

Budget Consultation- Summary of findings and key themes

The Draft Budget 2021/22 online consultation opened on 8 December 2020 and is due to close on 31 January 2021.

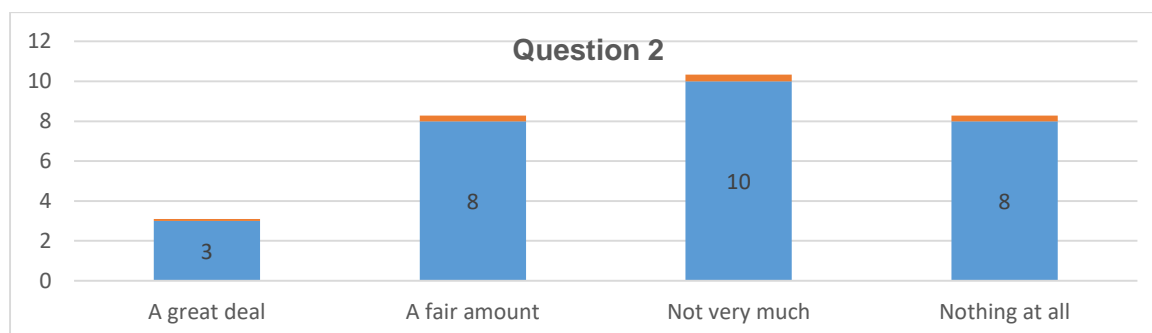
The online consultation asked Brent residents to read the Draft Budget 2021/22, including appendices, and answer the following questions:

1. Do you have any comments about our draft budget strategy?
2. Having read the draft budget proposals for the next three years, how much do you now feel you understand the Council's overall financial position and the need to both increase council tax and deliver savings between 2021/22 and 2022/23 in order to deliver a balanced budget?
3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the budget proposals?
4. Please provide any other comments you may have on the proposals for the Budget 2021/22.

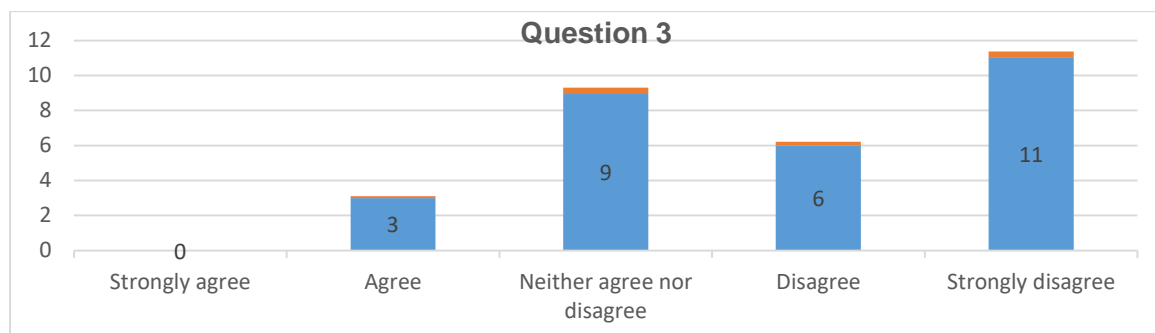
The key themes collected from the comments to **Question 1** 'Do you have any comments about our draft budget strategy?' include:

- The increase in Council Tax
- That the draft budget documents are difficult to understand
- Calling for improvements to contracted services

For **Question 2** 62% respondents answered that they had 'nothing at all' or 'not very much' understanding of the Council's overall financial position and the need to both increase council tax and deliver savings between 2020/21 and 2022/23 in order to deliver a balanced budget. 38% responded that they have 'a fair amount' or 'a great deal' of understanding on the Council's overall financial position.



For **Question 3** 59% of respondents answered that they 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the budget proposals. Whilst 10% answered that they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the proposals. The final 31% answered that they 'neither agree nor disagree'.



The most popular theme to **Question 4** 'Please provide any other comments you may have on the proposals for the Budget 2021/22:' was the Increase in Council Tax and the challenge to produce a balanced budget.

Overall, the most commented theme was the proposed increase in Council Tax. It is acknowledged that increasing Council Tax will be difficult for some households to manage in the current circumstances and sections 5.7 - 5.9 of this report set out the rationale the Council considers as part of its decision making. In summary, the additional funding will provide much needed funding to limit the impact of COVID-19 pressures expected in 2021/22, in particular for the Adult Social Care department, as well as preventing the wholesale cuts key services that many other Councils are having to consider. In addition, the Council continues to invest in the Council Tax Support scheme, which provides over £30m of support for around 28,000 households who are financially vulnerable.

Comments and feedback on the budget consultation demonstrates a wide range of views, many common viewpoints and emphasises the fact that Brent residents are concerned over what the expenditure reductions mean not only for them but also for the wider community.