

Summary of Engagement

1. Introduction

The Council engaged on proposals for the 'Our North Tyneside' Council Plan and the Council budget. This engagement activity ran from 11 December 2015 to 24 January 2016.

Face to face events were held for: the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership members, Staff Panel, residents, young people, older people, businesses and people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

In addition, people could give views via the Council's website. Engagement opportunities were published online, via social media, in the press and at Council locations.

2. Format

The format of the public meetings was a formal presentation by Heads of Service with details on the Council Plan and Budget Proposals, followed by facilitated discussions.

Attendance at the meetings and online responses were as set out below:

Date and Detail	Numbers in Attendance
11/12/2015 - Older People's Age UK Group in Wallsend	6
16/12/15 - Transgender Age UK Group in Whitley Bay	8
6/01/16 - NTSP Executive	8
11/01/2016 - NTC Staff Panel	15
13/01/2016 - Resident Panel	24
18/01/16 - Youth Council	31
20/01/16 - Community Voluntary Sector	40
20/01/2016 - Residents Event	18
22/01/2016 - Business Community Event	15
On-line responses – from 8/12/2015 to 24/01/2016	29
Total	194

3. Feedback on Proposals - Council Plan

The following feedback was made per each theme of the proposed Our North Tyneside Plan.

Our People will:

Be listened to, and involved by responsive, enabling services.

There was broad support for this with a call for ongoing evaluation to check how effective the engagement is plus the need for more feedback on the results of any engagement and consultation.

It was felt that the Council should regularly check on people's views and needs as they may well change.

It was felt important that all parts of the community receive excellent levels of customer service and that services are responsive to all needs including those of minority groups.

Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life.

There was broad support for this priority but some concerns raised around the need for the Council to continue to ensure quality around all childcare provision in the Borough. Support was voiced around the Troubled Families approach together with a suggestion that it could be broadened to help more families in need.

Be ready for work and life – with the skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet the needs of local businesses.

Again this was supported with a suggestion that within schools there should be more advice/information around careers in manufacturing and manual work and skilled trades and not always around working in offices, and assuming everyone wants to work in an office.

Be healthy and well – with the information, skills and opportunities to maintain and improve their health, wellbeing and independence.

Broad support for this with a view that the Council as a whole should give more priority to health and well being in partnership with all services including local health service.

Be cared for and safeguarded if they become vulnerable.

This priority was supported on the understanding that it includes people of all ages and types of need. It was agreed that the best approach is to enable people to stay independent as long as they can, signposting people to the help and support they may need.

There was some concern around needing to continue to ensure the quality of care services provided and to provide joined up services that are easier for people to understand.

Some concerns were expressed around making sure that members of the Trans community are well supported to feel safe in their local communities.

Our Places:

Be great places to live, and attract others to visit or work here.

People felt that the Council could work more in partnership across the region to promote the area as a place to visit. It was also felt important to continue to

publicise the excellent elements of North Tyneside including education. There was a call for the Council to do more to attract visitors by improving the coastal area of Whitley Bay, Town Centre and Spanish City Dome with a focus on facilities for young children.

Some concerns were raised around the potential impact of car park charges on visitor numbers.

Offer a good choice of quality housing appropriate to need, including affordable homes.

Concerns were expressed around the Local Plan in respect of the Murton Gap.

It was also felt that whilst housing should be a priority, it does need to really be affordable for local people as well as adaptable to meet the needs of people in the longer term.

Provide a clean, green, healthy, attractive and safe environment.

It was felt that providing places for people of all ages including children and young people to be active would encourage more healthy lifestyle.

There was some concern to ensure that the green spaces (and wagon ways) are well maintained.

There were also some views expressed around whether the provision of Christmas trees and spring flower planting could be sustainable given the budget pressures.

Some residents suggested a move to fortnightly alternate refuse collections in order to save money.

Have an effective transport and physical infrastructure - including our roads, cycle ways, pavements, street lighting, drainage and public transport.

Residents felt that maintenance of roads, pavements, cycle ways and car parks should be a priority.

It was felt that more should be done to encourage cycling and the use of public transport to ease traffic congestion.

Public transport by bus, including access to the new hospital in Cramlington, was felt as an area for improvement.

Our Economy will:

Grow by building on our strengths - including our existing world class companies, and small and growing enterprises.

This was welcomed by people and it was recognised that business growth is essential for positive outcomes for residents. The value played by charities and social enterprises in job creation was also highlighted.

Have the right skills and conditions to support investment, and create and sustain new good quality jobs and apprenticeships for working age.

It was felt that firms should be encouraged to train people in terms of the skills needed for the local economy and that a key focus on the provision of apprenticeships should be to target young people who have been in the looked after system.

Partnership Working

It was felt that the Council needs to exploit all potential mechanisms to work smarter with its partners and residents.

People felt that if the voluntary sector is to be more prominent in helping to deliver services, then there should be a process in place to make sure the right voluntary organisations are selected to carry out specific roles and that support should be given to these organisations who will undertake work.

There were some concerns expressed about the need to ensure quality of services provided by commercial partner.

Some residents felt that there needs to be more clarity around the North East Combined Authority arrangements and what the relationship is between the North Tyneside Council Plan and any wider regional plans.

4. Budget Proposals

This next section details the proposed budget savings that were agreed by Cabinet in December 2015, and the comments received.

Modernising how services are delivered and the way in which the Council operates through improved technology, innovation and mobile working

Support for the Council to use technology more and residents also but this was on the basis that the Council further developed its website to enable people to do more.

Providing more accessible services online, enabling people to do more for themselves at a time when it suits them, as well as supported access in face-to-face community settings

There was support for this with a call for support for older people to be involved in the digital age.

One way to do this was suggested as intergenerational activity - bringing different people together which naturally lead to better opportunities, learning, awareness etc.

It was felt that the Council should do more to support where staff can really spend time with people and listen to their experiences / issues to be able to provide a responsive service.

There was a clear view that vulnerable people should be offered sufficient support to help with the changes ie digital inclusion.

Moving to a non-cash-based approach to reduce costs associated with processing payments

It was felt that this was a good idea.

Residents felt that financial inclusion needs to be implemented as successfully as possible across the whole of the borough and across all generations.

Promote volunteering and to deliver more services in partnership with local community and voluntary sector organisations or groups

It was felt that local communities could work with the Council to improve its facilities and offer for residents and visitors.

There was broad support for the need to do more around prevention and early intervention. Concerns were expressed to ensure volunteering is not exploited.

Providing a network of frontline services via high-quality community-based facilities – a one-stop shop approach to provide more services under one roof

This was well supported and there was some suggestion for Customer First Centres to extend their opening hours, to provide the services that residents need at a time of their convenience.

A suggestion was also made to have more cash machines within well used centres and not just Customer First Centres.

Community-based housing support rather than residential homes or 24-hour wraparound care

This was well supported as it was felt that it better meets the needs of older people.

Managing demand for the most costly care and health services through a more preventative approach for both children and adults

It was also felt that people welcomed the Council being proactive in bringing children's and adults services together, which reduces cost and overcomes the trauma of transition - losing contact with the workers who know people well especially at difficult points in people's lives.

There was also support on the basis that this may prevent emergency hospital visits.

It was suggested that there should be incentives for people eg a point system to get free gym memberships (healthy lifestyles).

Streamlining access to care and disability support services for adults and children

Again, this was broadly supported with an emphasis supporting people to work. However, some concern was expressed over the need to maintain specialist staff to deal with people with particularly specialist needs.

Adopting a new approach to childcare through nursery provision

This was supported by residents at the engagement events and through the online activity but it was felt important that the Council should ensure quality and improve information about what is available.

A separate petition has been received regarding the proposed changes.

Developing a new self-funded approach to support the borough's schools to continue to perform excellently

This was broadly supported.

Introducing a more targeted and integrated locality-based approach for children and family support services

This was supported with a call for improved housing.

Back Office Services:

Depot rationalisation – was supported with also a priority around agility to enable officers to do more when they are out and about.

Finance issues:

Suggestions were made around Business Rates and to ensure that North Tyneside Business Rates are competitive.

It was felt by some residents that there are significant changes in the benefits system which affects a lot of North Tyneside residents. They felt that this could mean significant implications for the Council in terms of money potentially not being paid by residents who might find the moving from a weekly income to a monthly income difficult to manage. With the implication of less money, it was felt that the Council may have more recovery costs in the future if residents don't pay for their services.

Online Engagement

There were 29 online responses in total, between 8 December 2015 and Monday 25 January 2016. The feedback is set out below.

Residents were asked 'does the approach set out in the budget proposals meet the needs and priorities of the borough?' to which 8 people replied 'yes' and 16 people replied 'no'.

The second question asked 'are there any additional issues that need to be considered in the budget proposals?' to which 17 residents replied 'yes' and 7 replied 'no'.

The additional issues residents felt needed to be considered in the budget proposals are set out below:

- Concerns around childcare proposal
- Improved drainage in schools
- More focus on people and services and focus less on buildings and the look of the Borough
- Ensure needs of and budgets for vulnerable people are ring fenced so that the vulnerable are not further disadvantaged with improved facilities for people with disabilities
- Road maintenance - ensure more money from other resources eg EU