

# North Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2026/2027 – Consultation Analysis Report

## Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the Draft Budget consultation process, and key consultation findings (including an understanding of who participated in the consultation), the results of which will be used to help inform decisions on the North Northamptonshire Council's Budget for 2026/2027.

## Executive decisions and formal consultation

2. The [Draft Budget 2026/2027 and Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme 2026/2030](#) was approved by Executive on 16 December 2025 and consultation on the budget proposals began later that day. The consultation concluded on 23 January 2026.
3. The public consultation was conducted by the Council's Consultation and Engagement Team. The structure and design of the consultation set out the budget proposals and enabled both online and non-digital means of participation, in accordance with nationally recognised good practice.

## How was the consultation promoted?

4. The consultation was hosted on the Council's Consultation and Engagement Hub website, [Your Voice Matters](#), and promoted on the homepage of the Council's website. Councillors, local MPs, town and parish councils, partner organisations, voluntary and community sector organisations, representatives of protected characteristic groups, local business groups including Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses, and members of both the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel (circa 820 members) and the Council's Consultation Register were invited to give their views and asked to promote the consultation to their members, or within their local area where appropriate.
5. Opportunities to take part in the consultation were also promoted in the local media via press releases. The press release went to 26 newsrooms (local and national, print and broadcast including the Northants Telegraph and BBC Radio Northampton), plus individual reporters and other local news sites. It was promoted through the Council's website, e-newsletters and social media channels, enabling both internal (e.g. staff) as well as external consultees to get involved in the process. The Facebook Reach (i.e. the number of people who saw any content from or about the consultation web page) was 5,428; the X (formerly known as Twitter) impressions (i.e. the number of times any content from or about the consultation webpage entered a person's screen) was 1,274; and LinkedIn impressions were 1,656. Social media followers were directed to the consultation webpage to facilitate informed feedback.
6. Several reminders were distributed via various communications channels during the consultation period, including a further press release to the above newsrooms.

## How did consultees have their say?

7. Local people, organisations and other interested parties were able to have their say about the Draft Budget proposals in a range of ways, by:
  - Visiting the [Draft Budget Consultation webpage](#) and completing the questionnaire or requesting a paper questionnaire. Access to the online questionnaire was also made available free of charge at any North Northamptonshire Council library
  - Emailing [YourVoiceMatters@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:YourVoiceMatters@northnorthants.gov.uk)
  - Writing to Budget Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering, NN16 8TL
  - Contacting us by telephone to give verbal feedback
  - A toolkit was developed to enable user groups/forums to hold their own discussions and provide their feedback as a collective group

## Number and type of responses received

8. During the draft budget consultation period, using the various means available to consultees, local people and organisations contributed to the consultation 375 times. Nearly all the feedback received was via the questionnaire, with 369 respondents participating via the questionnaire, and six respondents submitting a written response. Google analytics recorded 1,146 unique visitors to the consultation overview page. It is unclear why many visitors to the consultation page did not respond to the consultation. Although we do not know why these respondents did not engage further, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest in these instances many of these stakeholders are likely to be apathetic towards the proposals and its subsequent consultation.
9. Within the questionnaire, respondents could choose which questions they responded to, so there are lower response numbers to each question when compared with the overall number of participants, depending on whether participants had a particular interest in the subject matter.
10. During the consultation period, regular summaries of consultation responses received were circulated to senior Finance officers and all responses received were circulated to decision makers upon conclusion of the consultation to enable them to see each response in full.

## What did people say?

11. This report is a summary of the feedback received. It is recommended that it is read in conjunction with the full consultation results, including the detail and suggestions contained within some of the written comments. The full consultation results have been made available to Members and are available to view on the [consultation webpage](#).

12. The questionnaire was structured so that respondents could give their views on any of the individual proposals if they chose to do so. This means we were able to summarise views by proposal and collate the views from the different consultation channels.
13. An [equality screening assessment for the budget proposals](#) was published alongside the Executive papers and made available via the questionnaire. The equality screening assessment found the proposals would have either a positive or neutral impact on the protected groups outlined within the Equality Act 2010.

### Draft Budget 2026/2027 Consultation Questionnaire

14. In total, 369 respondents filled out a questionnaire on the draft Budget proposals, either partially or fully. Respondents did not have to answer every question and so the total number of responses for each question differs and is shown in relation to each question.
15. Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. There were 363 responses to this question, **with respondents being able to select more than one option if applicable**. The vast majority of respondents said they were local residents (92.3%). The second highest number of respondents were North Northamptonshire Council employees (9.1%), closely followed by service users (8.3%). The following table details the various respondent types to the consultation questionnaire.

	Response number	Percentage (%)
A local resident	335	92.3%
A service user	30	8.3%
A North Northamptonshire Council employee	33	9.1%
A North Northamptonshire Council Councillor	20	5.5%
A representative of a Town/Parish Council	2	0.6%
A Town or Parish Councillor	12	3.3%
A representative of the voluntary sector or a community organisation	7	1.9%
A representative of the local business community	4	1.1%
A representative of a health partner organisation	0	0.0%
A representative of a user group	1	0.3%
Other	3	0.8%

### Proposed Council Tax rate increase

16. 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%.

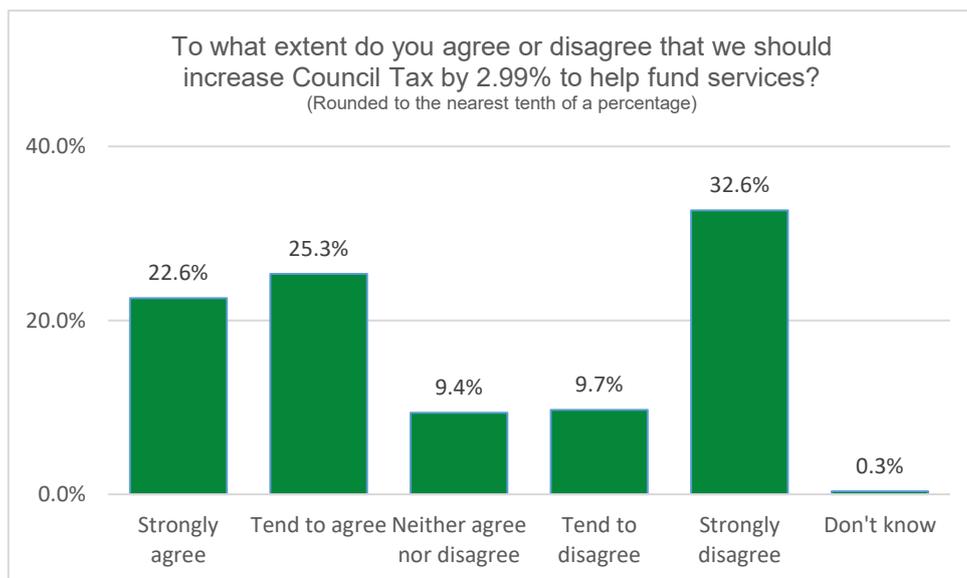
17. This 4.99% increase would result in a 2026/2027 Band D Council Tax increase for North Northamptonshire Council of £91.17 per year, which is £1.75p per week.

18. It should be noted that 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. These are not within the scope of this consultation, and these amounts are added afterwards before people receive their final bills.

**A 2.99% Council Tax increase**

19. The Council’s proposal to increase the core Council tax rate by 2.99% in 2026/2027 means an average (Band D) Council Taxpayer’s rate would increase £54.63 per year (£1.05p per week) for the North Northamptonshire Council precept.

20. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposal to increase Council Tax by 2.99% to help fund services. There were 288 responses to this question. A total of 47.9% said they strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal and 42.4% said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree.



21. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 183 comments made in relation to this question.

Key themes: 2.99% Council Tax increase	
<b>Agree</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support to sustain services:</b> Many accepted the increase as necessary due to rising costs and the need to maintain or improve services.</li> <li>• <b>Expectation of better value:</b> Support was often conditional on improved efficiency, better financial management, and addressing specific local issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Disagree</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost, fairness, and value concerns:</b> People felt the increase is unaffordable, unfair under the current system, and not justified by declining services.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low trust in spending decisions:</b> Many questioned how money is managed and felt the Council should improve efficiency or find alternatives instead of raising tax.</li> </ul>
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### Summary of comments who agree to a 2.99% Council Tax increase

22. There were 70 respondents that commented as to why they agreed with the proposed increase.
23. A third of these respondents recognised that the potential increase is necessary to maintain services, and that investment is needed to deliver and improve services.
24. About a quarter of these respondents felt any potential increase was aligned to the current economic climate, recognising the increased cost of services and the cost of living generally.
25. Although a similar number of respondents hold an expectation that any increase should result in improved services, efficiencies and value for money, with some of these comments referring to a perception of poor financial mismanagement.
26. Similarly, a tenth of respondents appeared to give conditional support linked to specific local issues including improved maintenance of roads, more robust planning decisions, improvement in Adult Social Care, and perceived wasted funds on the Cornerstone project.
27. A small number of respondents felt the historic issues of financial mismanagement from previous administrations, and the current administration were continuing to impact trust in delivering services. A similar number referenced frustrations at a perception that the Local Government funding model is broken, and that more funds should come from Central Government.
28. A small number of comments believe there should be changes to how Council Tax is calculated, indicating that more should be paid by higher Council Tax bands, or that funding should be equally shared for services used by individuals that access them.
29. There were a couple of specific references that respondents had trust in the current administration to make the right decision.

### Summary of comments who neither agree nor disagree to a 2.99% Council Tax increase

30. A total of 16 respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal made a comment.
31. Almost half of these respondents indicated conditional acceptance linked to improvements in service quality. A quarter of these respondents wanted more context around how funds will be spent or felt there was insufficient information shared. There were also calls for greater transparency and accountability relating to services. A small number shared affordability and long-term sustainability concerns in relation to household incomes, and the impact that continued house building may have in the area.

### **Summary of comments who disagree to a 2.99% Council Tax increase**

32. There were 95 respondents that commented as to why they disagreed with the proposed increase.
33. A third of these respondents shared their concerns regarding potential inefficiencies and mismanagement of current funds, with a sense of the Council's spending and priorities being unclear. It was commented that there is a lack of transparency as to how funds will be spent, with limited information on how success will be measured.
34. A third of comments were concerned that additional pressure would be added to family incomes due to current cost of living pressures and worried about the affordability of any potential increase, citing wage increases not being kept in line with increases in expenditure.
35. A similar number of comments indicated a perceived decline in quality of services and felt frustration at being asked to pay more. Specific examples were shared including road and path maintenance, town centre facilities, perceived increased crime/ASB behaviour, flooding support, and lack of health care provision.
36. A tenth of the comments shared frustration or political distrust with almost all of these comments mentioning the current administration, and a perceived broken promise to not increase Council Tax.
37. A similar number shared a perceived unfairness in the current Council Tax system either indicating that larger properties paid more but received no extra services or property value bearing no resemblance to the number of occupants. Some referenced their dissatisfaction in paying for garden waste collection, and that the precept for Police and Fire is another additional expense.
38. A small number of respondents offered alternative funding approaches including looking at ways to help businesses grow by reducing business rates to help fill empty business units, that Council Tax increase should be no more than inflation, and unnecessary projects should be aborted.
39. It was also suggested the Council should provide greater support to charities and volunteers to compliment some services and to only offer statutory services. There was also a small number of comments sharing a perception that new housing growth should add an income that would cover the additional use of any resources.

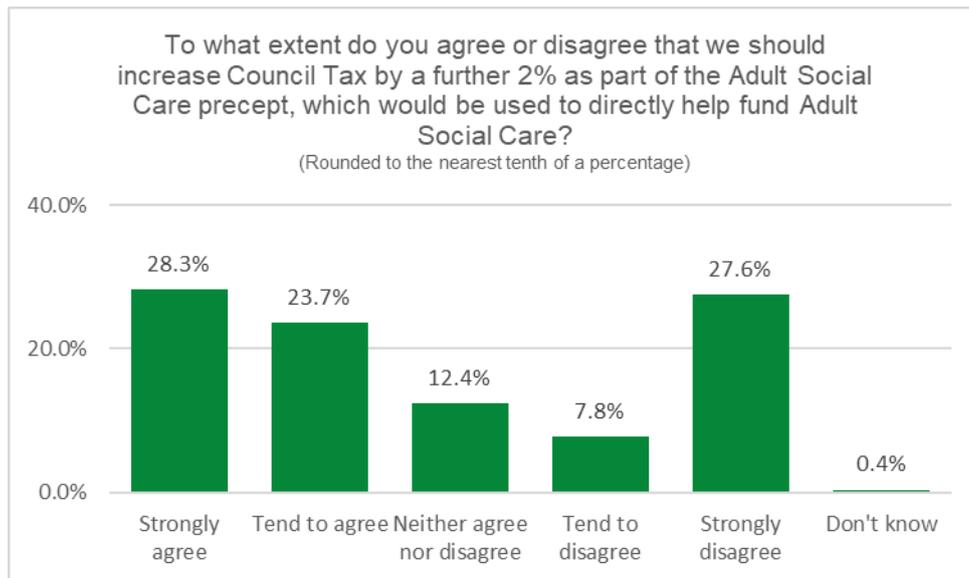
### **Summary of comments who feel a 2.99% Council Tax increase would have a negative impact and their mitigation suggestions**

40. Any respondents who felt the proposal would have a negative impact were then asked to tell us what they thought the impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be reduced or avoided. A total of 110 respondents provided comment.

41. Nearly half of these respondents indicated that financial hardship and cost of living pressures of an additional Council Tax increase would have a negative impact, particularly on low-income groups. With a small number mentioning the challenges faced of emotional stress and the potential risk of pushing residents into poverty or arrears of Council Tax or other bills, which may in turn put more pressure on services.
42. A quarter of respondents felt there was a decline in services, with the Council offering either poor value for money or poor financial management, which some did not see improving.
43. A tenth of respondents felt a loss of trust in the Council and elected Members, with a couple of references to the specific current administration.
44. A handful of respondents have a perception of an unfairness in how Council Tax is structured with larger houses paying more for services they don't use. Equally a few comments recognised that while the increase may have a negative impact the increase is needed to maintain services.
45. About a quarter of respondents offered suggestions on reducing negative impact including: cutting and/or reviewing services; further reduction in Council Tax for single occupants; review of Council Tax Support Scheme; a frozen or lower Council Tax increase; review of Council Tax bands; offering advice on debt management; better communication with residents on services available to them; reducing the pension and salary costs of staff; and tighter control of benefits received by residents so that recipients spend on living costs and not recreational. There was also suggestion that more services should be brought inhouse to reduce outgoings; prioritise core services like road maintenance; seek alternative funding from government support and targeted grants; and that transparency and accountability is improved by setting clear targets which are publicly reported. A small number also suggested reducing business rates to encourage more business into town centre; Council Tax payments being more equal – with residents paying pro rata for what they use and receive; and more rigorous investigation of SEND applicants.

### **A 2% Adult Social Care precept Council Tax increase**

46. The questionnaire then outlined the Council's proposal to increase the Council Tax rate by a further 2% in 2026/2027 as part of the Adult Social Care precept, which would be used to directly help fund Adult Social Care, meaning an average (Band D) Council Tax payer's rate would increase £36.54 per year (£0.70p per week) for the North Northamptonshire Council precept.
47. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposal to 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. There were 283 responses to this question. Similar to the core Council Tax increase there was more support for an Adult Social Care precept increase than opposition. A total of 51.9% of respondents said they strongly agree or tend to agree with the proposal, whilst 35.3% said they strongly disagree or tend to disagree.



48. Respondents were then asked why they answered the previous question in the way that they did. There were 163 comments made in relation to this question.

Key themes: 2% Adult Social Care precept Council Tax increase	
<b>Agree</b>	<p><b>Recognised need for funding:</b> Many accepted the increase as necessary due to underfunding, rising demand, and higher costs in providing ASC.</p> <p><b>Expectation of improvement and reform:</b> Support was often tied to wanting better-managed, more efficient services, with some calling for targeted investment or national-level funding reform.</p>
<b>Disagree</b>	<p><b>Opposition to tax rise and spending concerns:</b> Many felt Council Tax is already too high, the increase is unfair or unaffordable, and that ASC funding should instead come from government, business growth, or efficiency savings due to perceived mismanagement.</p> <p><b>Low trust and doubts about impact:</b> Some doubted the money would improve services and wanted clearer information on how funds would be used.</p>

**Summary of comments who agree to a 2% Adult Social Care precept Council Tax increase**

49. A total of 76 respondents who agreed with the proposal provided comments.

50. Half of these respondents either accepted that the additional funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) is necessary or unavoidable, or felt ASC is underfunded and requires additional financial support.

51. A sixth of these respondents recognised that overall demand for ASC services is rising due to an aging population and other increases in demand for services. Several comments also recognised cost of living pressures and the increased cost of providing services. One comment considered it would be helpful if more information was provided on why the costs are rising.

52. Over a fifth of respondents mentioned a desire to protect or improve ASC services or considered that it is important to provide these services for those who need them, with a need for funding to be targeted to the right areas. A small number of comments supported the increase due to personal experience of using services.
53. A sixth of responses reference their perceived need for reform in adult social care, with improved management and efficiencies identified, including longer term fixes to address rising costs not just increases in funding. A small number of responses considered ASC should be funded nationally.
54. A small number of comments were displeased with the proposed increase and the size of the welfare system.

**Summary of comments who neither agree nor disagree to a 2% Adult Social Care precept Council Tax increase**

55. A total of 19 respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal made comment.
56. A quarter of these respondents commented that they lacked knowledge or experience of ASC, with some respondents saying there was insufficient detail provided on how the increase would be spent.
57. A similar number of respondents suggested alternative funding or management arrangements, including for the funding to be sought from the government and house builders; and that services should be brought inhouse.
58. A small number of comments recognised the need for the funding but also highlighted cost of living concerns. A similar number also raised concerns over the high cost of ASC; whether need is genuine; and whether the funding is reaching those who really need it.

**Summary of comments who disagree to a 2% Adult Social Care precept Council Tax increase**

59. A total of 65 respondents who disagreed with the proposal provided comments.
60. Over a fifth of these respondents considered that either funding should come from different sources, such as the government or growing business rates, or that savings should be made through efficiencies or cuts to services rather than the proposed increase to Council Tax.
61. A sixth of respondents perceived inefficiency and poor management in the current system, concerns raised included staffing costs and inefficient processes. Several comments considered that services are not working, not improving and that enough money is already spent on ASC.
62. Several respondents said they felt Council Tax is already too high or that the increase is unfair, with a small number of respondents raising discontent over promises to not put up

Council Tax. A similar number disagreed with the charge, considering that the money would be better used elsewhere or that taxes should be reduced.

63. Several responses raised concerns about affordability of the increase for residents, associated personal hardship, and cost of living pressures. A small number of respondents considered that families should carry more responsibility for care or that individuals should take more responsibility for themselves; and one response suggested that older people should be taxed directly to pay for their care.
64. A handful of respondents did not trust that the funding would reach ASC or that it would have a positive impact on services. Several responses also considered more detail is needed on how the money would be spent to support the increase.

**Summary of comments who feel a 2% Adult Social Care precept Council Tax increase would have a negative impact and their mitigation suggestions**

65. Any respondents who felt the proposal would have a negative impact were then asked to say what they thought the impact would be, along with any suggestions on how any potential negative impacts could be reduced or avoided. A total of 76 respondents commented.
66. Just under a third of these respondents raised financial hardship and worsening cost of living pressures, and the associated knock-on effects such as financial stress and mental health, as negative impacts which could result from the proposal. Some comments highlighted that the increase is above inflation and pay or pension increases. There was also some frustration expressed with year-on-year Council Tax increases.
67. Just under a quarter of respondents had a perception of inefficiency or poor management, including financial management, which they wanted addressing rather than increasing Council Tax. Some concerns raised included loss of early interventions; use of interim or consultancy staff; perceived spending on 'luxuries'; and increasing spending without addressing inefficiencies.
68. Several respondents considered the charge unfair for those who don't use the services or viewed that the money could be used elsewhere. A small number of comments raised concerns over misuse or overuse of ASC services.
69. Several respondents thought there should be better communication on how the funds will be used, for example case studies or clearer breakdowns of how the money will be spent.
70. A small number of respondents considered there would be no negative impact or recognised that improvements would be a positive thing.
71. A few respondents suggested alternative funding approaches like growing business rates and government grants; cuts to services; or service reform.
72. Suggestions for improvements include closer partnerships with other agencies and volunteer organisations; better use of vacant buildings/ overgrown land for revenue

generation; greater support for families to help care for people; and help for people to find suitable employment.

### **Capital Programme 2026-2030**

73. The Capital Programme and its appendix 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.
74. 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.
75. The Capital Programme has been developed to ensure a robust mechanism to deliver our priorities within the finances available.
76. Respondents were given the above explanation and provided with Draft Budget 2026/27, Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme 2026/2030 report and Appendix A and its appendix, and were invited to contact the Council if they would like further details about any of the schemes.
77. Respondents were asked if they had any comments on any of these schemes. A total of 30 comments were received about these schemes, with responses to this question covering a range of different subjects. With, a handful of respondents saying they would like clearer, more accessible information about capital plans, noting that some documents are hard to find. It was suggested simple overviews, with the option to explore more detail if needed, would be more useful.
78. Several respondents commented about their dissatisfaction with highways maintenance. They want lasting improvement to the road network and felt many roads are unsafe and deteriorating. Requests were made for a funded resurfacing programme, citing areas which were felt of highest priority. Other comments relating to highways included concerns about lack of debris clearance, blocked drains, and clarity on insurance recovery from drivers who damage highway assets. There were also requests for improved street cleaning and parks and green spaces maintenance.
79. A small number of respondents expressed their frustration with the financial proposals and felt taxpayers' money is not being managed effectively. It was commented the overall plans fail to deliver on commitments to reduce the cost of living.
80. A similar number mentioned waste collection. Raising concerns over missed collections and a suggestion that a seasonal lower cost option be implemented to avoid discouraging use or increasing the risk of fly-tipping.
81. A couple of comments referred to housing. One suggested the Council should directly build affordable homes, as they felt council-led housing offers better value and quality than

relying on profit-driven private developers. The other respondent suggested the Council should install/ fund solar panels and collect any surplus revenue.

82. A couple of respondents mentioned Kettering library and museum. One wanted to see more clarity on the reopening and preservation funding of local artifacts. The other respondent expressed their opposition of spending any money on renaming the library.
83. Other comments include a request that leisure facilities are not overlooked; a belief that funding is disproportionately directed toward Corby rather than other areas; request for assurance that the Share Prosperity Fund is factored into the budget; suggestion for the Council to sell unnecessary or costly premises; to stop all schemes unless grant funded; and to reduce SEND funding.

### **Alternative suggestions and other comments**

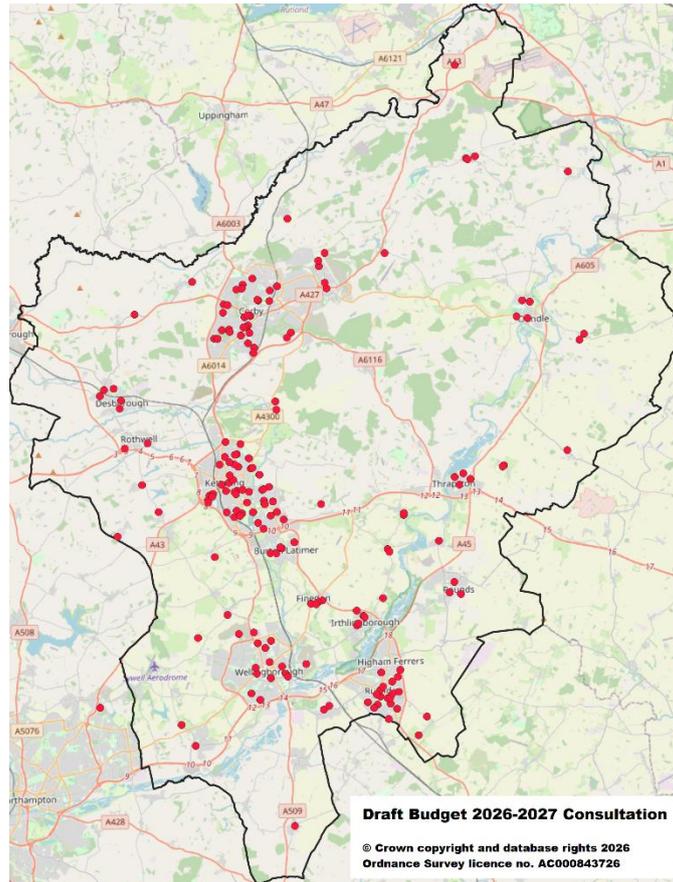
84. Respondents were then reminded that the budget report sets out the latest estimated funding position, service budget pressures, key financial risks and challenges influencing the development of North Northamptonshire Council's financial plans for 2026/2027 and the ongoing financial impact of those plans, together with the medium-term estimates of funding and spending requirements.
85. Respondents were reminded that the consultation questionnaire focusses on the new proposals for the draft budget 2026/2027 that will likely affect residents. However, respondents were welcome to comment on anything within the Draft Budget.
86. Respondents were asked if they had any other comments they would like to make, including any alternative ideas about how the Council could save the same amount of money or generate the same amount of income as outlined in the proposals. There were 47 comments made in relation to this question. A variety of comments were received to this question, with no clearly defined themes emerging.
87. The most frequently mentioned topic, being commented by a fifth of these respondents was about garden waste. Commenters expressed their disappointment that the cost for this service is going up. Concerns were raised over the principle of charging for this service, the scale of the increase and concerns it may have on fly tipping. It was suggested the service could be reduced in winter to reduce charges to residents.
88. Several comments raised concerns about highways and the need for roads, paths, and streetlighting to be repaired and maintained. Some comments considered these services were not delivered effectively. There was also concern that improvements needed haven't been budgeted for. It was suggested that the Council lobby Government to do more to fund councils to repair and maintain paths and roads.
89. Several comments suggested efficiencies and savings which could be made to reduce the cost of services. These included household waste deposit stations to make waste collection more efficient; reduction to the cost of parish and town councils and reinvestment of funds centrally, with one commenter concerned about the impact of responsibilities being transferred to parishes and the potential for tax increases through parish precepts. Other suggestions included reduction in Council Tax support; focus on

statutory services and reduce or stop non-essential services; reduction in staff costs; more stringent means testing; using assets to raise revenue; ensuring contracts are efficient and value for money; more work with volunteers and voluntary groups; inhouse architects department; ensuring homes are not left empty; and recognising holistic benefits of services for example benefits of improved health related to leisure provision.

90. A similar number of comments suggested opportunities for increasing revenue generation. These included recognising the role of High Growth Enterprises in creating jobs and attracting investors; giving consideration to creative ways to generate income by selling services, examples provided included creating software to support businesses and generate income or working in partnership with companies to provide services such as legal services to generate income; selling off unnecessary assets; and exploring private investment into regenerated land for recreational and retail opportunities.
91. Several comments called for funding for, or more provision of, additional services or projects. These included funding to address risks of flooding; local spaces for youth or young adults; tackling litter and maintaining public spaces; drain cleaning; support and help for young people with additional needs; and disability awareness training for staff to ensure needs of disabled people are considered.
92. A small number of respondents expressed distrust that comments would not be taken into account or were disappointed with the proposals. There was some feeling the community should have more say on spending. There were also calls for more detail on the proposed savings and improvements. Queries were raised on SEND funding and school transport provision and criteria for who is eligible and on the level of investments into repairing roads. A small number of comments also mentioned discontent of building developments out pacing infrastructure and support services; and there being too many warehouses being built.

## **Demographic information**

93. Within the demographic section of the questionnaire organisational respondents were asked to provide more detail about their organisation by providing their organisations name and their job title/ role. The respondents who provided this information identified themselves as a Parish Council and a Public Services Retired Members group. We have not listed the job titles/ roles of respondents within this report to ensure respondents' anonymity is retained.
94. Individual respondents were asked to provide their postcode to give us an understanding of where respondents live. There were 185 valid postcodes provided for North Northamptonshire. The below map broadly shows where these respondents reside. A total of 19 postcodes were incomplete.



95. Respondents who were not responding on behalf of an organisation were asked to complete the Council’s equality monitoring form to help us understand the characteristics of people who have taken part in the consultation.
96. The vast majority of respondents chose not to provide their demographic information with only a handful of forms completed. Full statistical data of the responses is available within the appendix to this report. The following is a brief summary of the data received.
97. The majority of respondents who completed the equality monitoring form identified themselves as male (75.0%), with 25.0% being female. The most frequent age band given by respondents were those aged between 65 to 74 years (37.5%), with 37.5% being younger and 25.0% aged 75 or older.
98. A total of 50.0% of respondents who completed the equality monitoring form were married, with 25.0% being divorced, 12.5% being widowed and 12.5% being single.
99. Other identified demographic information provided by these forms demonstrated that 37.5% were disabled; 87.5% of respondents who completed the equalities form identified themselves as White British; 87.5% said they were heterosexual; and 75.0% said they had no religion with 25.0% identifying themselves as Christian.
100. The final question within the questionnaire asked respondents how they found out about the consultation. A total of 245 respondents answered this question, **with**

**respondents being able to select more than one option if applicable.** The most frequent answer given was from respondents who said they were made aware of the consultation via an email from the council (28.2%). Other awareness raising channels included social media (17.1%) being notified as a member of the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel (12.2%); via the Council's website (10.6%); by being a member of the Consultation Register (9.4%); by a local Councillor (6.1%); council staff receiving notification via internal communication channels (7.3%) and the Local Link (3.3%). Other responses included hearing through local media outlets; council staff; hearing from a MP; and via word of mouth.

### **Emailed/written responses**

101. There were six emailed/written response received in relation to the draft budget consultation. Five were from individuals and one was from a Residents' Association.
102. Half of the individual responses referenced a desire for inhouse processes to be reviewed, particularly mentioning the number of fleet vehicles and perceived over staffed maintenance departments. They felt there is a general decline in infrastructure and want a better understanding of where funds may be spent.
103. A couple of comments referred to the increase in garden waste subscription, feeling that the proposed increase is not justified.
104. A decline in road maintenance and increase in potholes were mentioned within a couple of responses, with reference to the A6 and a fear for the safety of drivers.
105. A couple of comments referenced the financial pressure that an increase in Council Tax might have on families and pensioners. There was also a misconception that the proposed increase was only for Band D and above properties with a call for it to be across the board on all bands. Although one response shared agreement with the proposed increase, mentioning that anything less would be negative long-term.
106. The response from a Residents' Association also considered the Post-Financial Settlement update and acknowledged the improvement in funding assumptions. They felt the draft budget does not demonstrate a sustainable long-term financial position, with a sense that significant financial risk remains and is being deferred to later years. Clarity was sought on a full cost recovery plan in relation to fees and charges and concessions. They raised concern over what they perceive to be a high dependency on Council Tax income and the risks associated with Business Rates rebasing and felt the consultation supporting materials do not address how these will be mitigated. They felt the use of reserves and grant consolidation measures do not support long-term financial strategy. While equality and community impact are noted as no direct impact, it was felt service-level decisions are likely and should be considered early. They added there should be clear distinction between ringfenced improvements and discretionary funding pressures. They requested the points raised are considered and answered prior to any final budget approval.

107. A copy of the above responses are available to view along with the full consultation results on the [consultation webpage](#). Unredacted copies of the feedback received has been shared with senior officers.