

Budget Engagement 2014/15: A summary of findings (published in the Cabinet Report of 28 January 2015)

1. Introduction

The Authority has implemented an ongoing engagement programme during 2014/15 with residents and other stakeholders.

This summary of findings incorporates feedback from the 2014 Residents' Survey, Summer Engagement Programme, and State of the Area Debate, in addition to the corporate budget engagement programme.

The budget engagement programme included a web based questionnaire, drop-in events at Customer First Centres and discussions with the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership and Residents Panel (budget proposals were also presented to the Leadership Forum, Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector Event and Staff Panel). The following table illustrates the nature and numbers involved in each engagement activity:

Engagement activity	Feedback received from N stakeholders
Residents Survey	1,176 questionnaires completed
Summer Engagement Programme	590 questionnaires completed
State of the Area Event	120 participants
Budget web pages	44 questionnaires completed, 525 unique visits
Budget Drop in events	28 questionnaires and 49 feedback cards, 95 visits
NTSP Budget Debate	12 participants
Residents Panel Budget Discussion	32 panel members

As the web-based engagement will run until Sunday 18 January and additional responses are expected from the Young Cabinet, Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Children's Council and Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Group, the Business Forum and service specific budget engagement – an addendum report will be produced prior to Council on 5 February 2015.

2. Findings

2.1 Overview

Corporate budget engagement shows broad agreement with the proposals, with interest to have more information at the relevant time.

2.1 Key feedback

Analysis of all of the available engagement feedback highlights a number of key messages:

Ready for School

The key messages were:

- Interest in and support for the family partner role which is seen as successful, joined up, evidence based and avoiding duplication.
- Agreement with the ready for school entitlement (aspirations for children's communication, attitudinal, social, emotional and physical wellbeing and development), but concern that it should not be used to discriminate against children and families who failed to meet the milestones. Also that it is essential to raise public awareness of the importance of effective, early intervention.
- Agreement that services offered by children's centres should be more targeted.

Ready for Life and Work

Key messages were:

- Agree we must recognise the changes in the labour market and deliver the right skills, advice and experiences in the right places for all ages and abilities.
- Agree there needs to be effective communication of the opportunities available.
- Employers and the community and voluntary sector to work more with and in schools.
- Careers advice at 14-15 years old is too late - it needs to be more realistic and linked into the labour market.

Cared for, safeguarded and healthy

Key messages were:

- Strong support for re-enablement, backed up by positive personal experiences.
- Promotion of healthier lifestyles as a key part of prevention.
- The community and voluntary sector's key role in communicating change and direct service provision, within available capacity.
- The council should co-ordinate and communicate the services offered under this theme.
- Support for greater integration of health and social care.

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Key messages were:

Appendix E Addendum

- The importance of a good quality environment, and the need to improve roads and pavements, and the cleanliness of the borough, and ensure that the need for increased housing is met.
- Support for coastal regeneration plans.
- Recognise the contribution tourism can make to the North Tyneside economy, make more of the area's history and get the offer right.
- Recognise the role of the community and voluntary sector and identify ways to support the involvement of local communities.
- Praise for the borough's parks and activities.

Addendum (engagement responses received between 9 and 23 January 2015)

Further budget engagement responses have been received following engagement by or with Environment and Leisure Services, North Tyneside Homes, Adult Social Care, Children, Young People and Learning, North Tyneside Youth Council, and the North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC); three new on-line questionnaires have also been submitted. They agree with the points made in the summary above and highlight the following:

Cared for, safeguarded and healthy

- Support the emphasis on doing things better and prioritising the vulnerable, but keen to ensure that the quality of services is sustained.
- Further consultation is planned on:
 - proposed changes to charging for home care services, which will be undertaken in January and February 2015
 - changes of use for two council buildings to create a residential home for 8-12 year olds and semi-independent accommodation for girls up to the age of 21, which will be undertaken during February and March 2015.

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- Approval for the planned continued support for inward investment and business development.
- Agree with the:
 - building new affordable homes
 - improvements being made at North Tyneside Living Accommodation for older tenants
 - continued investment in maintaining council homes to the decent homes standard
 - proposals to make it easier for tenants to move home.
- Concern about:
 - pressures on advice services arising from the Government's welfare reform changes.
 - the cumulative impact of welfare reform on tenants of working age on benefits and on tenants currently under occupying their homes.