

North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2024/25 Consultation

Group Facilitator's Feedback Form

Overview

The draft revenue budget for North Northamptonshire Council was approved by the Executive on 21 December and we are now seeking views on our proposals for the next financial year.

The consultation phase is a very important one in the budget setting process as it's essential that we get the views of all the people the proposals effect before we can shape the final plans in February.

North Northamptonshire Council's budget proposals set out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2024/2025 as well as outlining the medium-term financial plan for the following three years.

Protecting and investing in local frontline services against a backdrop of continued national financial uncertainty is the focus of the Council's budget proposals.

The budget is not just about how to manage within available resources but also where funding should be invested, recognising residents' priorities and working with partners to jointly develop service delivery proposals, giving families strength and self-reliance so they will benefit from greater self-determination and improved life chances.

There is a balance to be maintained between encouraging growth, providing high quality universal services and protecting those that are the most vulnerable.

Financial stability is one of the cornerstones of local government and it's essential that we're in a robust and stable position if we are to deliver quality services to the people of North Northants both now and in the future.

Our commitment to maintain vital service provision has seen the Council invest an additional £53.4million into services, including adult social care and children's services to protect the most vulnerable in communities and address a growing need for services.

These pressures are, in part, offset by savings, efficiencies and further income of £18.5m. Taken together with an improvement in funding expected from business rates, Council Tax and government grants the Council has been able to set a balanced budget for 2024/2025.

The proposed net revenue budget for 2024/2025 is £371.5 million. This money provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the disposal and collection of waste, highways maintenance, economic development, housing and support for those that are homeless.

We are also proposing a programme of capital investment totalling £163.5m over the four-year period 2024-28 across a number of schemes including investing over £49.1m into our highways, £12.2m for our schools, £10.7m to support disabled facilities, £9.1m in improving our digital infrastructure, £2.7m from the Corby Town Fund and £2.9m for Electrical Vehicle infrastructure.

We continue to be cautious with our finances and continue to work to deliver efficiency savings, innovate, improve services and to attract funding from outside of the area.

Our call for funding certainty

There is much uncertainty regarding Local Government funding in future years with potentially a new funding regime being implemented from 2026-2027.

This brings substantial risk to areas, such as North Northamptonshire, that have experienced a significant increase in their business base as those that have delivered most in terms of business rates growth could stand to be the most adversely affected through changes in Government funding.

We have updated our medium-term budget assumptions based on the latest information available. This will require us to identify proposals to meet the anticipated gap between our spending needs and our forecast funding.

Unfortunately, the continuation of single year settlements hinder the ability of councils to develop effective spending plans over the medium to long term.

We would like to see a minimum three-year settlement that recognises the scale of the challenges we face and assists with meaningful planning over the medium term.

This will not only benefit our residents, as we can be much clearer about future investment in our services and our localities, it will also enable us to confirm our longer-term funding on to others such as the voluntary sector organisations that do so much for our communities.

Greater certainty of funding is essential as we continue to transform our services to better meet the needs of our residents in a way that ensures we are financially resilient for the future.

Council Tax

Government has permitted local authorities to increase the Council Tax rate by 4.99% in recognition of the difficult financial climate and increased inflationary pressures.

As such the authority is proposing an increase allowed by Government in Council Tax of 4.99%, which includes the 2% adult social care precept.

This increase would contribute around an additional £9.6m per year towards inflationary and demand lead pressures to enable services to be maintained and would represent a Band D level of Council Tax for North Northamptonshire Council of £1,740.22 for 2024/2025.

This is an annual increase of £82.71 (equivalent to £1.59 per week) from the Band D Council Tax level of £1,657.51 in 2023/2024. Around 57% of properties in North Northamptonshire are in Council Tax Bands A and B which will see an annual increase of £55.14 (equating to £1.06 per week) and £64.33 (£1.24 per week) respectively.

These figures do not include the Council Tax for individual Town and Parish Councils or the Council Tax set for Fire and Police by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Council Tax is the most stable form of income that the Council receives, which is important as we enter a period of significant uncertainty around Government funding.

We recognise that increasing Council Tax will inevitably impact on household finances. However, our services are seeing both rising demand and higher costs, and the funding we receive through Council Tax plays an important part in helping to protect those services that individuals, families and our communities value, need and rely on.

There is no change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25% (minimum contribution towards Council Tax).

Next steps

This consultation will run from 21 December 2023 until midnight on Friday, 26 January 2024, with the Executive then meeting on 8 February 2024 to consider the final budget proposals for recommendation to Full Council on 22 February 2024.

The main proposals are:

- To increase Council Tax by 4.99%, comprising a 'core' Council Tax increase of 2.99% covering all services and a further 2% for the adult social care precept, which is the maximum amount permitted. This would contribute an additional £9.6m per year and would represent a Band D level of Council Tax of £1,740.22 for 2024/2025, or the equivalent of £33.47 per week.
- Draft Capital Programme 2024-28.

Your feedback on this consultation is really important to us. All consultation feedback will be analysed and considered and will help inform Councillors of residents' and stakeholders' views when making a final decision on the budget at the North Northamptonshire Council Full Council meeting on 22 February 2024. This meeting is held in public and anyone wishing to speak at the meeting must

contact democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk once the agenda is issued on the Council's website on **14 February 2024**. Details of how the public can address the meeting will be given on the agenda.

Related Documents

Please read the related documents to gain a better understanding of the budget proposals before you comment on them.

- [Draft Budget 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan](#), and its appendices:
 - [Appendix A and B - Draft Budget Summary 2024/25 and list of budget pressures and saving proposals](#)
 - [Appendix C - Dedicated Schools Grant](#)
 - [Appendix D - Reserves Strategy 2024/25](#)
 - [Appendix E - Equality Screening Assessment](#)
 - [Budget Update 2024-25 - following publication of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement](#)
- [Capital Programme 2024-28](#), and its appendices:
 - [Appendix A - General Fund Capital Programme 2024-28](#)
 - [Appendix B - Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2024-28](#)
 - [Appendix C - Development Pool](#)

The following Housing Revenue Account (HRA) report is being presented to Executive as part of the council's budget papers.

The HRA is a separate ring-fenced account within the Council for the income and expenditure associated with our housing stock.

The HRA does not directly impact on the Council's wider general fund budget or on the level of council tax. Income to the HRA is primarily received through rents and other charges paid by tenants and leaseholders.

This year's HRA proposal is for a balanced budget for the two Neighbourhood Accounts.

Council tenants will be consulted via a targeted consultation on the HRA proposals via their respective Tenant Advisory Panel.

- [Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Plan Proposals](#)
 - [HRA Budget - Appendices A to C](#)

All of the above documents are available on our website <https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/budget-2024-25>

Have your say

This form is to help assist a group of respondents to record and provide their feedback as a collective group (for example a community group) to one or more of the consultation proposals.

If you would like to respond to the consultation as an individual, or if you are responding on behalf of an organisation, then we would encourage you to complete the online questionnaire at <https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/budget-2024-25> (paper copies available upon request).

The following sections give details of the budget proposals. Please tell us your groups views by completing this questionnaire.

This questionnaire focusses on the key new proposals for the draft budget 2024/25 that will likely affect residents. However, there is opportunity to comment on anything within the Draft Budget in the comment boxes towards the end of the questionnaire.

Your feedback will be part of a report with many other people's feedback, so you will not be personally identified.

The deadline for completing this questionnaire is midnight **26 January 2024**.

Thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire.

About you

Name of facilitator(s)	
Name of organisation/group	
Date of meeting	
Number of participants	

Which of the below customer categories best describes the participants?

(Please tick (√) all that apply)

Older People	<input type="checkbox"/>
Younger Adults	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black or Minority Ethnic Group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify):

Proposed increase to Council Tax

The Council is proposing to increase Council Tax up to the level currently allowed by the government, without triggering a referendum – 4.99%. This increased rate includes a **general increase of 2.99%** and the allowable **adult social care precept increase, which is 2%**.

The Council Tax increase will contribute an additional £9.6m per year towards inflationary and demand pressures to enable services to be maintained.

What would a 4.99% increase mean for Council Tax Bands?

As an example, a Band D level of Council Tax for North Northamptonshire Council of £1,740.22 in 2024/25 is equivalent to £33.47 per week. The annual increase on an average Band D property across the area is £82.71, which is a weekly increase of £1.59p.

Around 57% of properties in North Northamptonshire are in Council Tax Bands A and B. These households would see an annual increase of £55.14 (equating to £1.06 per week) and £64.33 (£1.24 per week) respectively.

These figures do not include the Council Tax for individual town and parish councils or the Council Tax set for fire and police by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The following table shows what the proposed 4.99% increase would be for each Council Tax Band.

Band	Annual increase	Weekly increase
A	£55.14	£1.06
B	£64.33	£1.24
C	£73.52	£1.41
D	£82.71	£1.59
E	£101.09	£1.94
F	£119.47	£2.30
G	£137.85	£2.65
H	£165.42	£3.18

With such a large proportion of our income coming from Council Tax – to not increase it, especially when inflation is at exceptionally high levels – would seriously impact our finances going forward and could mean that we would need to consider the revision of some of our services.

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) replaced Council Tax benefit in 2013. Council Tax benefit was a nationally prescribed scheme, whereas LCTRS is a local scheme set at the discretion of the Council. The scheme applies to working age

claimants. There is no proposed change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25%. Eligible pensioners continue to receive up to 100% Council Tax support depending on the levels of income they receive.

The proposed Council Tax increase of 4.99% relates to two elements - the core increase of 2.99% to support all services and a further 2% for Adult Social Care. The following questions will consider each element in turn.

2) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should increase Council Tax by 2.99% to help fund services?

What would a 2.99% increase mean for Council Tax Bands?

As an example, a 2.99% general increase would result in an increase of £49.56 per year (£0.95 per week) for 2024/25 for the average Band D Council Tax payer.

The following table shows what the proposed 2.99% increase would be for each Council Tax Band..

Band	Annual Increase	Weekly Increase
A	£33.04	£0.63
B	£38.55	£0.74
C	£44.05	£0.84
D	£49.56	£0.95
E	£60.57	£1.16
F	£71.59	£1.38
G	£82.60	£1.58
H	£99.12	£1.90

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) If you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did, please do so here:

4) If you feel this proposal would have a negative impact, please tell us what you think that impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be reduced or avoided?

5) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should increase Council Tax by a further 2% as part of the Adult Social Care precept, which would be used to directly fund Adult Social Care?

What would a 2% increase mean for Council Tax Bands?

As an example, a 2% adult social care precept increase would result in an increase of £33.15 per year (£0.64p per week) for 2024/25 for the average Band D Council Tax payer.

The following table shows what the proposed 2.00% increase would be for each Council Tax Band.

Band	Annual Increase	Weekly Increase
A	£22.10	£0.43
B	£25.78	£0.50
C	£29.47	£0.57
D	£33.15	£0.64
E	£40.52	£0.78
F	£47.88	£0.92
G	£55.25	£1.07
H	£66.30	£1.28

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tend to disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) If you would like to tell us why you answered the previous question in the way that you did, please do so here:

7) If you feel this proposal would have a negative impact, please tell us what you think that impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be reduced or avoided?

Capital Programme 2024-28

The Capital Programme and its appendices includes all capital expenditure and income, including the acquisition, replacement and enhancement of assets financed from government grants, external contributions, revenue contributions, capital receipts and borrowing.

It sets out the key objectives and broad principles to be applied by the Council when considering capital investment and its funding, and provides the context for how the Medium Term Capital Programme seeks to support the realisation of the Council's vision and corporate priorities.

The Capital Programme has been developed to ensure a robust mechanism to deliver our priorities within the finances available.

For further information please see the [Capital Programme 2024-28](#) report and its appendices, which contain details of each scheme:

- [Appendix A - General Fund Capital Programme 2024-28](#)
- [Appendix B - Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2024-28](#)
- [Appendix C - Development Pool](#)

If you would like further details about any of the schemes please contact us at YourVoiceMatters@northnorthants.gov.uk

8) If you have any comments you would like us to know on these schemes, please tell us here:

Name of scheme(s):

Comments:

Other comments

The budget report sets out the latest estimated funding position, service budget pressures, key financial risks and challenges influencing the development of North Northamptonshire Council's financial plans for 2024/25 and the ongoing financial impact of those plans, together with the medium term estimates of funding and spending requirements.

This questionnaire focusses on the key new proposals for the draft budget 2024/25 that will likely affect residents. However, you can comment on anything within the Draft Budget.

You can view the suite of budget reports via our website at <https://northnorthants.citizenspace.com/cet/budget-2024-25>.

If you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposals in this draft budget that you have not already told us, including any alternative ideas about how we could save the same amount of money or generate the same amount of income as outlined in the proposals, then please tell us here:

Name of proposal(s):

Comments:

9) How did you find out about this consultation?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

From the local media (i.e. newspaper or radio)	<input type="checkbox"/>
On social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
From our website	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a member of the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a member of the North Northamptonshire Consultation Register	<input type="checkbox"/>
From an email alert from my local council	<input type="checkbox"/>
From a voluntary sector organisation providing me with support and advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Other, please give details:	

The next steps

Once the consultation period closes on 26 January 2024, we will analyse the results and then final budget proposals will be developed before going back to the North Northamptonshire Council Full Council meeting on 22 February 2024.

Your feedback on this consultation is really important to us. All consultation feedback will be analysed and considered and will help inform Councillors of residents' and stakeholders' views when making a final decision on the budget for 2024/25.

This meeting is held in public and anyone wishing to speak at the meeting must contact democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk once the agenda is issued on the Council's website on **14 February 2024**. Details of how the public can address the meeting will be given on the agenda.

Thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire. Please return it to:

Email address: YourVoiceMatters@northnorthants.gov.uk

Postal address: Budget Consultation Response
North Northamptonshire Council
Sheerness House
Meadow Road
Kettering
NN16 8TL

The deadline for returning this questionnaire is midnight **26 January 2024**.