

### **2017/18 Budget Engagement Strategy**

North Tyneside Council is committed to being a resident-focused and listening Authority and this commitment includes giving residents and other key stakeholders an opportunity to be involved in helping to shape decision-making in relation to the Financial Planning and Budget process.

The Authority's overall approach to engagement ensures that the public have opportunities to have their say throughout the year, through a series of different methods, including engaging with the Elected Mayor, Cabinet and ward members through the Mayor's Listening Events and Community Conversations.

Between June and September 2016, there has been a programme of engagement out-and-about around the borough speaking to people to proactively gather qualitative feedback from people about their experiences as a resident and a customer of North Tyneside Council and their suggestions for future improvement (the Big Community Conversation).

The programme incorporates at least 2 visits to each ward, as well as ensuring there is adequate targeting to provide opportunities for those with specific equalities characteristics to be involved.

The feedback from engagement from this programme and other activity throughout the year will inform the initial Cabinet budget proposals process leading up to November 2016.

Further engagement on Cabinet's initial budget proposals will take place from 29 November 2016 to January 2017.

As with all engagement the Authority is committed to ensuring that residents with protected characteristics, as set out in the 2010 Equality Act, are able to participate. Further information on this aspect of the engagement approach can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment on the Budget Engagement Strategy, which is available on request.

#### **Target audiences**

The budget proposals are likely to have different levels of impact on different audiences and therefore the engagement strategy will aim to facilitate opportunities to reach appropriate sectors of the population through a targeted approach.

The approach delivers both universal engagement as well as engagement with particular groups, e.g. carers, people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Specific External audiences are:

- Residents of North Tyneside
- Service users
- Children and young people (including the Young Mayor and Cabinet, Youth Council)
- Older people
- North Tyneside Strategic Partnership
- Business Community (including the Chambers of Trade, Cobalt and Silverlink Business Association, the Federation of Small Business (FSB) and the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC) and North Tyneside Business Forum)
- Schools (including the Schools Forum, School Governors and the Head Teacher Convenors)
- Voluntary and Community Sector (including faith groups)
- Carers

Internal audiences:

- Elected Members
- Staff
- Strategic Partners (Kier, Engie and Capita)
- Trade Unions

## **Timescales**

Engagement on the budget proposals will commence on 29 November 2016 and run up until January 2017.

## **Approach**

Our approach will aim for maximum reach by offering a range of different opportunities for people to have their say. In line with the corporate principles, as agreed in the Engagement Strategy, these opportunities will be

- **Inclusive:** Making sure that everyone will be able to engage in the process
- **Clear:** Be clear on our aims of each engagement activity from the outset, and the extent to which residents can be involved.
- **Integrated:** Ensuring that engagement activities are joined up with the relevant decision-making processes.
- **Tailored:** We will aim to better understand our audience and use different methods appropriately to enable and encourage them to be involved.
- **Feedback:** We will give feedback, through agreed channels, when we have completed our activity.
- **Timely:** we will ensure that we give, where we can, sufficient notice to make opportunities available to all. We will take into account those times when it is more appropriate to engage depending on our target audience

## **1. Informing**

This will provide information to audiences about the budget proposals via:

- The Authority's website - [www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)
- The resident's magazine Our North Tyneside
- Information inviting residents to engage in the process will be provided in key outlets and facilities, including libraries (including mobile libraries) and customer service centres, community centres, leisure centres - together with feedback cards for comments
- Social media

## **2. Listening**

We will listen to the wider community and specific interest groups by:

- Providing opportunities for online feedback via website, e-mail and social media.
- One event will be organised in each of the four areas of the borough to engage with residents.
- Engagement with service users or their representatives, via existing networks.
- Engagement with other key stakeholders, including: businesses, schools, young people, community and voluntary sector, trade unions, North Tyneside Strategic Partnership, older people and carers
- Specific events will be held for: Residents Panel and Staff Panel

## **3. Feeding back**

The Authority will ensure that residents and specific groups are given feedback on how their comments have been taken on board via the website, Residents magazine and in key outlets and facilities.

## **Evaluation**

Each year the Authority evaluates its budget engagement process to consider improvements that can be achieved in future years. This will include consideration of the number of people involved (including via formal engagement sessions, social media contacts,) and the feedback received.