straw that broke the camels back for many households. Every house you build needs power, we are already in a situation where the lights might go out this winter. Be very careful what you are doing, this could all come back and bite you.	Don't increase C.Tax
43	Would you not save a lot of money by reducing street / highway lighting between 12am and 5 am?	Turn street lighting off

46	Allow staff to source purchases themselves - often bargains can be found quicker and on line without going to approved suppliers Spend more to prevent costs to other services	Review purchasing procedures
47	Look to develop more partnership arrangements between local businesses and the Council that would benefit both the economy and the public. Reduce red tape, emails and paperwork and empower middle managers to make decisions. Reduce the number of elected member committee meetings, streamline the political structure and reduce the pay-outs to elected members. The impacts of the budget are never felt at political level and always hit staff and residents hardest. The political system is also far too slow for getting decisions made.	Increase partnership working
48	Review school transport. e.g. Five buses of various sizes go to Cresswell each morning, there can't be that many kids in such a small village, there must be scope for rationalisation.	Review home to school transport
50	The key thing for Northumberland (& the NE more generally) is to make it a more attractive place for talented individuals to move to. As the report highlights, we need entrepreneurs, people who are going to start or help to build businesses. Such individuals can go anywhere, so why would they come to Northumberland? It is critical that the area is competitive with other areas in the north-east and indeed across the country in terms of being attractive. This means highly desirable housing, low crime, excellent schools, culture, clean. This should be the standard against which every change is measured - does this make it more likely or not that mobile talent (& their businesses) will come here? So whilst in cuts have to be made, one has to have a "Fenwicks" mindset - i.e. make the shop front and key areas where visitors are passing through and make their decisions really impressive and nice. Think about how we could motivate entrepreneurs to move. I am afraid that none want to move to areas of social housing, of mediocrity. Such people now expect high quality aspirational housing, to be close to other talent and to be able to have access to schools which offer excellence, competing with the best in the south. We also need a culture change from 'passive' to 'active', whether that be with regards to economy and entrepreneurial mindset, or with regards to health lifestyle factors and the consequent disproportionate cost to health and welfare we have the area (the major	Make Northumberland attractive to businesses
51	Improving online services, improving communication between council departments and outside organisations to provide a more streamlined service and to prevent the duplication of work.	Improve communication
52	I agree that there is a constant need to look to being as efficient as possible, however, this should not affect the efficacy of the authority, service or department concerned. Consideration needs to be given to and taken from those that these efficiencies directly impact upon.	Ensure effective service delivery
54	Stay at County Hall in Morpeth.	Don't relocate HQ
55	No tax increase	Don't increase C.Tax
56	Agree with the above	Supportive of proposal
57	More actively seek sustainable financial arrangements with sports groups and parish / town councils that have previously expected discretionary services for free or at heavily subsidised rates, with some benefitting more than others, which is unfair. Enable greater sharing of equipment, staff and knowledge between the operational areas of Local Services/ Neighbourhood services. some are currently much better provided for than others and this is causing uneven service delivery standards and uneven expectations of staff in different areas in terms of workload/ their capacity to deliver. Parochialism is not helpful to the NCC objectives, although in difficult times possibly understandable. Improving security and CCTV at Leisure Centres and Depots would reduce thefts and vandalism. Weighbridge facilities would enable better monitoring of salt usage, particularly in the SE.	Effective partnership working internal/external
58	Keep the general public aware of what county hall expects of them e.g. report defective street lighting, traffic lights, pot holes. Most people think that someone from the authority will see and report these sometimes important problems hence the issue takes forever to be resolved. Information on where to inform the authority if the person has no access to the internet would also be helpful.	Promote services to residents
59	Support and fast track big planning applications to attract jobs and housing and increase income.	Fast track planning apps
60	Reduce salaries to the highest earners in ALL departments. Cap all expenses and ensure they are thoroughly audited. Move away from high end expensive advertising and glossy printing unless vital it mostly goes in the bin any how! Set time limits and deadlines then stick them and ensure contractors do include clauses in contracts which	Reduce Mgmt Include penalties

	mean they pay the council if projects over run.	in agreements with contractors
62	Seeing where the public actually want the resources, do we really need lots of rights of way officers employed by the Council when the actual footfall and demand is low, and putting the resources into your green spaces and country parks where at one park alone there are over 200,000 visitors plus and people really value these resources, so much so they consider having their relatives ashes spread.	Ensure staff deliver what the public want
63	There seems to be a lack of communication between certain departments, e.g. planning and enforcement to inspection, all of which should work hand in hand and yet they seem to work in separate worlds. By ensuring good communication and at a level for all to understand, and to work together, the potential to reduce some of the workload is there, this would also become more efficient.	Improved communication internal/external
64	It would appear that several Council services continue to work as independent 'silos' with little or no meaningful co-ordination between them. While this may not specifically lead to overspending, it could be suggested that there is a huge potential for wasteful spending due to duplication or inefficiency of use of resources. I feel that Councillors should not have access to funds to spend independently of due Council process. I have personal experience of an extremely wasteful and ineffective process led by one former Councillor which had to have other funds applied to sort out the mess left behind. It seems that senior staff are often exempt from the normal employment processes affecting other staff at lower grades. Inflated salary arrangements, enhanced pay-offs, and massive leaps between grades of seniority would suggest poor recruitment processes. This is demoralising for other Council staff and wasteful of funds.	Improved communication internal/external
65	High end management structure should be looked at to avoid cuts in front line services.	Reduce Mgmt
66	Ask every division to set down how they provide VFM which should be analysed in such a way the difference will be seen between what they say they do / will do and what they actually do.	Review effectiveness of every service
68	stop paying expensive consultants and agency staff. restructure management pay.	Don't hire consultants
69	Interesting budget and appreciate that savings need to be met that unfortunately will have a negative effect on the community. I work for the voluntary sector and I work with NCC services, especially leisure services and the county youth service. As far as doing things differently, the Active Northumberland model will create savings, and maybe you need to ne looking at this model with your youth services. Additionally, looking at each department i.e. Youth Services and looking at areas where funds are being wasted with non-beneficial outcomes to the community may be a good start. You also need to start looking at areas of need instead of allowing poor and unfair allocations of funds to areas of non-deprivation and Seaton Delaval and Morpeth would be a prime example.	Supportive of proposal  Consider ALMO for more services
71	Central purchasing is not efficient, in many cases it is cheaper and more effective to source items and supplies locally. I know of many instances where items and supplies bought from approved suppliers cost significantly more than they should.	Review procurement procedures
74	I am concerned that a large amount of resources is being spent on reviews, restructures and consultations rather than delivering high quality front line work.	Direct funding to front line work
75	Consider how much communication/printing is actually necessary. On visits to County Hall and other offices, the offices appear to be peppered with large, colour posters of random and very general information (e.g. some just telling staff what jobs their colleagues are doing!). In times of financial hardship, this money could be better used on actually delivering a service, rather than reminding staff that their colleagues are simply doing the job that they are paid to do. This is the sort of information that could be put on the website at virtually no charge, rather than designing posters, incurring printing charges, etc. only to inform people of things that may be interesting to some, but which is hardly essential to know. Many potholes have been crudely patched, rather than repaired, over the past year only for the patching to now be working losses. Consider fewer but more robust repairs which will last longer and reduce the need for frequent repeat visits to do the same job over and over again (which is what is happening on the road past my house).	Reduce waste ad unnecessary expenditure
76	Cut out consultants and use the expertise of existing staff (shame a lot of them have already been made redundant)	Don't hire Consultants
80	Removing parking charges at the Country Parks seems a retrograde step, when it makes a huge contribution to the Country parks budget. No one spoken to objects to the charge. It is not the same as charging for parking in town centres, which drives people away from the shops.	Re-introduce car parking in Country Parks

81	You are proposing to take out the car parking charges for the Country Parks that NCC runs, this charge does not deter visitors from using the parks, in fact they appreciate that they are contributing to the running of these facilities. Why would you turn away this funding resource?	Re-introduce car parking in Country Parks
82	The Youth Service was already cut 3 years ago 25% - 39%. Any cut to the streamline Youth Service will have an impact on the number of youth work sessions delivered. This 20% cut would result in a cut of almost 50% in 4 years. This will not save money as it will cost County more in the long run. Change the way we have to purchase from specific suppliers. This way of purchasing doesn't allow staff to find deals on trains or similar which would save money. There are ways to ensure these systems are not abused. Start looking after current Foster Carers so they don't leave. It costs so much more in the long term to have to recruit and train new carers or to place young people out of county.	Review procurement procedures

Common themes emerging through the consultation responses:

Responses to this question were received from 62 of the respondents.

Supportive of proposal	8 respondents stated support for the proposals
Review procurement procedures	3 respondents felt that procurement could be more effective
Review senior management	8 respondents felt there was a need for fewer higher/middle mgmt
Use of Consultants/Agency staff	8 respondents felt the Council should not be recruiting Consultants
Relocation of County Hall	3 respondents felt the Council should not relocate its HQ
Improved Communication	3 respondents felt that communication needed to be improved
Use of ALMO's	3 respondents made comments on the use of ALMO's
Council Tax rise	3 respondents were opposed to any increase in Council Tax

## Managing demand (saving around £0.4 million over two years)

We will work closely with our partners, in particular those in public health and the NHS, to support our most troubled and deprived communities and families. We aim to address issues early before they escalate and create further pressures on services and budgets.

How else do you think we could do things differently to better manage demand?		
Ref.	Comment	Category
5	Do not disband the Youth Service which provides an essential service to the young people of Northumberland. Working with young people to provide awareness can result in less teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and need for social housing.	Retain youth service
6	cut down on expenses to both staff and councillors freeze pay avoid high redundancy costs, pay salaries and provide services instead centralise services within county hall	Cut down on expenses
8	Working in partnerships in the key to supporting and improving troubled and deprived communities and targeting families and individual through support and early intervention is the most effective method of improving delivery and reducing inequalities. There needs to be an understanding and an acceptance that council services are not always ideally placed either through lack of experience or knowledge or relationship to deliver a service that is cost affective and beneficial.	Increased partnership working
9	Better out of hours system where the caller can speak to an agent and not an automated response	Improved out of hours service
12	Commission a better drug and alcohol treatment service that includes local providers who know and care about Northumberland and that bring lots of added value to any contract.	Commission specialist services
14	Do not assume that poverty doesn't exist in rural areas.	Poverty Countywide
15	Maintain those professionals who are in contact with young people on a regular basis who deliver effective prevention work - to identify problems/issues - before they escalate into a really expensive drain on other valuable resources.	Protect staff that deal with prevention
16	All public sector organisations are facing similar financial challenges and strengthening partnership working is vital to enable all parties to focus on what preventative and early intervention strategies they can provide, as part of pathways of care. Further exploration of voluntary sector provision may be a useful way forward (if these have not already been fully explored), to enable voluntary provision to also become an integral part of health and social care pathways. Develop more apprenticeship roles to enhance capacity for managing workload whilst providing opportunities for vocational skill development.	Increased partnership working
17	Restrict off license sales and decrease the availability of cheap alcohol across the county	Increased enforcement action
18	Understand the needs of the whole county, not just the SE - what works in Ashington does not necessarily work in Alnwick. People in rural communities have different pressures and costs (esp. travel and access to public transport and other services). Demand needs to take in to account how people are able to access services.	Local solutions
19	You need to look at the voluntary sector and the effectiveness of their provision and measure the effectiveness and cost compared to county provision. Be prepared to commission services to the voluntary sector as that will save funds	Work with the VCS
20	Supporting troubled and deprived areas should be your priority as an earlier intervention and the provision of support will have long term savings, as money will be saved in due course. Demand will be driven by the needs of the community and that needs to be your priority. Partnerships will be the answer, as well as commissioning to those services who have the evidenced based track record in effective and cost effective delivery.	Increased partnership working
21	If you could find ways of attracting businesses to the area they could provide jobs for more people which would reduce the demand for social services. It might help if local politicians (especially MPs) could talk about the advantages of moving businesses here instead of giving the impression in some quarters that if we can't have coal mines the local workers can't do anything else.	Make N/Land attractive to businesses
22	The council's emphasis should be equally placed on everyone who pays council tax, not the 'troubled' and 'deprived'. I think the additional strain on services should be dealt with by tougher rules on who can benefit from them	Provision of services or all

23	stop wasting money on moving county hall	Don't relocate HQ
26	Prioritise work better. Tender for work to get the best price. Pot holes were a shambles instead of a long term solution to repair the holes they were a bodge job & I know of at least one job that has had to be completely redone.	Review procurement procedures
27	gather business intelligence - where support is needed, what kind of support is offered, how much is it used, what other authorities/private sector are doing, joined up working with NHS share resources/buildings/systems, target support based on intelligence speak to troubled and deprived communities and families - get their needs, expectations identify them earlier so you know when the demand is going to hit the services so you can plan	Partnership working
28	Encourage more self-help and volunteering in communities. Promote a culture change where people take responsibility instead of everything being 'the government's fault'. Eradicate the blame culture. Work more closely with parish councils and local community groups.	Partnership working
29	There should be a coordinated approach to health and leisure activities. Reduced fees to access leisure facilities to improve the overall health of the population in Northumberland. I understand that troubled families need help and support but endless, pointless projects in these areas do not work. Any money put in should have real outcomes. The rest of us must work to buy what we want or need, giving items or providing everything completely free does not encourage people to value what they have, courses - they do not stay and complete, computers - many ended up being sold second hand from that project, etc. Clear guidance on how to change their position, careers, financial guidance, interview guidance, mandatory basics such as English and maths would be a start towards being more employable. It should not be more beneficial to be inactive, qualifying for freebies that those working cannot afford.	Reduce cost of leisure facilities to encourage healthy lifestyles
30	Some of these programmes start out with good intentions but if they were to be scrutinised and evaluated you will probably find that the same service is being delivered in slightly different guises by different organisations without any of them achieving full potential or making much difference in the long term. An audit of services should be carried out to ensure that the same families don't keep receiving the same type of help but from different agencies, and that the families who really need the assistance are actually getting it and not just the ones where they are the easy options for agencies to deal with.	Review work programmes to ensure they meet objectives
31	attract new business by cutting business rates	Reduce business rates
33	In my opinion you have started looking at need and deprivation and hopefully re-directing those funds to areas of need. Working in partnerships especially with the voluntary sector has been going on for years especially in the Blyth area, with youth providers being dependent from the support from Area Youth Workers, in management, fund raising direction etc. However, there seems to be an underestimation of the effectiveness of the voluntary sector and a comparison on cost, delivery and relationship with users you will find that the voluntary sector can do the job better and cheaper. However, there are no reasons why both sectors can work together, with funds directed to areas of need and delivered to a standard that makes a difference. Early intervention makes sense as it saves funding on the long run, especially in most troubled and deprived communities. Solutions can be offered by the voluntary sector and commissioning can allow voluntary and community innovation and deliver cheaper and better options or a partnership provision that produces positive and effective outcomes	Partnership Working
34	The most troubled and deprived communities are themselves to blame for the state of their community they have no pride in where or how they live. Get them to maintain it.	
35	This approach makes perfect sense, however it can be expensive and resource intensive in the short term. How will the extra funding be identified to support this approach? Can an approach be developed that grows resilience within communities and helps them to meet their own needs wherever possible?	How is this going to be funded
36	Use facilities and staff such as schools/teachers, their contact with the public should be used to work with these problems	Use partnership agencies
37	Liase with customer facing staff to see what works in their area. Accept that they know what works in their area and one size does not fit all. Provide safe areas for deprived families to spend time with their children by providing cost free activities, accessing computers etc Ask partners to contribute financially to provide these inclusive activities Use buildings to host events that people want to see and not highbrow limited interest events	Local solutions
39	I strongly agree with the above but could not dare to suggest how improvements can be made.	Supportive of proposals

42	"to support our most troubled and deprived communities and families". I had my eyes opened when we had county councillors meet us in old Ashington leisure centre, to explain why they were closing it. One went to sleep in front of us, others told blatant lies. I trust no one in politics now.	
46	Invest in addressing issues to make long term savings. short term cuts can lead to long term expenditure	Invest to save
47	Review and negotiate service standards with residents. The budget savings mean that we cannot always meet people's expectations. Be realistic and tell the public that we must offer reduced services. Residents still think that they can have their bins emptied regularly, public toilets will remain open and that we can cut their grass every week in the summer. None of this is a realistic picture for residents – it's time to tell people just how much of an impact that the last 10 years of budget reductions is now having. Get Real! There are very few staff efficiencies left to make, there is only so much we can cut without services being hit and only so much income that we can capitalise on / generate without taking business from private sector companies in Northumberland.	Be honest with residents about what is realistic
48	Invest in cycling and walking to get young people active and staying active	Invest in sustainable transport initiatives
50	I think a much more 'muscular' approach to Public Health could be undertaken, but at lower cost than done now. What is needed is a mindset change and a shift in expectation, so that the default is EVERYONE is expected to address their key lifestyle factors and also contribute to society through either voluntary activity or paid work. This could be achieved by systematising the checking of such factors as part of interactions with healthcare professionals which happen anyway. The new NHS England 5 year Forward view is saying we should be doing this. PHE are saying we should be doing this. The Chief Medical Officer is saying we should be recording employment status of everyone with mental health problems. But we don't do any of this because it is seen as taboo, or because of learned helplessness, or it is someone else's responsibility. This is by far the biggest impact we could make for Northumberland which would impact both on health, welfare and economy as the factors are so interlinked. And one could also look at getting every council employee reviewed by Occupational Health annually to record their key lifestyle factors and then if deviating from the ideal, to lead a reflection on possible measures to address these. I would like to see a focus of the council on monitoring and encouraging, rather than delivering everything. The biggest influence on behaviour is one's surroundings, so I do not agree with focussing purely on pockets. The default should be that every child	Look at delivering services differently
51	Working with organisations that are trusted by the community, such as libraries, to provide a safe and comprehensive service to troubled and deprived communities and families. Supporting organisations such as libraries to enable them to provide more services to these families.	Partnership working
52	It is clear within the budget proposals that the authority is focusing on getting help where it is needed as early as possible, so i am more than a little concerned that there are significant cuts proposed to the Youth Service and the Employability and Skills service. It seems pretty obvious to me that by reducing the working capacity of these services we will be creating a greater workload for and expense for the already stretched targeted services and social work teams. This proposal seems very short sighted.	Look at long term impact of the proposed cuts
53	A proactive stance is required and it seems that is what you are doing	Supportive of proposal
55	No tax increase	No C.Tax increase
57	Continue to support the LMAPs groups and enable targeted funding to be made available to reduce or remove issues within communities (i.e. prevent offences and opportunities for antisocial behaviour / community friction). .	Local solutions
58	Try to ensure there are enough front line personnel, in accessible areas, for the families/person in need. The first point of contact is often the most important for that person and can determine the way they feel their concerns will be addressed.	Protect front line services
59	Provide more support to the Community and Voluntary Sector to work with communities to help them become more self-sufficient.	Additional support to the VCS
60	A fair assessment process that focus on actual need of a person. Forget this you can do this so you don't need that approach. Give what a multi-disciplinary team feel is best for an individual it prevents crisis situations which are much more expensive!	Target prevention activities
63	Sometimes it is necessary to speculate to accumulate. By improving services, an increase in demand can be achieved and thereby generating a greater income, this effectively offsetting the need to make savings. Saving may also be achieved, e.g. if we were to offer free collections of bulk waste per household, the benefit of reducing fly	Promote income generating services

	tipping which invariable cost more to retrieve than organised collection. It may be possible to schedule such collections alongside general waste collections, say bimonthly in each area. Also more stringent use of powers once anyone who fly tip is identified, fines should be pursued and general litter.	
64	Clearer identification of services so those in need can approach the right agencies at the right time. Greater recognition and resourcing of preventative work. Effective cross-agency targeting and tracking, with greater accountability placed upon those agencies being funded to assist. Clearer delivery of outcomes.	Partnership working  Effective signposting to services
65	Look for early intervention to ensure problem areas are dealt with early thus reducing costs	Fund prevention activities
66	Health & well-being is the key factor here; NICE recommendations are supposed to be embedded into every level of council policy and practice but this clearly isn't happening.	
67	Find ways to reduce learned helplessness by giving local communities a voice and feedback where the council have listened and taken action. Promote the good positive work of the council	Increased dialogue with the community
68	be more pro-active to prevent problems occurring especially with youth crime	Prevention activities
69	Yes you need to work more closely with your partners, especially the voluntary sector organisations, who on average provide a better service to the community and much cheaper. As mentioned above, you need to look at services whether they are effective and meet need and whether funds are wasted on areas on non-deprivation. Working in Blyth as a I do, I have noticed that county's expenditure for the area in comparison to Cramlington and Seaton Delaval has been substantially reduced since 2011 with the direct delivery from NCC on youth provision diminished in that period. However, what is interesting is that there has been an increase in demand and this demand for provision has been met by the voluntary sector organisation, supported extensively by NCC Area Youth Worker in time, but not through funds, so questions need to be asked in that area. Demand should be dictated by need and not by historical involvement.	Partnership working
74	While I know that there is a limited resource I cannot agree with the complete move away from providing services for all to a system where only those that cause a problem for the authority get the services. My concern here is focused on young people, by removing and reducing the universal youth service the vast majority of young people will lose out. Where are their youth clubs? Where do they get support from?	Opposed to a targeted approach
75	I am not sure how you are doing it at present so am unable to consider what an alternative might be without more information to go on. Perhaps better put together surveys would avoid the cost of drawing up surveys such as this which do not seem to be particularly well thought out and yet will nevertheless have to be funded. This seems to be a recurring theme given previous surveys that have been undertaken.	Better consultation process required
78	by cutting services i.e. floating and visiting support services in housing/mental health you are not addressing the issues in the communities you claim to serve, this cut will impact further down the line and will have a detrimental effect on local communities that have improved over the years, Blyth, Ashington especially which are deprived already. This is just a gloss over but will undo the good work that has been achieved.	Cuts will have a negative effect on communities
79	Don't leave out services in rural areas as they can also be deprived and people struggle in these areas to access services especially young people.	Local solutions
82	If this is the stance of NCC then they should be investing in rather than cutting the Youth Service. The Youth Service is a prevention service either preventing or intervening early with health (Physical and Mental), education & employability, family relationships & housing, Safeguarding, drugs and alcohol, crime and disorder etc etc before they become bigger more costly issues such as teenage pregnancy, addiction, criminal activity and homelessness. It's cheaper to pay for the fence at the top of the cliff rather than the ambulance at the bottom To save money they could build on the success of the Youth Service for engaging with young people and have mental health workers and TAS workers and other professionals based in locality teams available to YP locally to engage with them as issues start rather than when issues become problematic. So much more work should be done with young people leaving care to prevent them needing services themselves (high risk of teen preg, neet, crime etc). Youth Service and Social Services should be working together to do this. Social Services should learn to work together with other services to benefit children and young people. Lessons are to be learnt from the recent issues in Rotherham – report mentions professional jealousies	Some decisions appear contrary to stated priorities

Common themes emerging through the consultation responses:

Responses to this question were received from 52 of the respondents.

	Local Solutions	4 respondents wanted services targeted to communities
	Partnership working	10 respondents wanted increased partnership working
	Prevention Activities	4 respondents felt that funding to prevention activities should be protected

## Income generation (saving around £8.5 million over two years)

We will do everything possible to stimulate economic growth and generate income. This will allow the council to redirect resources to activities which protect vulnerable residents.

For example, while in-keeping with our adopted strategies, we will actively promote the construction of new homes and the generation of new businesses to maximise income through council tax and business rates. We will also be looking to make savings by exploring opportunities around renewable energy sources.

We are proposing to raise our charges for some services but still believe they offer good value for money. Given the pressure on resources and the need to make cuts elsewhere, we believe it is reasonable to ask those using these services to pay a little more.

How else do you think we could do things differently to generate more income?		
Ref.	Comment	Category
4	Play to our strengths, the beauty of the County, allow more cottage industry developments and stop approving wind farms, why not consider hydro and solar power?	Increase use of renewables
5	Construction of new homes when people cannot afford to feed themselves is a waste of time and resources.	
6	parking permit scheme for residents build our own homes for sale on council land creating jobs and revenue spent in Northumberland rather than give this off to a private developer attach conditions for developers to invest in the community via endowment's etc	Reinstate parking permit scheme
7	I think we should charge for parking county wide. This would generate income which it seems we need. I think we should introduce charges along Seaton Sluice & Blyth Beach. North Tyneside charge people to park their cars along their coastal car parks and they always have busy car parks at weekends so I do not think this will deter people from visiting.	Reinstate parking charges
8	There are a number of ways you can generate income which in turn will reduce the need to redirect resources to activities which benefit deprived and marginalised individuals and communities. I have a number of colleagues who are employed through a variety of NCC led services, especially relating to housing, leisure, youth services and employability and skills and in their own admission there are substantial improvements they would make to streamline the service that would generate income and prevent unnecessary expenditure. My suggestions are the following - Considering you are looking to address the inequality of expenditure and endeavour to redistribute to deprived areas, I suggest you look at delivery of provision within the youth and adult services in relation to funds spent on non-beneficial activities and redirect the savings to deprived and marginalised areas of Ashington and Blyth. - More accountability of budget holders in relation to where funds are being spent and what more accountability in whether the funds have been delivered any outcomes towards young people and the community. - Work in partnership with those voluntary sector organisations and commission services in order to target those young people and families who may need the support and concentrate in areas of need. - There is too much time spent working in Astley High School, St Benet Biscop, Cramlington High School, King Edwards, Bede Academy working with young people who are in not desperate need of	Joined up working
9	Advertise and perhaps sell some of our ideas for joint working with external agencies. EG: The Pest Control System was built by us and sold to Wales.	Partnership working
10	1. Make a minimum charge for FOI requests, each year the number of FOI requests the council receives is increasing and more staff resources are being allocated to dealing with trivial FOI requests. If you consider it appropriate to charge a fee for dealing with a request, you may also want to consider charging for non-staff costs or disbursements - for instance, photocopying, printing, or posting. A £3 fee would cut the number of requests we received and also generate some income. 2. As I travel to work on public transport, I see more and more pensioners using their bus passes before 9.30am and the bus companies are more than happy to let them travel. By allowing pensioners to travel before 9.30am they are costing the council money. This needs to be clamped down, why not ask the local bus companies how many passes are used by pensioners before 9.30. I know by experience that over 90% of the pensioners I see getting on a bus in the morning are not going to a doctor's or have a	Charge for services

	hospital appointment.	
11	Start putting emphasis on building companies to pay for installation of hydrants - currently the fire service picks up this bill. There should be a planning requirement that any new estates that require hydrant installation then the onus has to be put to the builder to cover these costs.	
12	You could ensure that recyclable materials got recycled. Maybe this service would be better run by NCC rather than the outfit that refuse to take items that can be recycled.	Promote recyclables
15	Ask the Parks and Gardens Department to offer a garden service to local householders throughout all the locality areas. This will maintain jobs and help a wide range of people. I think busy working people would be willing to pay for a reliable trustworthy service - and also older people - who struggle with leaves at this time of year - and the planting of summer flowers. (I think this my best idea!!) Charge people for grit boxes on non-public roads Start a county-wide broadband/phone provider business - I would definitely sign up! (ditto power supplies)	Charging for services
16	Evaluate the extent to which the free car parking disks, introduced within the county in April 2014, have generated income within wider the local economy, as compared to the income generated by historical car parking charges (and fines).	Charge for parking
18	Have a better understanding of how services are used – e.g. get out and see how home-school transport works. There are a number of efficiencies that could be made by reducing outgoings before thinking about income generation. Reintroduce parking charges across ALL council car parks. People do not begrudge paying for parking (as long as it is reasonable) if it is applied equally across all parts of the region.	Charge for parking
19	Look at what is currently delivered by county youth service and whether a slimmer and more effective service will save funds.	Slimmer and more effective services
20	You need to be looking at the effectiveness of your delivery versus value for money and wherever quality is not provided and funds are used in areas of no deprivation and disadvantage, then a decision needs to be made to redirect those funds to areas of need.	Ensure VFM
21	How can people be expected to pay more when most workers have not had a pay rise recently? Again the key is to actually attract new businesses, and do it not just say you would like to do it.	Attract businesses
22	I think raising fees for non-mandatory services like gyms is a good idea.	Charge for service/ income generation
23	It's not reasonable to ask people to raise charges for some services we pay council tax to cover charges for all our services maybe scrap town councils and stop paying councillors twice who are on county council and town councils	
24	Counter fraud work e.g. council tax benefit	Counter fraud work
26	A small increase in community tax is ok but I hope I am not going to have my town council tax put up by 157% like last year especially when they buy a house in Cramlington village which is of no value to us. Look to outside to tender for work to save money. Forget about selling off the county council headquarters this building is not old enough to get rid of	Contract out services and work
27	Offer different/new services offer services to neighbouring authorities/private companies incentives to start-up businesses in Northumberland - provide broadband, it kit, support write bespoke IT systems for businesses/websites/apps etc SLA's with businesses/charities for IT support offer IT training courses to Non NCC businesses/charities host other peoples systems, resilience back up sites	Trade services
29	Raising process is not always the answer - for example: if the swimming baths charge £10 per swim a hand-full of people will go occasionally as it's too expensive. If the cost was £2 many, many more would go, take their families, groups of friends for something to do and would go more regularly. The overall income would be far greater and the people would be fitter. Could try a pilot on slow days, £2 Tuesday and see how effective it could be. The council charges for brown bins, they could offer to sell the compost back as part of the collection round. When you pay for the bin, you could offer delivered compost with occasional rounds. At present they are for sale at waste refuge sites - you buy the bin so you don't have to go there. If you use the brown bin for a number of years, you should get a loyalty reduction, even a £1-2 would encourage people to keep them going. The street cleaner scarabs should have weed killer in the solution to save others having to come round and repeat the job. Advertise on website and in leader when they are going to be in the area so people can arrange to move cars off the road for maximum impact. The parks staff do a great job, in quiet times could they be hired out to residents and companies willing to pay? When they change displays could this be advertised so residents could go and buy the bulbs and	Review pricing structures

	plants they remove. Could schools and community projects have access to improve Northumberland in Bloom (may help towards people wanting	
30	Firstly I think there is nothing wrong with increasing the council tax to a position where is actually makes a difference to public services. Most people would rather keep a local service through paying extra council tax than have to travel outside of the county to use other local authorities services. When the price of petrol rises everyone complains for a short while but the fuss soon dies down - so hike up the council tax, take the flack for a while and keep our services!! The Council should consider charging a registration fee for the home-finder service and increase the fees paid by the registered providers. Parking charges should be reintroduced across the county - even if it's just 10 -20p per hour (but in all towns)	Reinstate parking charges
31	This statement is ludicrous, do you seriously think that by increase charges you will get people to use them.	
32	Reduce the inflated salaries of senior managers for a start, cut back on the number of middle managers and combine posts.	Fewer senior managers
33	Unfortunately, it is not about people it is all to do with finance and in return there are loss of jobs and services and that is the fault of the Conservative government Income generation will be a constant issue as you will need funds to fund the cost on new and existing services. Partnership with the voluntary sector allows the partnership to raise funds through charitable donations that unfortunately exclude the statutory sector in applying as an organization. We need to be looking in house, do you really need 12 Senior and Area Youth Workers to manage the youth service and an estimate current of in excess of (£420000 plus of the youth service budget). Your current budget is £1260000 t less 19% savings/reduction of £240000 = £1020000. 41% represent Area and Senior Youth Workers and you need to find a happy medium and management versus delivery and that is an area you need to be looking at. Additionally, schools should be charged for county services through service level agreements, as currently schools are expecting leisure, youth services etc, to be provided free of charge.	Review services
34	Get someone with brain to look at Blyth. It's been allowed to deteriorate beyond a joke. A dead joke. Ashington is making progress, decent MP, not elegant, but is doing something to improve the community. Cramlington streets ahead of everyone else and striving for more every day. Blyth, last of coarse, not a lot to say, useless MP, keeps his head down takes his salary + unaccountable expenses. Has increased its Blyth Town council tax every year and will again this year, and with property tax increase, THATS MY PENSION INCREASE GONE. value for money , try working 8-5, not job and finish , IT WORKS.	
35	Wherever possible all of the approaches outlined above should utilise local people and keep spending within the local economy, which may not be the cheapest option but will grow Northumberland's economy and resilience.	Spend locally
36	Use arms-length companies to carry out external work to generate income.	Partnership working
37	In the library service the concessionary reduction for unemployed persons should be withdrawn. The withdrawal of stock should be suspended unless it is on the grounds of condition with immediate effect before the stock is non-existent. All debt should be added together and collected via community charge. Tea and Coffee facilities should be available Card payment should be available in all libraries and staff should be trained to cover customer services posts	
38	Contract out your skilled / technical staff to private companies.	Trade services
39	Reduce costs! You have stated your intentions to renegotiate contracts; this needs to be done realistically. All too often I have heard that, 'Well... you can just write off the first 20% of any contract as a given' i.e. 20% (or more) is accepted as above the actual cost it's just how things are'. I wouldn't accept it as a customer. We shouldn't accept it as a Council.	Renegotiate contacts
40	Car parking charges	Charge for car parking
41	Income generation should be concerned with discouraging frivolous use, not raising cash.	Charge for services
42	I was born at the beginning of the second world war and new what it was like. Because of evil bankers and politicians we are now in worse conditions. Not one banker or politician has been reprimanded for their actions, we have had to watch while they give themselves pay rises, while the poor struggle to stay alive.	
43	The county council has many brownfield sites which should be sold off to private developers and the money used to Not increase council tax!!	Sell off land and assets
46	Many services offered by NCC staff can attract external funding to improve the effectiveness of them - but need core costs in place to be able to attract that funding.	Maximise funding

	look as what we do that can attract external funding to increase efficiency	opportunities
47	Look at what the rest of the NE councils are charging, get together with our neighbours in other local authorities and reach a con-census as to what we charge for and how much so that the public view this as fair for all.	Identify best practice
48	Invest in infrastructure that supports tourism, which is the biggest employer in some areas of the County. Consider reinstating car=parking charges in coastal villages with the express aim of reinvesting all revenues in improving infrastructure and environment for tourists (car parking, public transport, public toilets, public realm, natural environment)	Reinstate parking charges
49	New homes should have lower priority than economic development - homes without jobs will increase liabilities	Promote economic development
50	Living in a rural area is a luxury many aspire to. But most have to move through their life for education, work and family reasons i.e. it is a balance. We are not a rich council and just cannot afford to deliver the same services to everyone, everywhere, in the same way that has been done historically. Would the person who wants hospital services close to them move to Benwell so they can be within a mile of the RVI? Probably not. Because they like living where they are. But this comes at a cost. It may be that the council therefore needs to encourage more migration within the county, or indeed region, so as people get older they are closer to where it is possible to deliver services. I would imagine that it would be more cost effective and would stimulate employment, to have more nursing home provision and related services in the Blyth area as there will be a greater pool of working people who could deliver or be trained to deliver such services. Therefore charges for services should reflect more what it actually costs to deliver them in different regions of the county, rather than having a 'universal postage stamp' cost. I understand the logic behind new home build, but worry about the amount of 'affordable' housing being proposed and the general quality of the housing. We already have migration of dependent families and individuals from the south and from Tyneside into Northumberland because they perceive it as being nicer and there is a relative availability of	Charge for services
51	Marketing services that make a profit better on social media etc - improving social media so that the council looks more professional and services are highlighted in an appropriate way.	Charge for services
52	It is clear that the Youth Service already brings in considerable external funding in its own right to support its existing budget and delivery. By reducing this core budget in the manner proposed (over 19%) logic would suggest that their ability to offer very early help and support to young people throughout the County would be greatly reduced. In turn this would create a greater demand on other services within the authority.	Maximise external funding
53	Provide incentives for business to locate in Northumberland.	Promote economic development
54	Have the Blyth and Tyne railway operated by Nexus under the metro brand (doesn't need to be same rolling stock). Owned by Combined Authority so NCC will get its share.	
55	No tax increase	
56	The council proposes to make significant cuts to parks and green space staffing (to save £85,000) while also lifting parking charges at the country parks and losing income of over £100,000. Parking charges at the country parks attract little negative feedback and users generally understand that they receive an enhanced level of service as a result. If parking charges were left in place the 3 jobs that are at risk could be saved, hence retaining a valued level of service. (NB Regular park users benefit from an annual permit at a cost of £30)	Reinstate parking charges
57	Treat the Travelling community the same as the settled community and impose on the spot fines for littering and parking in non-parking areas, greater use of no-grazing byelaw fines to kerb the assumption that some areas are open for grazing by anyone. Explore the short-term letting of vacant council facilities, for example as pop-up shops, starter offices or storage facilities, while negotiations for sale are underway. Assess all land, to ensure that if it can be grazed or put into an agricultural/forestry grant scheme.	
58	Invest in multi-story car parking in the main townships e.g. Morpeth and Blyth to generate more foot-fall in the town centres. More people, more trade, more use of leisure facilities and increased tourism. Invest in public facilities, parks and school provision so families can be sure of that their family have these important resources close at hand when choosing where to buy or rent their new home. Time and travel cost money young families do not always have.	Invest to attract economic development
59	Support and fast track big planning applications to attract jobs and housing and increase income. Target major companies that would be an asset to Northumberland.	Support economic development

	Be bolder in making Northumberland open for business.	
60	Look at internal system that can be cut first! Not front line services,	Rational support services
61	Make the most of funding available to improve NCC assets - like Heritage Lottery Fund's parks for people which can bring in 95% of funding up to £1million and 90% of funding on projects between £1million and £5 million to improve parks. But remember that the projects need managing, if you cut teams who can do this you risk not being able to deliver on these much needed projects and claw back of grant money paid to existing projects. the HLF are getting much better at monitoring and inspecting parks that have received funding, at any point in past from their parks improvement grants.	Maximise grant funding
62	Why on earth are you considering taking out the car park income from Country Parks, this alone raises over £100,000 plus annually. You are considering taking out staff on the ground at the parks, who will then raise money through HLF applications then. There is very little reluctance by the general public to pay their car parking fees as they know this contributes directly to the running costs of the parks	Reinstate parking charges
63	At present there is a proposal to remove car parking charges from the country parks, bringing in approximately £120,000 net, and a gross income of approx. £100,000. I do not see the benefit in removing an income that covers the cost of staffing. Looking to retain staff in this climate is by far the best method to ensure that the public have the best possible service and the continued expansion of the parks by the public in activities and events will see an increase in income. It is strange that the county are willing to give away an income and as a result have to reduce staffing (84K) that cost less than the income they are willing to sacrifice. This is not an efficiency move it's a reckless move that will see the demise of the highly used parks throughout the county. There is so much potential within the park to generate income, through the provision of events, which increases tourism, in addition these site are ideal in linking them to the national with National Health Service, as the park provide an ideal environment to encourage a more healthy living style which promotes a healthy body. By promotion of these services income will be increased further resulting in the parks becoming more efficient which could be seen as flagships for the county. Tourism is an area that we should look to develop, the coastal route has seen an increase in tourists in the last few years, and yet we provide little in the provision for such tourist, many of which are walkers and cyclists.	Reinstate parking charges
65	Re-introduce parking charges to raise revenue	Reinstate parking charges
66	Being more supportive to sustainable tourism will benefit SMEs which are fundamental to enabling rural Northumberland to continue to exist let alone thrive. In turn this will generate more income for NCC through council tax and business rates. Furthermore, every pound spent will trickle-feed other parts of the local economy.	
68	stop selling council houses, increase housing stock through rental for all people in the community if they require it	
69	As mentioned above the Active Northumberland Model may be applied to different services across Northumberland. But that is something that needs to be considered carefully as it will have an effect of quality but a happy medium needs to be found as services could be lost forever. Additionally, I would be looking at how we could develop partnerships with the voluntary sector and use the sector to raise funds that can be used to maintain and provide added value to the existing service and provision. In relation to youth services, looking at providing additional services in areas of need and acquiring government contracts to deliver maybe an option also looking to support the work of children services and youth offending team, will create additional income generation. From personal experience the NCC youth service, have very little expertise in the funding field and the identification of opportunities that will generate income and my suggestion is to employ a Funding Officer, with a remit of identifying opportunities for diversification into areas of income generation and to submit applications for additional income generation for the youth service.	Partnership working
75	Consider bringing in reasonable charges for parking. Whilst free parking is nice, it has over-stimulated demand. Some Council's allow 30 minutes free parking followed by reasonable charges thereafter - this would seem to be a fair approach and should be considered. Not to charge for parking in the current financial climate does seem a bit short-sighted but a balance needs to be struck between the wishes of the general public and the need to generate income.	Reinstate parking charges
78	By not relocating to your expensive building in Ashington. Saving money by prioritising services that don't have as much impact on vulnerable people. i work with vulnerable people and there are very little or very soon no services that can sustain them in their tenancies.	Target those in need

80	Do not scrap the charges at the Country Parks. This provides something like £150,000 at present as far as can be found out.	Reinstate parking charges
81	you are taking out staff at Country Parks that through their operations generate income from school visits, outdoor education groups , public event programmes, parties and public fundraising events. You cannot generate the same or more revenue with no staff	
82	Lessons could be learnt from proactive example of the youth service when it comes to bringing in external funding. Could there be staff in county who's role it is to seek out and chase funding opportunities across the services as sometimes (especially with cuts) people don't have time for this and opportunities are missed	Maximise external funding

Common themes emerging through the consultation responses:

Responses to this question were received from 62 of the respondents.

	Reinstate parking charges	13 respondents felt that parking charges should be reintroduced in towns and country parks
	Trade/Charge for services	9 respondents felt the Council should charge for certain services and trade expertise with the private sector
	Promote economic development	4 respondents felt that the Council should do more to promote economic development in order to simulate the local economy.

## Cuts in service (saving around £2.9 million over two years)

We have been examining how and when our services are used by customers. We are proposing making changes to what they do, or maybe providing the service in a different way. For example reducing opening hours during quiet times.

There will also be cuts where we will stop doing something completely, or reduce it significantly. We will work with those residents to ensure they are informed and prepared for the impact of these cuts.

How else do you think we could do things differently when cutting/reducing services?		
Ref.	Comment	Category
4	Some of the Councils working practices are outdated and antiquated, modernise these. remove duplication of work, concentrate on service delivery rather than internal corporate mumbo jumbo - usually a barrier to getting the job done efficiently	Modern working practices
5	Cramlington Library hours are far too long, and the staff are working very long hours in a relatively empty library. The building is mainly used for other council services. Why not reduce the opening hours, or close the library section entirely and allow other council departments to utilise that area, saving on rent elsewhere?	Review opening hours of council buildings
6	Stand up to national gov't and tell them we are not doing it and that this will be revisited after the election fight for this county rather than accept what's handed out	
8	The answer is very simple as far as I am concerned. You have made it very clear that you are looking to target those areas that need it most and you need to re-direct the finances to those areas. In my opinion this should have happened years ago. Too many funds have been wasted in areas who may survive without youth services and leisure services as the residents and young people are equip to deal with issues and problems in life without the support from services etc. You also need to take into account that there is a strong possibility that voluntary sector organisations maybe ideally or better equip to provide a better and cheaper service. Additionally, look at what works, where are the benefits, reduce and cut the services for those areas that cannot demonstrate impact and benefit. Reduce opening hours, reduce the number of workers, the public will fully understand that a reduced provision is better than no provision and there are unlimited areas that savings could be made.	Target those most in need
9	Maybe reduce working week to 35 hours for staff who would like this.	Reduce working week
12	Consult Northumberland residents. If we knew which services were at risk we might be open to paying more taxes to keep them.	Consult residents
14	By commissioning the voluntary sector to deliver young people's services, especially in town centres	Use the VCS
15	I assume public meetings with all local councillors and executives will take place at a local level so that people can have their say - and question their elected members? I don't believe it is necessary to cut any service completely. I believe there is still a lot of waste within local authorities. I think the executive board could probably earn a bit less (and I am hopeful that no-one in NCC gets paid more than the prime minister) Definitely keep local services local. Give more powers/responsibility/funding to Parish/Town Councils so that they can commission the services they deem desirable/needed in their own communities. I worry about people losing their jobs and the effect on local economies. I don't support the idea of a new county hall building. I do understand the need for a cheaper county hall to run - but why not just disperse into existing buildings across the county? Have a much smaller administration building - and allow more people to work from home. Why not allow staff to reduce their hours to save jobs overall? I would rather have less hours and keep my job! I work and live in Northumberland and pay over £6k in taxes each year ... if I lose my job, this will disappear from the treasury, I won't be spending my money on local businesses - and whole communities will suffer when people lose their jobs. Please, please, please don't make cuts to jobs. There is no were else for people to get work. Please try and keep everyone employed!	Reduce waste
16	Consider more job-share opportunities for remaining posts so that anyone at risk, who is full-time, has at least an option to work on a part-time/job-share basis in the future.	Reduce working week
18	Northumberland is a large county - consider the travel time and costs associated with reducing/cutting services resulting in greater costs to rural communities. Not everyone can just hop on a bus to get to things 10 minutes down the road.	Consider impact on rural areas
19	Be ruthless. you say that you will concentrate on deprived communities then look at	Target those most

	provision in non-deprived areas and reduce the funding in those areas and make the savings or re allocate the savings to areas that it is required	in need
20	Once again look at what you deliver and the costs and act accordingly. Savings can be made through a variety of methods through reducing provision in areas of no need, or working in partnership with voluntary sector to save share the costs of the provision or even commission all together to the voluntary sector.	Partnership Working
21	Can volunteers be used? Why are local libraries open during the day when people are at work and not in the evenings. Same goes for other council services. As a footnote, despite all the "cuts" so far I have not noticed and diminution in services.	Work with the VCS
22	I would remove libraries altogether and instead facilitate community-run book swaps. I also think there's a gross over spend on community housing - it's not right that some people are given a home whereas others have to work for it.	Cut libraries
23	try reducing how many managers you have	Reduce senior mgmt
25	cut some more	
26	Cut out manpower initially at headquarters to generate more funds where it is most needed	Cut back office functions
27	Share buildings with other depts, police, NHS, fire, CAB, community ventures other agencies to get better use out of the space encourage channel shift to online, end to end processes into back office systems, no manual intervention required, remove wasteful processes front line staff trained in more than one service	Partnership Working
28	Continue to explore the possibility of shared services.	Partnership Working
29	Why do you need to spend another 12 million on IT infrastructure? Are there any services where the different councils can share costs? can all councils join for purchasing power on larger projects, if you need new PCs surely they all do, everyone uses reams of paper a buyer supplying to many councils will be able to cut costs.	Partnership Working
31	Cannot comment. What services are proposing to stop.	
32	Stop wasting money i.e. the £10,000 spent on reducing the speed limit in residential areas (Holywell village) where there is no history of road traffic problems	Reduce waste
33	You will only see a negative impact in areas that have been utilised by the public and there has been evident benefit. I can guarantee you that in certain areas of Northumberland, there are more funds spent in areas that do not require the service or the intervention. Looking at the youth service and youth provision as a whole, you need to be looking what is spent on what, and in what particular areas and whether that project and activity has been beneficial to that particular area. I was given a very good example the other day and it is worth mentioning. There are more funds spent in Cramlington and Seaton Delaval on young people, than there is in Blyth an area of major deprivation. The most interesting issue, is that Blyth still outperforms the other two areas in numbers and quality and that is delivered by the voluntary sector organisations, with significant support from Area Youth Worker. Reduction in services in the certain areas will not be missed as there are no deprivation and the residents and young people do not actually need the service anyway. You need to be looking at specific areas on needs versus areas that may not need that NCC intervention.	Target those most in need
34	PART 4 these paragraphs mean nothing. What services. What and where opening hours What on earth does stop doing things mean	Reduced opening hours
35	Whilst this approach makes sense in the current economic climate care should be taken that vital infrastucture to support continuous business improvement is not lost during lean economic times. A focus on the delivery of statutory services only may see a lessening in value for money as key strategic skills are lost and a holistic approach to customers is weakened.	Fund vital infrastructure
36	A concerted and careful effort needs to be made to reduce in areas as yet untouched such as children's services. They are almost never affected by efficiency measures that have been implemented within the rest of the Council over the years. They are years behind in terms of efficient working practices and the existence of 'non jobs' etc. These services will continue to operate inefficiently if changes aren't. Cut's to service provision is not being suggested, just efficient working.	Review all areas of council services
37	Consult the users before making decisions that affect them. Daily newspapers should be available for use in public libraries Re training staff to be able to provide an efficient one stop shop system	Further consultation
38	Get rid of all private contractors and only use council staff to provide services.	No private contractors
39	We need to look at what we want to provide (currently not enough ...in some cases) and work backward to see what support that that needs. It is of no benefit to reduce	Target those most in need

	support without reference to the front line. But equally we shouldn't be paying for support which is over and above our frontline requirements.	
42	Councillors put themselves forward to be voted into office, they should make sure that they are suitably armed with the required educational status, so that they can carry out any problem thrown at them. This consultation proves that councillors are not up to the job, you are throwing the onus onto the general public, you can then say that it was not your fault.	
43	Save money by ensuring all county council buildings are energy efficient before cutting frontline services such as street cleaning	Increased use of renewables
46	Talk to staff openly and honestly about areas they know can be cut with minimal impact.	More transparent engagement
47	Staffing changes - Look at introducing shift work or alternative working patterns and contracts for some services so that residents do not lose out.	Changes to working patterns
48	Cut less grass (weekly) and create more meadows that only need cut once a year.	Reduce some provision
49	Reducing debt would reduce costs. Amalgamating back office functions such as payroll with other public service organisations has the potential to reduce costs. Too many organisations are sustained by local authority financial support.	Back office review
50	Greater cuts could be made regarding transport. Walking and cycling to school should be the default, if living within 5 miles of school. Use the Children and Young People's needs as the motivator to close bus lanes, create safer cycle routes, to save this money. Also this improves fitness, independence and decreases obesity. Make everything online as the default.	Automate more services
51	Use local knowledge especially that of staff to guide decisions - in some cases it may be best to close smaller services such as small branch libraries instead of stretching staff across several locations, so that the larger locations can provide a better service. Looking at demand and being proactive rather than reactive.	Provide local solutions
52	As I have previously stated it is very evident that the Youth Service already works with and supports young people across the county, providing help and appropriate assistance often before there is a need for more costly and intensive services from the authority, with this in mind it seem strange that this work is being penalised. Can I suggest that consideration is given to which services are actually working with young people in the evenings and weekends, when there is a greater need for knowledgeable support and early help, and that this provision and service is properly funded, thus reducing the need for increased costs to the authority further down the line.	Target those most in need
53	It is vital locals are consulted on all options that can be considered including volunteering. Is there a Northumberland Volunteering Website? I would like to volunteer but am unaware of such a facility. I have a range of skills that I am willing to volunteer and this may save funds and facilitate retaining key services.	Further consultation
54	You have closed Whytrigg middle school and moved it to Astley to make savings. That is a lot of kids in a tiny block....you should be ashamed.	
55	No tax increase	
57	Be mindful that cutting in one place might create demand / a need for resources to be spent somewhere else. Eg less cutting of grass means longer grass when it is cut and people complaining about mess. Less collections of bins mean more demand at recycling facilities and fly-tipping.	Look at the impact of any potential cuts
58	Decisions on making cuts to any service most, be extremely hard on the people who make those decisions but the impact on those it effects is even harder. Northumberland Youth Service gives much needed support to some of the most vulnerable youngsters in the county, their work going mainly unnoticed by the general public but for those young people who have no-one to share their concerns and issues with, this service is a life line. N.Y.S. pro-active support of organisations such as Newsham and New Delaval Youth Forum cannot be over looked when consideration is given to opening doors of opportunities for young people and strengthening community links. I gather resources may be diverted to areas of greatest need and would agree with that in the current climate but rural areas also have children who feel isolated/troubled. I am sure the youth workers in the particular areas have a much clearer picture and solution than I could offer and remain within budget.	Local solutions
59	Devolve as much as possible to town and parish councils so they can decide the level of service that they are prepared to pay for.	Devolve to town and parish councils
60	Do real transparent market research do not reach for the easiest options such as adult services or highways.	Further consultation
61	Do not remove car parking charges from country parks at Plessey, Bolam and Druridge	

	Bay. The income generated by parking exceeds the savings made by the proposed cuts to staff in the Green spaces and countryside team. If the revenue can be found to off-set the removal of parking charges why not keep the charges and the staff.	
62	At least give the green spaces and parks to other organisations who will be able to invest in them and make them viable	
63	I believe that if you keep people well inform, they accept changes better, so communication is the answer, getting it out there. Interacting with the news media and allow them to disseminate information sooner rather than it become a "News Item", would assist greatly. Nothing worse than finding out too late in the day and not being prepared.	Further consultation
64	It would seem that cuts are being placed on services based entirely on random financial quotas, rather than a consistent analysis of cost and benefit. For example, proposed cuts to Youth Services may lead to increased spending on the juvenile justice or health systems far outweighing any short-term impact.	Ensure cuts are fair and transparent
65	Reducing services should be a last resort, the offer of Job sharing and mobile work shops around the county rather than using office space should be considered for the delivery of some of these services	Increased job share and mobile working
66	Again, NCC must apply basic VFM criteria at every stage but also be careful to factor in cause & effect and try to estimate any negatives resulting from the 'law of unintended consequences'. This isn't techo-speak - its good judgement to ensure every effort is made to prevent cuts being made that sever arteries as opposed to reducing deadwood.	Look at impact of any cuts
68	Cut bias and favour for religious belief. Stop free travel for students who choose not to attend their local school. Why do 'special' schools have far superior budgets and grants to normal schools? all children should be treated equally and have a fair chance.	
69	In relation to the youth services in Northumberland there are numerous opportunities of making savings that will safeguard existence of the current service. My suggestions are the following - Look at your current delivery and identify the thousands of pounds that are wasted on current non-productive/non beneficial delivery. - Look at the overtime in each area and start questioning the reasons, why in certain areas part time workers are grossly over-paid for non-productive work - Identify need and re allocate funds to areas of need. - Look at staffing levels and youth worker allocation and funds by area and the level of partnerships that are delivered. - Look at what the voluntary sector delivers and compare the cost and effectiveness and outcomes for the community	Local solutions
74	Reducing the youth service is simply wrong! From what I can see they are the ones prepared to work with and support all and any young people in a way that prevents them needing the presumably expensive specialist services. What other NCC services offer drink and drug support and information, health information and advice, behaviour support, support and advice about self-image, sexuality, self-esteem and careers information as well as making sure young people's views and opinions are heard. Is it not the youth service that supported the young people who represented Northumberland in the Youth Parliament?	Local solutions
75	Most services are provided for by local people from the local communities of Northumberland. Whilst some efficiencies are inevitable, the Council must remember that it has a responsibility to the population of the communities that it is there to serve and not simply withdraw services without considering the effect that this may have on peoples lives. Reducing opening times etc. seems a sensible way forward, as does withdrawing services for which there is no need. As with printing etc., does the Council really need so much communication on non-essential items (e.g. statistics over what it has done over the last year; posters to staff about staff)? These are nice luxuries, but they are not necessities.	Look at cause and effect
77	I don't think it is fair that the proposal gives some young people more of a service than others by reducing the Youth Service in the County. as it is the youth workers and youth service work with me and my friends to help prevent us having future problems and to help us achieve well in our lives. Whereas only focusing on young people who are already vulnerable doesn't help and support me and my friends from making the same mistakes.	Target those in need
78	Reduce council staff	Reduce staffing
79	You need to keep some services running especially youth services, however it may be wise to involve the voluntary sector in contracts and commissioning to keep the cost of these services to a more reasonable cost, as at the present time the county youth service is not cost effective.	Partnership working
80	Do not spend money on a new HQ, and reduce the borrowing for new sports centres.	Don't relocate HQ
81	People value their free time and the provision of safe and well maintained public	Don't remove

	spaces, including country parks. They value the service provided, with drawing staff will lead to increased problems with litter, vandalism and anti-social behaviour often making places a no go area. For over 40 years you have invested in these areas now to allow them to deteriorate just like the public spaces in Newcastle	essential services
82	The Youth Service was already cut 3 years ago 25% - 39%. Any cut to the streamline Youth Service will have an impact on the number of youth work sessions delivered. Any cut to the Youth Service will have an impact on external funding coming into the county by 1. reducing the capacity for applying for it 2. removing the option for match funding 3. forcing vol sector to apply for funding to replace statutory responsibilities rather than enhancing them – they will then fail to get this funding. The Youth Service already targets it's services locally to those that most need it based on deprivation, additional needs, geographical exclusion etc if you take this away then the negative impact on those in need is not proportional to other sectors of the community. If you cut the youth service budget it will cost NCC more in the long run	Local solutions

Common themes emerging through the consultation responses:

Responses to this question were received from 61 of the respondents.

	Partnership Working	6 respondents felt the Council should explore more partnership working opportunities
	Consultation	5 respondents felt that additional consultation and engagement with residents and service users was required prior to implementation
	Local solutions	5 respondents felt services should be bespoke to the local community and not standard throughout the County



## Control inflation (saving around £6.3 million over two years)

Financial management of annual inflationary increases.

How else do you think we could do things differently to reduce the impact of inflation?		
Ref.	Comment	Category
4	Invalid question as inflation although rising is well below predictions therefore a net saving!	Out of our control
6	Tell suppliers that they need to adhere to this if they want to work with the county freeze salaries, expenses or cut the expenses--- lead by example stand up to national gov't	Salary and Expense Freeze
8	I am finding difficult to comment of my opinion of how I could do things differently to reduce impact of inflation. Can we influence inflation ;	Out of our control
12	Pay freezes for all staff earning 16k or more. Renegotiate contract prices	Salary and Expense Freeze
15	Wage freezes, better to have a lower salary than no job. Long term procurement deals More home working Less travelling about/greater use of video conferencing/less meetings	Salary and Expense Freeze
18	Stop spending/committing to spend on unnecessary capital projects which the locals do not want	Review Capital Projects
19	difficult to answer but you could reduce the impact by making savings in different areas that has little impact when there is an increase in inflation	Out of our control
21	Inflation is very low. How can you say fuel prices are rising. From experience I know that councils often pay more than industry for the same products. How can this be so except as a result of inefficient bargaining?	Contract negotiations
23	Use more direct labour instead of paying over the odds for private firms	Use more direct labour
24	Inflation happens....no way to avoid it.	Out of our control
26	Better management of finances	Better budget monitoring
27	Buy products/systems/services as a group - get more units for your money- all local authorities/NHS/police/other businesses/charities club together	Contract negotiations
29	Take an example form the good life - where possible grow our own, use our own and build our own. Can we use renewable energies in our own buildings? All schools and council buildings should use solar, wind and bio power where we can. If we don't have to buy from others, they can't put their prices up on us.	Increased use of renewables
31	See answer to question 1.How can u justify increases of nearly 2% when peoples salaries are not keeping pace with inflation. Do the councillors really think that people will vote for them by increasing council tax.	
32	Nothing inflation is out of local authourities hands.	Out of our control
33	Inflation is difficult to control and reducing the impact is probably as difficult. The rise of cost of goods and services has an effect of the community as it reduces the purchasing power to pay for additional services etc. There should be a % build in within your budget and savings allocations that compensates for increase and impact in inflation. This in turn will allow services to continue and minimise the impact on inflation.	Out of our control
34	The financial departments are pretty lax within councils, This is common knowledge, Stop the company car to all employees, especially when that company car is used by the family during the day, or parked in the street. Look within the county council own backyard.	Review company car policy
37	Bulk buy between departments stationery, toilet rolls, soap etc	Bulk buy products
39	Better preparation. Get ahead of the game. We have staff in high salaried positions who appear to be reacting instead of pre-empting financial situations. This shouldn't be happening if they are truly worth the salary.	Be more pro-active
41	Not much scope to control inflation.	Out of control
42	One only has to look at the trail of incompetency and ignorance carried out by councillors past and present, I have no faith in the council at all now.	
43	Ensure any travel / transport is only used when necessary to cut down on fuel use	Review unnecessary travel
47	Good investments, invest to save schemes and increase Council tax revenue.	Increase C.Tax
50	Change the role of council to that of a commissioner of services, in the same way that	Contract

	it is for the NHS (& could use their skill sets in commissioning and monitoring).	negotiation
51	Forward planning and being proactive rather than reactive. Looking to future-proof services with technology etc.	Be more proactive
53	What are other councils doing?	Review best practice
55	Cut councillors expenses	Salary/Expense Freeze
57	Buy items that are better made and so will last longer, removing the need to buy so frequently or incur regular repair bills. .	Buy products that last
58	Not sure anyone can judge the impact across such diverse areas, just try to be fair and even as possible in any cut backs, staffing and services. Most people would be willing to pay a little more to maintain good services.	Ensure cuts are fair and equitable
63	As the county council have a large housing stock, I wonder whether it would be possible for the county to purchase bulk gas and electric, and sell this onto their customers, passing on as much savings as possible to the house tenant. This would probably target the most vulnerable people in our community.	Bulk buy utility services to sell on.
65	Inflation is at an all-time low, by managing local taxes this can be achieved, the removal of percentage salary increases should also be considered as this only increasing the gap between front line services and top end staff, it is not acceptable for the gap to grow to large	Salary/Expense Freeze
68	raise council tax	Increase C.tax
75	Inflation is at its lowest for 15 years. I am unsure whether you are treating this as a problem and wish measures to increase the rate of inflation (and whether Northumberland is in a strategic position to achieve that) or whether even that rate is something that is causing the Council problems. A better explanation on this point would help to inform an answer. Again, the survey question does not seem to be particularly clear which begs the question as to how much weight could be attached to any answer.	Need further information
78	Consider collecting rent arrears and council tax arrears.	Increase collection rates
80	Has the reduction in the cost of fuel been factored in to this year's financial calculations. It must be large.	Need further information

Common themes emerging through the consultation responses:

Responses to this question were received from 35 of the respondents.

	Pay/Salary Freeze	5 respondents felt that a pay or expense freeze on staff /members was worth consideration
	Out of our control	7 respondents felt that inflation was outside of the control of the Council and therefore difficult to manage
	Contract negotiations	3 respondents felt efficiencies could be achieved through better negotiations with suppliers and contractors

## Your ideas

How else do you think we could do things differently to save money?	
Ref.	Comment
4	Get the various departments to co-operate better with each other, instead of putting up barriers, stop ignoring errors or bad practice and address them, get all staff to think of the Council as a whole instead of their own little section of work.
5	Stop investing money in external consultants in order to improve things like Ofsted results. Stop holding training events that are not necessary and providing external buffets. Shut down kitchens in county buildings, staff can bring their own lunches in and that will save on many resources.
6	contract more services out to the private sector innovate
12	Ensure that the services you contract out are properly performance managed and that you claw back anything you can for poor performance/outcomes.
13	Overtime only to be worked when necessary - not for falling workloads No Agency staff or consultants
15	More home working - which would reduce the size of the building needed to host "County Hall" Offer all staff the option to reduce hours/job share rather than anyone lose their job A more local focus on delivery of services (meaning in the towns and villages - not cluster wide) Look after all the staff who live in Northumberland and work in Northumberland - who make it such a nice place to live
16	Instead of permanent lighting, consider the use of light sensors in buildings (for example, public toilets) which activate only when triggered. Further development of solar-powered lighting. Clean public toilets, especially in remote areas, more regularly when demand/use is high and reduce the schedule out of season and/or when the weather is poor and demand is low. Check cleanliness using remote technology (when facilities are closed!) to assist with decision-making.
17	stop the proposed move of county hall , it's a pure political move to secure labour votes
18	Manage finances better than you are doing at the moment - rigorous monitoring of all services (see recent debacles regarding home-school transport for example) and consulting better on requirements - eg not understanding what courses 6th form students need/want and providing better quality ones in county at accessible locations throughout the county (not just Ashington, which is not particularly accessible for any outside SE of county)
19	Look at county youth service provision and ask for clarification on funding. Allocation of funds is not equal or fair and certain areas like Blyth have suffered. Look at what works and use it in areas of need.
20	Start working in partnership with providers from the voluntary sector and encourage them to improve and develop their provision that in turn will save NCC substantial amount money. Look at our provision, is it really value for money; Through my experience youth work provision in schools is an expensive resource that should be paid by the schools, which in turn will bring in funds that can be redirected to areas of need
21	I often notice people outside council buildings on a "smoking" break - the same people several times each day. Are they working efficiently? Why are there always several people standing around doing nothing when a gang of men are working on mending a road, grass cutting etc? Why does there always seem to be one man just sitting in a van at the site - do the drivers only drive and then sit around all day?
22	I would split every service into a chargeable entity and make some mandatory, some optional. I would make cuts to all services that don't directly benefit everyone who pays council tax.
23	not have so many consultants and middle managers
24	Invest to save by supporting staff more to prevent them going off sick with stress. Do this by raising standards of management. Right from the top. And put the council tax up.
25	cut staff do NOT increase council tax why should we pay more when our income has been cut
26	look at my answers in previous questions
27	locate staff where there work is to reduce travel don't move staff from buildings that aren't closing, they are fitted out appropriately for their needs already turn the heating down in county hall ( we have all the windows and doors propped open) back scan paper to cut down on storage costs go paperless offices don't spend thousands of pounds on councillor ideas without getting business intelligence/opinions to back up the spending
28	Do all posts that are full-time need to be full-time? Re-evaluate contracted hours - many posts could be more efficiently assigned. Work and roles could be shared out within teams which would prevent as many redundancies. Stop contracting to expensive consultancies when there are highly qualified and capable employees within the Council. Projects should be peer-reviewed for validity instead of using external companies. If external companies are used, there should be a 'local' weighting applied to any tendering process to encourage local economic growth.
29	Could the council offer a 4.5 day standard week? other companies do this to save money, workers still complete their full hours but in less days. this means council offices could close from 1pm on a Friday. It would reduce overtime and flexi and encourage workers to be more efficient with their travel. British Engines in Newcastle use this method where Monday is the longest day, slightly less on a Tuesday etc. The workers appreciate the longer weekend, wages are not reduced but costs are. It consolidates the workforce work times rather than being too flexible with only a few staying some evenings but the heating, electrics etc still being on.

30	All council building should be heated and powered through their own energy supply - solar array panels around county hall, panels on roofs of other buildings. The Council seems to be promoting renewable energy for everyone else except the council!! A lot of money must be wasted on utility costs for heating poorly insulated building with poor heating systems and practically EVERY office having several small electric heaters blasting all day every day. The Council should practice what it preaches and start to look now at alternative supply.
33	Look at what you currently deliver, is it effective, does it provide benefits, can you measure the benefit through community evaluations. This will allow you to save additional funds.
34	Look at the staff and waste created. Look at council meetings and cost of free lunches and drinks. Look within your own departments. Do your job. Do not get consultants in. Take a look at your department. Something that happens all the time repetitive statements. NO NOTICE WILL BE TAKEN OF THESE COMMENTS, AS IS THE CASE WITH SALE OF MORPETH PLOT. YOU HAVE ALREADY MADE THE DECISIONS AND YOU WILL NOT CHANGE, YOUR TIMETABLE TELLS ME THAT. THAT'S WHY PEOPLE ARE SICK TO THE BACK TEETH.
35	It may be timely to look at the role of interim and temporary staff within the organisation.
36	Sell the jet-patcher, they are an extremely expensive method of repairing surfacing. Two operatives in a pickup with can produce repairs of the same quality. The two operatives and pickup are necessary when jet patching anyway so the cost of the jet-patcher machine and driver could be eliminated.
38	Stop trying to achieve excellence in certain areas and concentrate on being good over all areas.
39	Introduce a 'We Own It' culture. We can all affect costs by being diligent in our own areas. It is not acceptable to cut corners or take the easy route, just to make life easier for ourselves. Coming from the private sector I feel privileged to now work for the council and treat my departmental requirements as if they were my own. That includes method and costs! Open consultation between other departments to gauge opinion on acceptability of some of the bigger projects. This survey is a great idea and, if you truly listen to what is being said, why stop there?
41	Increase council tax
42	All councillors should be seen to be with the people, not sitting in centrally heated offices, drinking the best coffee, while the rest of Northumberland struggles to stay alive.
43	Limit all pay increases for the very highest paid management
47	Local Services - Generate more SLA's with Town and Parish Council's, Supermarkets, schools
48	Manage the Council-owned woodlands for wood fuel supply through woodland grant schemes.
49	Reduce debt and/or increase in council's debt. Freeze capital spending.
50	Resource should be maintained for high level work related to EU (& beyond) investment, lobbying government, getting big schemes shovel ready for when national economy turns or the national political imperative provides an opportunity. I would accept cuts on local 'firefighting' measures to provide such dedicated resource. I am not sure if the LEP or LA7 is doing this or up to it. Instead cut funding for all of those things which would not require as much spend if the individual behaved differently. For example, if extra support is required for an individual to assist with mobility or home care, but less would be required if they were less obese, then the support should become dependent on weight loss, following on from the precedent now set in Devon where routine operations are not offered to anyone who smokes or who has a BMI >35 until they have stopped smoking for greater than 8 weeks or lost a certain amount of weight. So elsewhere in the UK a greater expectation on the individual is being made. The council can't do it on its own. We must expect more of the population. I would also invite other council executives from elsewhere in the country to periodically come and review and advise, to identify different ways of doing things. I suspect there is also a culture change needed in council, and this is difficult when one has worked in the same institution for a long time. One becomes adapted. What about Edinburgh or Gateshead, both close enough for executives to visit.
51	Services such as libraries and tourism are the heart of communities - look at all the different ways in which they can be used to provide services and support to Northumberland.
52	I am sure that this has already been considered, but there does always seem to be a large number of external consultants and agency staff working for the Authority, I question if this is the best use of the limited resources available, as I'm sure that these skills, knowledge and expertise are already available with the current workforce. Having read the budget proposal and the associated guidance document I am clear on the how the authority intends to address the budget gap, however, as i have highlighted throughout this consultation i feel that some of these measures are very short sighted and are simply storing up greater costs for the future.
55	Cut local tax
57	Many of our buildings are poorly insulated and difficult to keep warm, if we are to stay in certain properties they should have all possible insulation to keep energy bills down, and where appropriate, solar panels. Lights are left on, so a timer or motion detector would make sense in larger premises, and also in sports pavilions to prevent people accidentally leaving things on for long periods. Embargo furniture purchases and ensure disused furniture within the organisation is recycled where possible.
59	Invest more in the community and voluntary sector to support communities to be better equipped to look after themselves and reduce need for council services.
60	Each internal department should be set a targets to achieve savings,
61	Talk to teams when thinking about making cuts, like removal of car park charges, that directly affect the jobs of officers in them and value the jobs, livelihoods and lives of staff that are affected.

62	There are too many statutory functions that need to be reassessed, stop protecting them when it would seem the public do not value the work that is done i.e. Right of Way or archaeology. You say you are protecting front line services - untrue country park staff and green spaces officers are not being protected and they provide valuable education resources to schools and are able to income generate
63	We seem to use some companies to undertake building repairs whose charges are exorbitant, whom in my experience, are often far more expensive than local traders. Why do NCC continue to use such expensive services, I would rather see them use a local trader and support our local economy, and build up a better relationship which generally means you get a better service.
64	Increase commissioning relationships with voluntary sector partners at local level who can bring added value to the resource.
65	Reduce expenditure on meetings and expensive council properties
66	All NCC spend needs to be evaluated on sound principles and not assumed to be VFM based on unsound reasons just because a head of dept argues a case. It is evident in Northumberland that not all heads of dept or key staff are on top of their responsibilities in terms of latest thinking or best practice despite saying / writing the right words. This causes waste of money, waste of time and waste of opportunity.
68	STOP THE VERY POLITICAL, BIASED AND RIDICULOUS PROPOSAL TO MOVE COUNTY HALL TO ASHINGTON.
69	Look at what you currently provide and deliver and measure the effectiveness and whether there is actual a need to deliver and whether you are wasting funds in areas that actual provision is not required. Look at your current contribution to the voluntary sector and how you can learn from working together in partnership.
70	School Transport. At the moment schools, even within the same pyramid, have teacher training days on different days. If these days could be rationalised into the same day within pyramids, better within the whole county, it would mean that on at least six days a year, school transport would not be required. This would represent a massive saving on a bill that always seems to be under pressure.
71	Money is wasted at all levels within the organisation; sometime relatively small things like lights and heating being left on in unoccupied rooms and buildings, but larger things such as poor control of contractors carrying out building and maintenance work, being overcharged by suppliers for goods and services. There is also money being wasted within the organisation by the introduction of initiatives that have not been fully tested or thought out: for example the fitting of expensive lightfoot devices to hundreds of county vehicles without any evidence of realistic savings.
72	Why spend millions on a new leisure centre in Morpeth. There are already 4 gyms in Morpeth town centre.
74	You need to look at the skills and abilities within the current staff team across all departments and realise the true extent of the work that the youth service do.
75	Use your accommodation wisely. Prevent staff from constantly moving offices (there is a perception that staff are frequently having to move from one room to another at the various NCC offices which is presumably at a cost) - a "make do and mend" attitude would prevent unnecessary expense. Turn off street lights - we have the best dark skies in much of Europe and the National Park area has just won recognition for that. If we turned off much of the lighting it would save a vast amount of money, be more environmentally sound and would allow residents to enjoy those dark skies rather than the neon glare of the thousands of lights that we do have. Areas in the south of England have already done this, so it has been tried and tested. This would be the single thing that would improve the quality of life whilst saving money at the same time and it would be great to see that happen.
79	As mentioned previously, the county council youth services are not cost effective, it would be wise to deliver these services through the voluntary sector in the major areas such as Berwick, Alnwick and Morpeth through town center provision where young people can get easier access after school etc. It would prove to be more cost effective and if commissioning with the sector took place, then this would attract additional 'match funding' from other funding organisations.
80	No new HQ.
81	Re-evaluate you protection of statutory services, very often the public are not asked if they want these to be provided or protected. Give the public a say in this factor, e.g. spending on rights of way, for which the foot fall and usage is very low in comparison to green spaces and public parks
82	Change the way we have to purchase from specific suppliers. This way of purchasing doesn't allow staff to find deals on trains or similar which would save money. There are ways to ensure these systems are not abused. Start looking after current Foster Carers so they don't leave. It costs so much more in the long term to have to recruit and train new carers or to place young people out of county. To save money they could build on the success of the Youth Service for engaging with young people and have mental health workers and TAS workers and other professionals based in locality teams available to YP locally to engage with them as issues start rather than when issues become problematic. So much more work should be done with young people leaving care to prevent them needing services themselves (high risk of teen preg, neet, crime etc). Youth Service and Social Services should be working together to do this. This would save money in the longer term. Lessons could be learnt from proactive example of the youth service when it comes to bringing in external funding. Could there be staff in county who's role it is to seek out and chase funding opportunities across the services as sometimes (especially with cuts) people don't have time for this and opportunities are missed