

ANNEX 6

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2019/20

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ANNEX 6: BUDGET CONSULTATION 2019/20

SUMMARY

Nottingham City Council has seen further reductions in Government funding and faces uncertainty over future levels of funding. Even with additional money for Adult Social Care the council must make difficult decisions about some services and levels of Council Tax.

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 4 February 2019.

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.

Impact of Consultation

Nottingham City Council has a long term commitment to incorporate the views of citizens into the processes of policy making and service improvement. This helps the Council to understand the issues and services that matter to local communities. Budget consultation ensures that citizens' priorities guide the Executive Board in developing the budget proposals.

The Council has been guided by the following principles:

- Address demographic and service pressures;
- Reflect the significant reductions in external funding (especially general and specific Government grants) by reducing expenditure on those activities;
- Support the Council's determination to be efficient, improve performance and modernise the organisation;
- Minimise the impact of service reductions and changes on vulnerable citizens by protecting frontline services;
- To pursue commercialisation opportunities to generate income for the Council.

2. THE CONSULTATION

How we consulted

Consultation on the budget was conducted in two phases:

Pre-budget

Before the budget settlement for 2019/20 was announced in December, pre-budget consultation was carried out during October and November 2018. This gathered views through a survey, available both on-line and through the October edition of the Council's Arrow magazine. Citizens were asked:

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

Following this process, the Executive Board approved draft budget proposals for consultation on 18 December 2018.

Consultation on budget proposals

The Council are currently consulting on the draft budget proposals agreed from 18 December 2018. A consultation form is available online and in hard copy to enable everyone to have their say, as of 4 February 2019 there have been 39 responses.

As part of the consultation, events were arranged across the City, which have been publicised locally by neighbourhood management teams. Attendees were invited to provide feedback via the consultation form and verbal feedback from these events has been recorded and collated. Although a consultation event with businesses was set up for 29 January 2019, there were no attendees. One Nottingham partners and the voluntary and community sector were invited to a meeting on 29 January 2019 and young people's views were sought via a discussion at Youth Cabinet. A session has been arranged for Colleagues in February 2019.

The consultation events

The local public consultation events provided the opportunity for citizens to engage directly with members of the Council's Executive Board and ask them about the proposals. The Council's neighbourhood management teams arranged five 'drop-in' sessions, in each of the Joint Service Centres throughout January 2019. At each event a presentation was available, providing background to the budget and information about the proposals. In addition, agenda items on the budget consultation were added to some pre-existing meetings.

Members of the local business community were invited to attend a breakfast briefing. This meeting was cancelled due to no attendees. There was also an event for voluntary and community groups and One Nottingham. There was formal presentation from Councillor Chapman followed by a Q&A session.

The views of young people in the City were also sought via a session at a Youth Cabinet meeting. Councillor Mellen introduced the young people to the budget and fielded questions and encouraged discussion about the proposals and the budget as a whole.

3 RESULTS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE CONSULTATION

Pre-budget consultation

The Your City Your Services consultation was undertaken in October and November 2018, in total there were 2,187 responses were received, 821 online and 1,366 received through the paper questionnaire printed in the October edition of the Council's Arrow magazine.

Respondents were asked to rate a cross section of 24 council services / functions 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 most important by respondents were:

1. Tackling Crime and Anti-Social behaviour
2. Services to Elderly and Vulnerable People
3. Refuse Collection
4. Child Protection
5. Public Health
6. Public Transport

The services rated as the most important by respondents in 2018 remain consistent, and they are the same as those identified in the 2017 and 2016 survey. However, Services to the elderly has moved up the priority list, as has Child Protection.

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

Consultation on the budget proposals

Responses via the budget consultation form

39 online and paper survey submissions have been received to date. This is a significantly lower response at this stage of the consultation than in 2017/18.

Feedback

Respondents were asked to feedback their comments relating to budget proposals, some of these comments didn't define the exact proposal the respondent was referring to and some comments did not reference a proposal at all. In total there are 25 comments, these do not fit directly into themes, some of the comments talk about the following concerns:

- There are significant concerns about reductions in funding for youth services and a number of concerns about the impact on safety for children and young people.
- Council tax increase is a concern, people are worried that wages are not increasing, but council tax is and state they will struggle paying bills. The awareness of what council tax pays for is evident. People still only attribute this to paying for bins.
- More information needed on the link buses and a suggestion these could be kept if the charges were increased in line with other operators charges or that the free buses could charge as well.
- Concerns on the money spent on selective licensing.
- More money needs to be spent attracting inward investment and the perception that Nottingham city council is not anti business.
- Comment that cutting area based grants and councillor budgets will be detrimental as they fund small local projects that help support vulnerable people.
- Using the fleet of vehicles in Eastcroft to deliver services for other local authorities.
- A suggestion to look at less postal correspondence and more electronic methods.
- Ideas for saving money in Loxley through more awareness of turning lights off, switching off screens and so on.

Respondents were also asked if they had any general comments or suggestions about the Council's budget proposals as a whole. There were twelve comments received which are not specific to individual budget proposals or fit into any themes. Some of the comments, as examples are:

- Although the City Council is trying to protect the vulnerable, I do feel that children and young people are losing out. You cannot expect the voluntary sector to take up the slack. Personally, I would like to see less street cleaning and emphasis on tidiness and more emphasis on supporting needy people.
- We need to be kept safe and keep on top of crime and anti-social behaviour
- I appreciate the Council is having to be careful with spending and therefore I think the cuts suggested are reasonable in the current economic climate.

The above is based on data received up to 4 February 2019.

Discussions with One Nottingham Partners and Voluntary and Community Sector

A joint Voluntary Sector and One Nottingham Budget meeting was held on 29 January 2019 at the NCVS.

Discussions covered a range of topics including:

- How the voluntary sector can help support and share resources in areas where funding is being reduced to council services
- Concerns that the grant funding situation has not been resolved and notice has been given to staff
- Concerns about the effects of Brexit on the tendering and commissioning processes

Feedback from the Youth Cabinet

Youth Cabinet met with Councillor Mellen on 16 January 2019. The main areas of concern/interest were:

- Proposed reduction in Youth Service posts - counter-intuitive to be reducing posts while knife crime and other public safety issues on rise
- There should be more initiatives in schools and extra-curricular settings to address the issue of knife crime
- Creating more opportunities for young entrepreneurs
- Improving information on pathways to training and good jobs
- The commercial and shared use potential of Council assets to offset losses in Government revenue - getting young people's ideas

4. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the consultation to date, feedback has been received from a wide-ranging group of respondents and this information has been fed into the decision-making process.

Overall, there is recognition of the difficult position the Council is in, regarding the scale of savings that have to be made.

The results from the '2018 Your City Your Services' survey undertaken of the consultation shows that Citizens' top service priorities have remained the same when compared to previous years. There have been small changes in the overall ranking of services important to citizens. For example 'Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour' has risen in the rankings since last 2017.

The feedback we have received via the survey and at events has been around the long-term effects of the proposals and how reductions will affect public services, there are concerns about safety for children and young people. Respondents are concerned there continues to be both a financial and health strain on local people most especially with council tax.

There is a continuing and growing understanding and concern amongst citizens and organisations within the city about the more long term issues such as funding for social care and how the funding reductions are unfair on the council however there is still a feeling that the Council could do more to protect services.

Additionally, there has been increased concern about Brexit and how leaving Europe will affect businesses, the voluntary sector and citizens.

Appendix A: Your City Your Services 2018 Data Report

1.0 Methodology

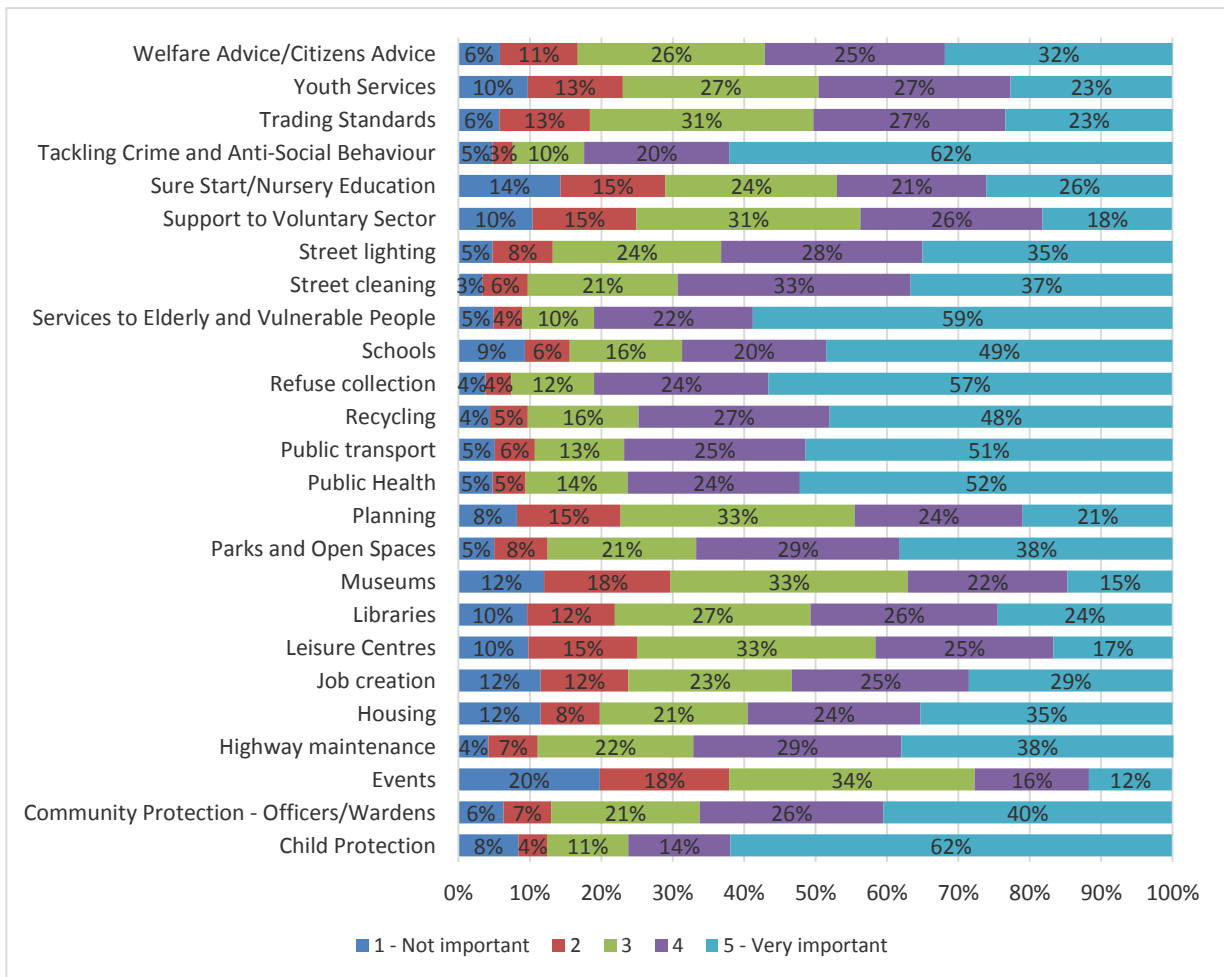
- 1.1 This report highlights the final results for the Your City, Your Services consultation.
- 1.2 Households in Nottingham City received the council's Arrow magazine in October 2018; the questionnaire was included as an insert in the magazine and allowed respondents to have their say on what they feel is most important to them as a resident, and for them to express any concerns and comments.
- 1.3 The survey was also available online and was promoted through the engage hub.

2.0 Responses

- 2.1 In total 2,187 responses were received, 821 online and 1,366 received through the post.
- 2.2 This report outlines the final results for the 2,187 responses received, please note that this is statistically significant and representative of the population. Albeit comparisons based on ward may not be.

3.0 Importance of services

- 3.1 Respondents were asked to rate a list of 26 council services on a scale of 1 to 5 where one is not important and five is very important. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of respondents opinion.
- 3.2 Figure 2 breaks down the data further to provide a clearer view of the most important services, by calculating the average score from 1 to 5.
- 3.3 The top most important services rated by respondents are:
 - Tackling Crime and Anti-Social behaviour – 82.4% rate this as important (av 4.32)
 - Services to Elderly and Vulnerable People – 81% rate this as important (av 4.26)
 - Refuse Collection – 80.9% rate this as important (av 4.26)
 - Child Protection – 76.1% rate this as important (av 4.17)
 - Public Health – 76.3% rate this as important (av 4.14)
 - Public Transport – 76.8% rate this as important (av 4.12)
- 3.4 Please note that the most important services have been defined as those with the highest average score between 1 to 5 and those who have the highest percentage of respondents rating them as important or very important.
- 3.5 The least important services, rated by respondents are:
 - Events – 27.6% rate this as important (av 2.82)
 - Museums – 37.1% rate this as important (av 3.10)



Figure

1. Respondents rating of importance for council services % (2,187 responses)

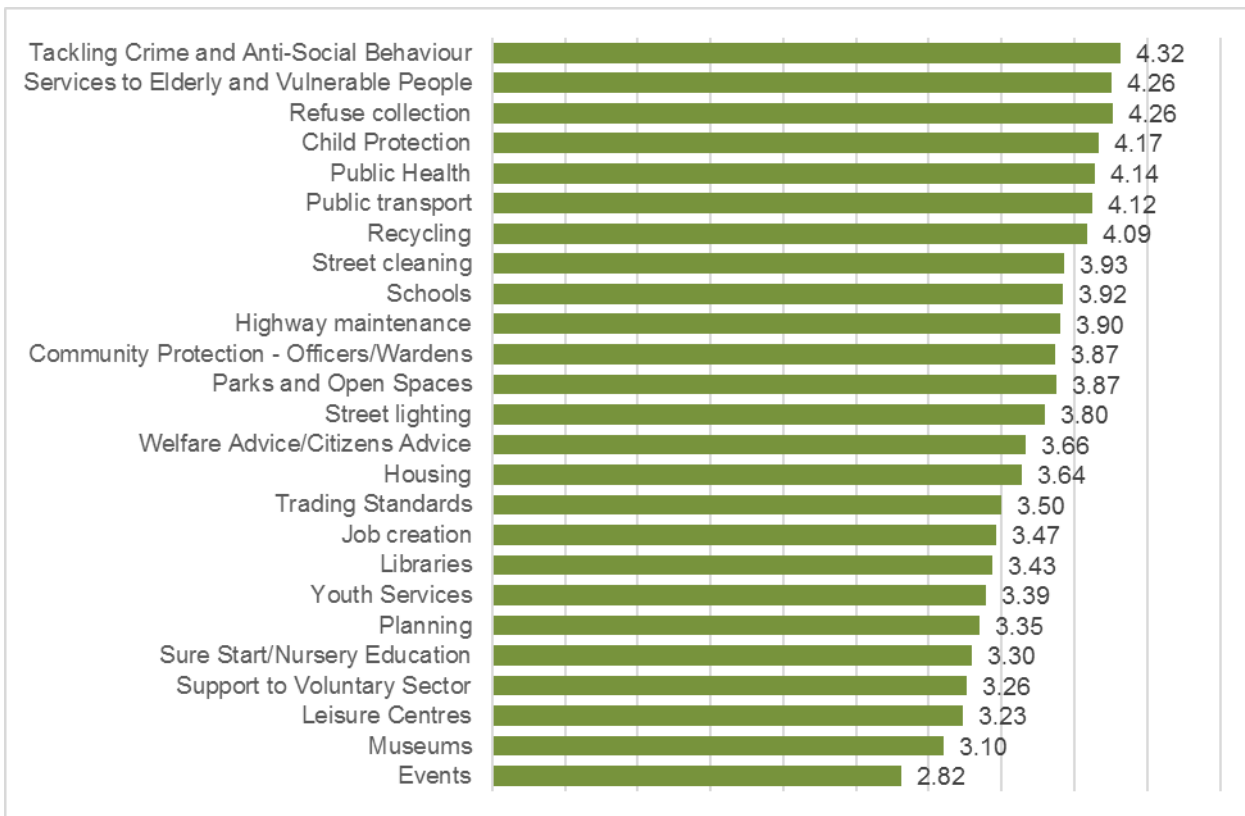


Figure 2. Respondents rating of importance for council services – average (2,187 responses)

4.0 Areas of Concern

4.1 Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they were with a number of areas that may affect them, due to the economic climate. A significant number of respondents (64.6%) are very concerned about cuts to public services and 28.9% are concerned. 41.6% of respondents are very concerned and 30.1% are concerned about the impact on their health. See figure 3.

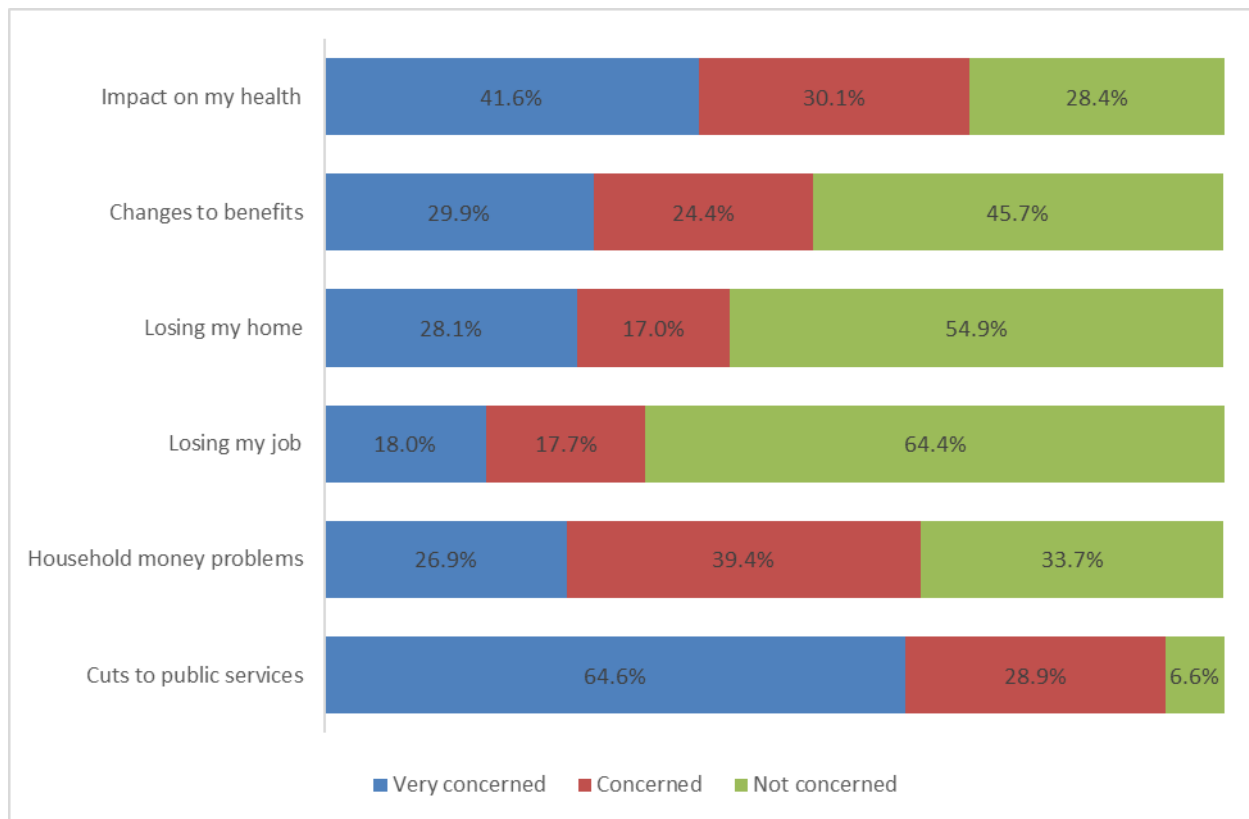


Figure 3. Respondents rating of concern % (2,187 responses)

5.2 Respondents were asked if they had any suggestions on how the Council could make further savings or generate additional income, 984 respondents made a comment or suggestion. Figure 5 shows an illustration using a word cloud, which carries out a count of the main words respondents used. There were comments made on ideas for saving money and a number of comments gave ideas on where income could be generated.

Ideas for saving money

- Less frequent bin emptying for smaller households
- Use NCH workers instead of contractors
- Better communication
- Means test bus passes
- Reduce frequency of street cleaning
- Convert council vehicles to electric
- Make people more responsible for their community
- Cut back on grass cutting
- Share office suppliers with other council
- Use volunteers more
- Turn off alternate street lights in less used areas
- Stop publishing the arrow
- Do repair jobs correct first time

Ideas for generating income

- Community charity shops
- City lottery
- More fines for littering
- Increase council tax
- Charge for currently 'free' attractions and events
- Make universities pay the council tax for students
- Make students/student landlords pay council tax
- Schools grow their own vegetables and sell the surplus to the public
- Plant fruit trees in the parks and sell to the public
- Charge tradespeople to get rid of rubbish
- Set up a council skip hire service
- Charge for collection of bulky waste
- Speed cameras on A610
- Sell off unused buildings
- Allow council property to be used for private functions when not in use
- Higher council tax for the wealthy
- Charge for parking around schools
- Increase dog fouling fines and enforce them
- Make employees pay for their own business trips when earning over £45,000

6.0 Who responded?

6.1 This section highlights the demographics of respondents to the Your City Your Services survey. There were respondents who declined to give this information.

6.2 Table 1 shows the gender of respondents, 55.4% female and 42.2% male. Comparing to the city population females are over represented in the responses.

	Survey responses		City Profile*	
	count	%	Count	%
Male	871	42.2	153,777	50.3
Female	1145	55.4	151,903	49.7
Prefer not say	49	2.4		
Total	2065	100.0	305,680	100.0

Table 1. Gender of respondents comparison city profile* ONS Census key statistics 2011

6.3 Table 2 shows the representation of respondents by age. Over half of respondents are age 60 and over (54.6%) with just 1.6% from those under the age of 24. Looking at responses compared to the city profile, older respondents are over represented whilst those under 24 are highly unrepresented.

	Survey responses		City Profile*	
	Count	%	Count	%
15 and under	1	0.1	55576	18.2
16 - 24	31	1.5	66,497	21.8
25 - 44	390	18.7	87,751	28.7
45 - 59	529	12.1	47,678	15.6
60 - 64	250	11.9	12,626	4.1
65+	894	42.7	35,552	11.6
Total	2095	100.0	305,680	100.0

Table 2. Age of respondents comparison city profile* ONS Census key statistics 2011

6.4 Table 3 shows the respondents who consider they have a long-standing illness or disability, 33.2% feel this applies to them. Comparing to the city profile, those with a disability are over represented in the responses.

	Survey responses		City Profile*	
	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	787	38.4	55382	17.6
No	1262	61.6	250298	82.4
Total	2049	100	305680	100

Table 3. Respondents with a long standing illness or disability comparison city profile* ONS Census key statistics 2011

6.5 The majority of respondents (86.3%) are from a white background. Table 4 shows the ethnicity breakdown of respondents. Looking at the city profile White respondents are over represented.

	Survey responses		City Profile*	
	Count	%	Count	%
White	1764	87.3	218698	71.5
Black	79	3.9	22185	7.3
Asian	52	2.6	34051	11.1
Mixed	32	1.6	20265	6.6
Chinese	13	0.6	5988	2.0
Any other ethnic group			4493	1.5
Prefer not to say	81	4		
Total	2021	100	305680	100.0

Table 4. Ethnicity of respondents comparison city profile* ONS Census key statistics 2011

Respondents were asked to provide a postcode to identify the area they live in. 13 of the responses were from outside Nottingham and are not included in the ward analysis in table 5 below. The largest response from those living in Nottingham is from people who live in Sherwood (7.9%) and Wollaton West (9.6%). Responses are not representative of the city profile by wards.

	Survey responses		City Profile*	
	count	%	count	%
Arboretum	39	2.1%	13,321	4.4
Aspley	56	3.0%	17,622	5.8
Basford	100	5.3%	16,207	5.3
Berridge	106	5.6%	18,651	6.1
Bestwood	104	5.5%	16,753	5.5
Bilborough	117	6.2%	16,792	5.5
Bridge	106	5.6%	14,669	4.8
Bulwell	86	4.5%	16,157	5.3
Bulwell Forest	106	5.6%	13,614	4.5
Clifton North	76	4.0%	12,888	4.2
Clifton South	98	5.2%	13,947	4.6
Dales	108	5.7%	16,754	5.5
Dunkirk and Lenton	27	1.4%	10,920	3.6
Leen Valley	77	4.1%	10,702	3.5
Mapperley	138	7.3%	15,846	5.2
Radford and Park	84	4.4%	21,414	7.0
Sherwood	150	7.9%	15,414	5.0
St Ann's	90	4.7%	19,316	6.3
Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey	47	2.5%	9,952	3.3
Wollaton West	182	9.6%	14,741	4.8
Total	1897	100.0%	305680.0	100.0

Table 5. Ward Area of respondents comparison city profile* ONS Census key statistics 2011

Annex Report Information

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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 2018

Comments on budget proposals: 18 December 2018 - 5 February 2019

Notes of consultation meetings: January 2019

PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS ANNEX REPORT

None