

# ANNEX 6

## BUDGET CONSULTATION 2015/16

<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>SECTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Background	1
The Consultation	1
Results and feedback from the consultation	4
Conclusions	7

<b>APPENDICES</b>	
<b>APPENDIX NUMBER AND TITLE</b>	
<b>A</b>	Your City Your Services 2014 Data Report – December 2014

# ANNEX 6 : BUDGET CONSULTATION 2015/16

## SUMMARY

Nottingham City Council is setting its budget within a context of difficult economic conditions, changes in national policy and continued, substantial reductions in funding. In 2015/16, savings of c£25m are proposed to be made.

In line with the Council's commitment to citizen involvement, a full programme of consultation has been undertaken to support construction of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This report details the results of that consultation and includes responses received up to and including February 13<sup>th</sup> 2015.

## 1. BACKGROUND

### Context

There are a number of practical difficulties to be faced when undertaking budget consultation. A unitary authority such as Nottingham City Council provides an enormous number of services and this creates a complex picture with many proposals to consult on. This is made more difficult by the short consultation period available between the government notifying the Council of its funding levels and the annual budget-setting Council meeting.

### Impact of Consultation

Nottingham City Council has a long term commitment to feed the views of citizens into the processes of policy making and service improvement. This helps the Council understand the issues and services that matter to local communities, as reflected in the priorities that guided the Executive Board in developing the budget proposals. These priorities are:

- Protecting front-line services
- Protecting jobs
- Supporting the most vulnerable
- Keeping Nottingham safe and clean
- Bolstering the economy

## 2. THE CONSULTATION

### How we consulted

Consultation on the budget was conducted in two phases:

### Pre-budget

Before the budget settlement for 2015/16 was announced in December, pre-budget consultation was carried out during October and November 2014. This gathered views through a survey, available both on-line and through the October Arrow. Citizens were asked about:

- Which services are important;
- Issues of concern in the current economic climate;
- How the Council could make further savings;
- How the Council could generate more income:

Following this process, the draft budget was approved for consultation by Executive Board on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

### Consultation on budget proposals

The Council consulted on these draft budget proposals from December 17<sup>th</sup> 2014. A consultation form was made available online and in hard copy to enable everyone to have their say. As part of the consultation, events were arranged across the City, which were publicised locally by neighbourhood management teams. Discussions held at these events were recorded and attendees were also invited to provide individual feedback via the consultation form. Consultation with businesses, colleagues, One Nottingham partners and the voluntary and community sector was also undertaken.

### The consultation events

The events provided the opportunity for citizens to engage directly with members of the Executive Board. The style of the neighbourhood events varied depending on local need but generally included a presentation that provided background to the budget and summarised the proposals. A short video was also shown which explained the current budget position in Nottingham.

Targeted events were held which had additional provision for equalities groups and communities of identity. The venues were fully accessible. Invitations were sent to members of the City's equality engagement groups and community groups from different backgrounds. These events were intended to ensure that people with specific access requirements could partake in the budget consultation.

Members of the local business community were invited to a breakfast briefing and a Learning Network event concentrating on the City Council's budget was held for One Nottingham partners. There was also an additional event organised for representatives from Nottingham's Voluntary and Community Sectors.

Citizens also had the opportunity to discuss the budget during regular weekly surgeries with councillors.

Nottingham City Council colleagues were also given the opportunity to be involved in the consultation. This involved:

- Presentations by the Chief Executive or a member of the Corporate Leadership Team and a Councillor, followed by a question and answer session.
- Briefings including Intranet news articles

## Feedback to services

Feedback received on the budget proposals from this series of events has been circulated to the relevant service heads and directors for their consideration.

### **3 RESULTS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE CONSULTATION**

#### Pre-budget consultation

1,982 responses were received from the pre-budget consultation with 90% of these coming from the survey in the October Arrow magazine; the remainder responded online or completed a form at a consultation event.

Respondents were asked to rate a cross section of 24 council services on a scale of 1 (Not important) to 5 (Very important). For each service a mean average has been calculated out of 5. The services rated as the top 5 most important by respondents were:

1. Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour (4.4 out of 5)
2. Services to elderly and vulnerable people (4.3 out of 5)
3. Child Protection (4.3 out of 5)
4. Refuse Collection (4.3 out of 5)
5. Public Transport (4.1 out of 5)

The top 5 services remained the same as in 2011, 2012 and 2013 although the order changed slightly.

The full results of the survey are given in **Appendix A** to this report.

#### Consultation on the budget proposals

##### **Responses via the budget consultation form**

Around 240 submissions have been received to date.

##### **Feedback specific to budget proposals**

Over 90 items of feedback relating to specific budget proposals have been received to date. Two thirds of this feedback relates to proposals for Children's Services and for Adults, Commissioning and Health services. Specifically the two proposals which have attracted the most feedback to date are:

**AC&H19: Preventative services & commissioning:** Feedback refers specifically to a reduction in funding for the Disability Living Centre (DLC). The DLC is described by those responding as a very valuable resource used by both patients and professionals (particularly occupational therapists). Those responding suggest that cuts to this service would impact upon people with disabilities and could lead to pressures on other care services.

**ChS10: External groups:** Feedback almost exclusively refers to cuts to the Rainbow Parents Carers Forum. Many of those responding talk about their own personal circumstances and describe it as the only help available to meet their needs.

## **Other feedback**

Many comments received were not specific to individual budget proposals. These covered a wide range of themes and issues, including:

- The negative impacts of changes to social care services
- The negative impacts of changes to library services
- Concern about a rise in Council Tax
- Concern regarding the financial impact of the Tram network
- The impact on the vulnerable i.e. children in care, elderly, disabled citizens
- Reduction in budget for non-essential services i.e. museums, parks open spaces, grants to voluntary groups
- The need to reduce bureaucracy and improve efficiency in council activities
- Urging the Council to lobby central government for a better deal for Nottingham
- Concern regarding School performance league tables
- Reducing the amounts spent on the production of free publications and on the management of events
- Concern about the removal of concessionary bus passes for the elderly
- Suggesting that the City should do more to attract tourism

In many cases, feedback showed that citizens were supportive of the Council and felt that it was doing the best it could, given the difficult circumstances. Some citizens stated that they would need more detailed information about the proposals to be able to provide informed comment(s).

## **Feedback from events in neighbourhoods**

The budget proposals were discussed at eleven events in neighbourhoods. Around 200 citizens attended to give their views. Most sessions received a presentation from a Councillor, followed by a question and answer session.

Issues raised included:

- Concerns about the impact on key services such as Youth Provision and Community Protection,
- Concerns about the closure of Long Meadows Day Centre.
- Comments around Sunday pay and display parking and the Workplace Parking Levy.
- Concerns about reductions in social care services and the impact this will have on elderly and vulnerable people
- Questions around empty properties in the city

At many events citizens acknowledged the difficulties faced by the Council.

## **Equality Issues**

Seventeen people attended a session organised for Communities of Identity, which mostly focussed on the impact of budget proposals on specific groups. In particular, they highlighted concerns about proposals relating to:

- Business rates and the effect on social businesses,
- Early intervention services,
- Voluntary and community sector funding,
- The Council's ongoing commitment to the voluntary sector,
- The mental health strategy.

More specifically, attendees raised concern about support for BME Mental Health and Rape Crisis.

The importance of an over-arching Equality Impact Assessment of the proposals was also emphasised.

### **Feedback from the business community**

Seven representatives attended from the business community and a wide-ranging discussion took place.

Attendees suggested that the Council needs to establish a more continuous dialogue with the private sector. The general opinion was that the Council could be more effective in looking for private sector partners in capital investment and that the Council has not actively looked to the private sector to provide services at low cost or commercially.

Concern was raised over whether small businesses are being made aware that they are entitled to relief on business rates and whether they are being actively encouraged to take up the relief available.

Questions were raised about the Nottinghamshire growth deal and how additional funding awarded will create opportunities within D2N2.

### **Feedback from colleagues**

Five consultation sessions were organised at a variety of venues for colleagues to ask questions or make comments on budget proposals.

The main themes emerging from these sessions were:

- Concerns around the ongoing increment freeze whilst living costs continue to increase
- Concerns that reductions in the number of front-line staff could result in worse services.
- Questions around the proposed redundancies
- Questions around the use of Council reserves to reduce the need to make cuts to posts and services
- Concerns about the St Ann's Day Centre
- Whether there are plans for a coordinated effort to oppose the cuts to the funding central government provide

### **Feedback from One Nottingham Partners**

Partners from the public, private and voluntary sector attended learning Network event organised by One Nottingham. Attendees viewed the animation video explaining the current budget position in Nottingham, then listened to a presentation on the proposed Nottingham City Council Budget for 2015/16 from Councillor Graham Chapman and Councillor David Mellen.

There were questions about:

- Savings arising from the restructure of hostel provision
- Decommissioning non-essential voluntary sector services
- Big issues around health improvement for the city such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. How do we allow the health and wellbeing work to take place?
- Concern about care workers and how we protect the most vulnerable, some of whom are care workers themselves
- The possibility of cross-authority working

### **Feedback from the Voluntary and Community Sector**

A consultation event was held for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

Discussions were wide-ranging but the main themes emerging were:

- Concerns around the inclusion of services to Children in Care in the proposed cuts

- That Councillors, MPs, the voluntary sector and the worst affected together should campaign for a better deal at Parliament
- A return to traditional procurement where the Council will open this up to the private sector again

### **Formal responses**

In addition to the survey responses and comments made at public meetings, a formal submission was received from the Nottinghamshire Disabled People's Movement in which concerns were raised and specific additional information was requested.

The full content of this submission has been supplied to relevant service heads and directors. The main issues highlighted were as follows.

The Nottinghamshire Disabled People's Movement raised concern of the potential impact the proposals would have on citizens, particularly those with additional needs (including disabled people), and specific concerns and questions were raised in relation to a large number of proposals. They also expressed concern about the overall effects of the budget proposals and the disproportionate impact they could potentially have on disabled and other vulnerable people. They proposed that services and facilities aimed at supporting the most vulnerable people, such as care for older people, disabled people, children at risk of harm, and early intervention services such as welfare support should face the lowest level of cut. They suggested that universal services like bin collection, litter clearing, parks, libraries and leisure services should face a higher level of cut.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Throughout the consultation a large amount of feedback has been received from a wide-ranging group of respondents and this information has been fed back in order to inform the final decision-making process

Citizens have expressed concern about the potential cumulative impact of these proposals on some of the most vulnerable citizens and this concern has been considered in the Equality Impact Assessments carried out.

Overall, colleagues, citizens and businesses recognise the difficult position the Council faces in having to make savings on this scale. Generally, they have appreciated the opportunities to express their views and concerns through the consultation process although some respondents would have welcomed the availability of more detailed information. This view will be fed into planning future budget consultations.

## **Appendix A: Your City Your Services 2014 Data Report – 11th December 2014**

### **Background**

This report presents the findings from the 2014 Your City Your Services (YCYS) Survey. This is the fourth annual Your City Your Services survey.

The YCYS survey was available online from the beginning of October 2014 and a paper version was distributed to every household across the City in the October edition of the Nottingham Arrow publication. The survey was also circulated using social media (Face book and twitter). Paper copies of the survey were made available at customer reception points across the City including at leisure centres, libraries and Angel Row Contact Centre and the Council House.

In addition, Neighbourhood Development Officers circulated the survey at a variety of community and neighbourhood meetings across the City.

As in previous years, the 2014 YCYC survey used a self-completion approach. At the date of writing this report a total of 1,982 responses have been received, compared to 2,524 in 2013 and 1,308 in 2012.

The information from the survey will be used to inform Councillors' decisions in the 2015/16 budget making process.

### **Interpreting the data**

Please note that, as the Your City Your Services survey did not use a truly random sample, the confidence intervals stated within this report should be used as a guide only.

Percentage figures quoted have been rounded up/down to the nearest whole number and mean scores have been rounded up/down to one decimal place.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers.

The base number of respondents for each question is given as (n = base number)

### **Postcode Data**

Of the overall sample (n = 1,982) 1,621 (82%) respondents provided a valid City post code. This information has been used to show the geographical location of respondents as follows:



**Table 1: Responses by Area Committee / Ward.**

<b>Area Committee / Ward</b>		<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>% of overall sample</b>
Base: n = 1,621			
Area 1	Bulwell (98), Bulwell Forest (111)	209	13%
Area 2	Bestwood (114), Basford (101)	215	13%
Area 3	Bilborough (91), Aspley (74), Leen Valley (59)	224	14%
Area 4	Sherwood (142), Berridge (88)	230	14%
Area 5	Arboretum (51), Radford & Park (64), Dunkirk & Lenton (18)	133	8%
Area 6	Mapperley (119), St Ann's (55), Dales (83)	257	16%
Area 7	Wollaton West (127), Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey (33)	160	10%
Area 8	Bridge (69), Clifton North (71), Clifton South (53)	193	12%
Area Total		1,621	

As in the last two Your City Your Services surveys Area 6: Mapperley, St Ann's and the Dales had the most responses (257). For the 2014 survey Area 5: Arboretum, Radford and Park and Dunkirk and Lenton had the lowest number of responses (133)

**Table 2: Responses by Locality**

<b>Locality</b>		<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>% of overall sample</b>
Base: n = 1,621			
North	Area 1, Area 2, Area 3	649	40%
Centra	Area 4, Area 5, Area 7	524	32%
South	Area 6, Area 8	448	28%
Area Total		1,621	

**Table 3: Demographic data**

<b>Base: 1,982</b>	<b>Census 2011</b>	<b>YCYS 2014</b>	<b>+/-</b>
Male	50%	41%	-9%
Female	50%	57%	+7%
Disabled	18%	29%	+11%
White	72%	91%	+19%
Black	7%	3%	-4%
Asian (including Chinese)	13%	3%	-10%
Mixed	7%	2%	-5%
16-24	27%	3%	-24%
25-44	35%	11%	-24%
45-59	19%	25%	+6%
60-64	5%	12%	+7%
65+	14%	36%	+22%

The sample is over represented by female, disabled, white and all age groups over 45. This is most likely to be because the main methodology used was an insert in the Arrow publication, which is predominantly read by age groups over 45.

## How important are services?

For question 1, respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 (Not important) to 5 (Very important) a cross section of 24 council services.

Please note: From April 2013, Nottingham City Council took responsibility for some Public Health functions, providing a wide range of services including stop smoking services, sexual health services and school nursing service. Public Health services have not been included in this year's Your City Your Services survey but will be included in future surveys.

Based on the views of respondents each service has been given a mean score calculated out of 5. Figures have been rounded up/down to one decimal point.

The five services rated as the most important by 2014 respondents are the same top five services identified in the 2013 survey.

**Table 4: Top Five Rated Services in 2014**

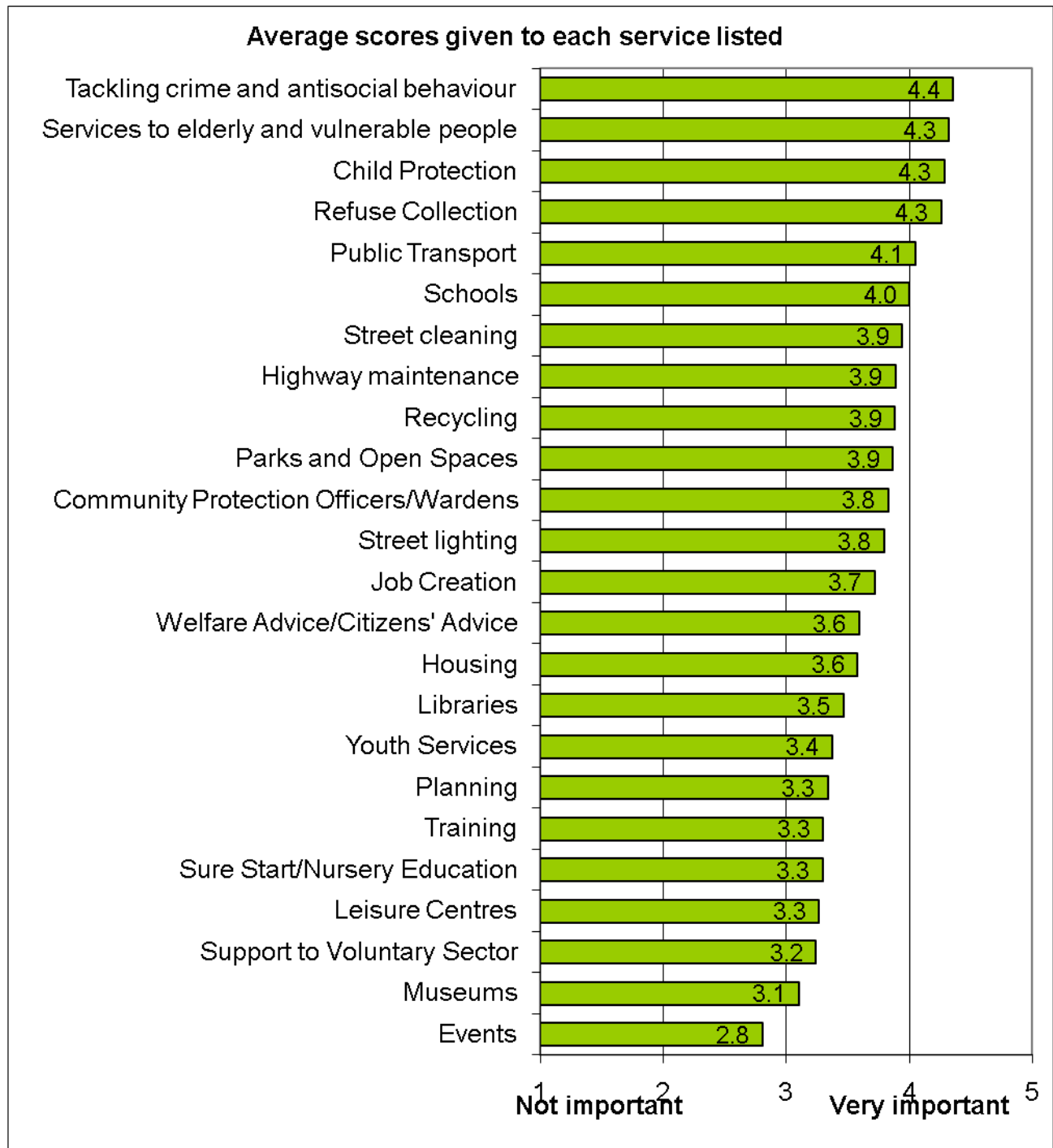
<b>2014 ranking</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Mean score</b>
1	Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour	4.4 out of 5
2	Services to elderly and vulnerable people	4.3 out of 5
3	Child Protection	4.3 out of 5
4	Refuse Collection	4.3 out of 5
5	Public Transport	4.1 out of 5

Although the top five service rankings remain the same as in 2013, there is a difference in ranking order. **Child Protection** has moved up one place to the third most important service to respondents. **Refuse Collection** has dropped from third to fourth.

The three services rated as the least important by respondents remains the same as in 2013. These are **Support to Voluntary Sector** (3.2 out of 5), **Museums** (3.1 out of 5) and **Events** (2.8 out of 5)

There is no significant difference between the services rated as important by those aged under 45 and those aged 45 and over.

**Table 5: 2014 Service Rankings in order highest to lowest**



**Table 6: 2014 Rankings Compared to 2013**

2014 Ranking	Service	2014 Mean score	2013 Mean score & ranking	Ranking up / same / down compared to 2013
1	Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour	4.4	(1) 4.4	Same
2	Services to elderly and vulnerable people	4.3	(2) 4.3	Same
3	Child Protection	4.3	(4) 4.3	Up
4	Refuse Collection	4.3	(3) 4.3	Down
5	Public Transport	4.1	(5) 4.1	Same
6	Schools	4.0	(6) 4.0	Same
7	Street cleaning	3.9	(7) 3.9	Same
8	Highway maintenance	3.9	(10) 3.9	Up
9	Recycling	3.9	(8) 3.9	Down
10	Parks and Open Spaces	3.9	(9) 3.9	Down
11	Community Protection Officers/Wardens	3.8	(12) 3.8	Up
12	Street lighting	3.8	(13) 3.8	Up
13	Job Creation	3.7	(11) 3.8	Down
14	Welfare Advice/Citizens' Advice	3.6	(17) 3.6	Up
15	Housing	3.6	(15) 3.6	Same
16	Libraries	3.5	(16) 3.5	Same
17	Youth Services	3.4	(14) 3.4	Down
18	Planning	3.3	(19) 3.3	Up
19	Training	3.3	(18) 3.3	Down
20	Sure Start/Nursery Education	3.3	(21) 3.3	Up
21	Leisure Centres	3.3	(20) 3.2	Down
22	Support to Voluntary Sector	3.2	(22) 3.2	Same
23	Museums	3.1	(23) 3.1	Same
24	Events	2.8	(24) 2.8	Same

**Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour** remains the most important service to citizens.

In general, the mean scores across all the 24 service areas in 2014 have remained the same compared to 2013. This indicates citizens are viewing Council services about the same as they did in 2013.

#### **Which services have moved up/stayed the same/down?**

Although there has been minimal change in mean scores compared to 2013 the overall ordering has seen some change.

In the middle third of the table, '**Welfare Advice/Citizens' Advice**' has moved up three places to be ranked fourteenth and '**Highway maintenance**' has moved up two places to be ranked eighth. '**Community Protection Officers/Wardens**', '**Street lighting**' and '**Planning**' have all moved up one place to be ranked eleventh, twelfth and eighteenth respectively.

'**Youth services**' has moved down three places to seventeenth. '**Job Creation**' down two places and is ranked thirteenth in 2014. '**Recycling**' and '**Parks and Open spaces**' have moved down one place and are ranked ninth and tenth.

The bottom six, remain the same as in 2013, although again there has been a change to their order: ‘**Planning**’ and ‘**Sure Start/Nursery Education**’ have moved up one place to eighteenth and twentieth. ‘**Training**’ has moved down one place to nineteenth.

**NB: Whilst there have been some upward/downward changes in the rankings, it should be remembered that mean scores have not significantly changed since 2013.**

### Further savings

Respondents were asked if they have any suggestions where further savings could be made and a total of 807 respondents provided comments.

**Table 7: Main areas identified by respondents for potential further savings**

The main areas identified by respondents for potential further savings have largely remained the same as in 2013.

Comment theme	Count
Managers - Reduce number of managers / cut pay for senior staff / reduce number of high paid jobs	81
General efficiency - less duplication / cut bureaucracy / reduce non-essential spending do jobs right the first time	56
Cost of democracy	52
Publicity - stop Arrow / lamppost banners	45
Events - stop events / charge for events / reduce number of events	42
Staff - cut staff numbers / pay / salaries / pensions.	40
Use volunteers / unemployed / offenders to help with city upkeep	37
Street lighting - turn off or reduce in early hours	36
Tram - stop the tram	34
Benefit claims - cut benefits / reduce fraud	34
Channel shift - put more information & publications online / reduce number of contact centres / use email rather than phone or post / put multiple letters in one envelope / let people opt for email communications rather than post	32
Rubbish & recycling - reduce number of collections / charge for collections / organise more efficiently / make money by selling collected waste	32
Traffic projects - reduce spend on traffic calming / 20mph zones / highways projects	31

### Generate Income

Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions on how the Council could generate more income.

A total of 701 respondents provided income generating comments.

**Table 8: Main areas identified by respondents on how the Council could generate more income**

Comment theme	Count
Implement more fines - fine for motor vehicle related issues, littering and for ASB	122
Charge for services - charge for bins, services, tourists entering the city and OAP bus passes	116
Sell / Hire out Assets - sell leisure centres and hire out empty council building.	104

Also hire out town hall, castle	
Increase Taxes - late night drinking tax, late night policing, and ASB related NHS use	86
Improve tourist areas - improve the appeal of Nottingham to tourists and improve the Robin Hood brand	63
Transport - bus passes, car parking	62
Litter - ensure the streets are clean and fine those caught littering	50
Job creation - Reduce business rates to encourage new business to open and hire people, also make people on benefits do community service in order to earn their benefits.	37
Events - increase the event prices	22
Privatise services - sell services to the private sector	21
Shared services - share resources between councils. Charge citizens/business owners to use council services e.g. people with managerial experience.	20
Anti-social behaviour - fine those involved in ASB, and make them pay towards policing and NHS	20

Although respondents were asked to comment on ways they felt how the council could generate income 152 respondents made comments around further cuts i.e. reduce jobs, services, cut wages, and business trips. Around 50 respondents made comments suggesting that the Council reduce the number of events it holds.

### Areas of concern

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of concern on a number of issues during the current economic situation.

**Table 9: Stated Levels of Concern.**

<b>% Very concerned/Concerned</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Cuts to public services	92%	93%	90%
Household money problems (Wording changed from previous survey: Debt problems in 2010/11/12/13)	69%	64%	58%
Losing my job	45%	51%	54%
Welfare changes (Wording changed from previous survey: Changes to benefits 2010/11/12/13)	77%	77%	N/A
Impact on my health	69%	73%	N/A

Compared to 2013, respondents are significantly more concerned about household money problems. (Please note that the wording in the 2014 survey was changed from previous YCYS surveys, it was 'Debt problems' in 2010/11/12/13.)

Results indicate that respondents in 2014 are less concerned about losing their job and the impact on their health than in 2013.

Respondents were asked if they had any 'further concerns' due to the current economic situation.

A total of 610 respondents provided comments.

**Table 9: The main topics of 'further concern':**

The main areas of further concern to respondents have largely remained the same as in 2013.

<b>Comment theme</b>	<b>Count</b>
Safety / Police / ASB / Fire Service	65
General cost of living / pay cuts and freezes / bills	61
Central Government management / policies/ benefits / welfare	52
NHS / Healthcare / carers	52
Economy and (lack of) jobs	48
Local Government management / staff / salaries / councillors	46
Rubbish/fly tipping/dog fouling / clean streets	42
Transport / tram / buses / concessionary bus passes	42
Cuts to services - other	42
Cuts to services - children	33
Cuts to services - older people	26
Increased taxes - bedroom and council	24
Roads/pavements / lighting / cycle paths	24
Immigration	21
Parking / Workplace Parking Levy	18
Social cohesion / inequality	18
Housing	9

## **Conclusions**

The 2014 Your City Your Services survey shows that Citizens' service priorities have not significantly changed since the previous year.

There have been small changes in the overall ranking of services important to citizens. For example, Welfare Rights/Citizens Advice and Child Protection have both seen a rise in importance. This may in part be due to the level of national and local media coverage in these areas over the last twelve months. Highway Maintenance has also risen in importance to citizens. This may in part be due to the large amount of transport infrastructure work currently ongoing across the City.

The main areas identified for 'potential further savings' and 'ways the Council could generate income' have largely remained the same as in 2013.

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### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Your City Your Services Arrow and Online Survey October to December 2014

Comments made via online survey form - Jan/Feb 2015

Notes of consultation meetings across the City - Jan/Feb 2015

Detailed budget submissions from, Nottinghamshire Disabled People's Movement and Council colleagues.

### **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS ANNEX REPORT**