

## **Budget Consultation Analysis**

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The online 2023/24 budget consultation opened on 14 November 2022 and ended on 31 January 2023.

The online consultation asked Brent residents to read the Draft Budget Plan for 2023/24, including appendices, and answer the following questions:

- Do you have any comments about our draft budget strategy?
- Having read the draft budget proposals, 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 in 2023/24 in order to deliver a balanced budget?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the budget proposals?
- Please provide any other comments you may have on the proposals for the 2023/24 Budget
- If you have any other ideas for ways we could save money, please specify below

In addition to the questions above standard equalities monitoring questions were asked, to better understand the demographic of the residents who responded. Please note, answering these questions was not mandatory.

The new proposals for 2023/24 are designed to limit, as far as possible, service reductions and the impact on front line services. The Budget Plan consultation aims to inform residents of the pressures faced, explain the need to reduce spending and expand on how savings will be made. The consultation aims to receive feedback on the aforementioned and capture responses to the borough's financial position.

To date, the budget plan survey has received 101 responses from the community, including residents, businesses, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders.

#### **Question 1**

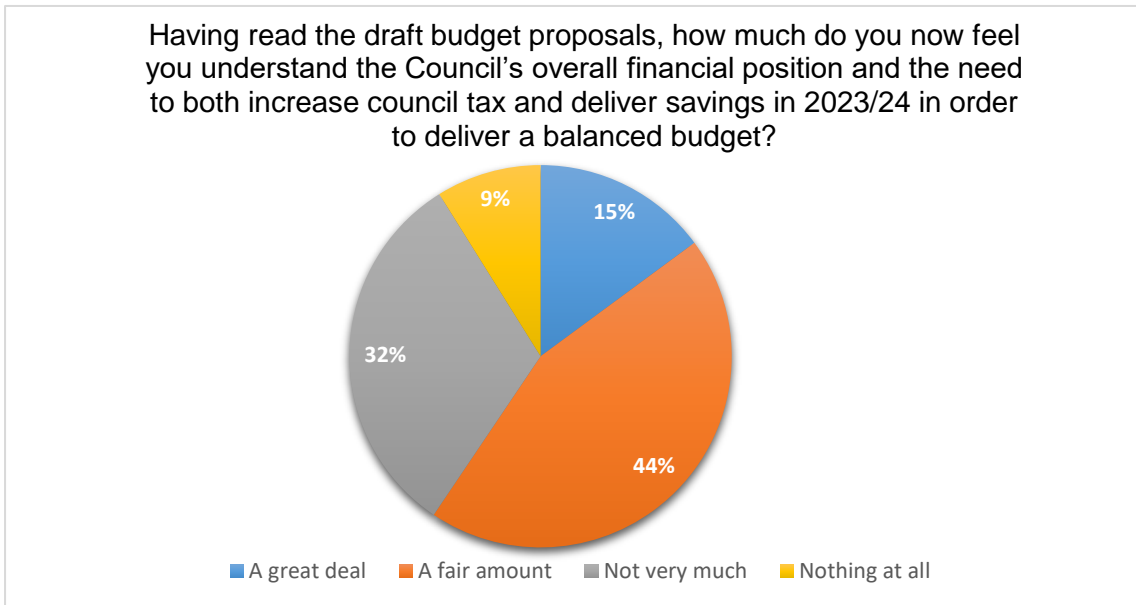
The first question in the survey asked respondents whether they had any comments about the draft budget strategy. Some key themes captured in the comments from this question are as follows:

- Concerns regarding budget cuts affecting the provision of services and the impact to residents.
- Concerns regarding the increase of council tax.

- Concerns centred on Brent Council expenditures within the organisation.

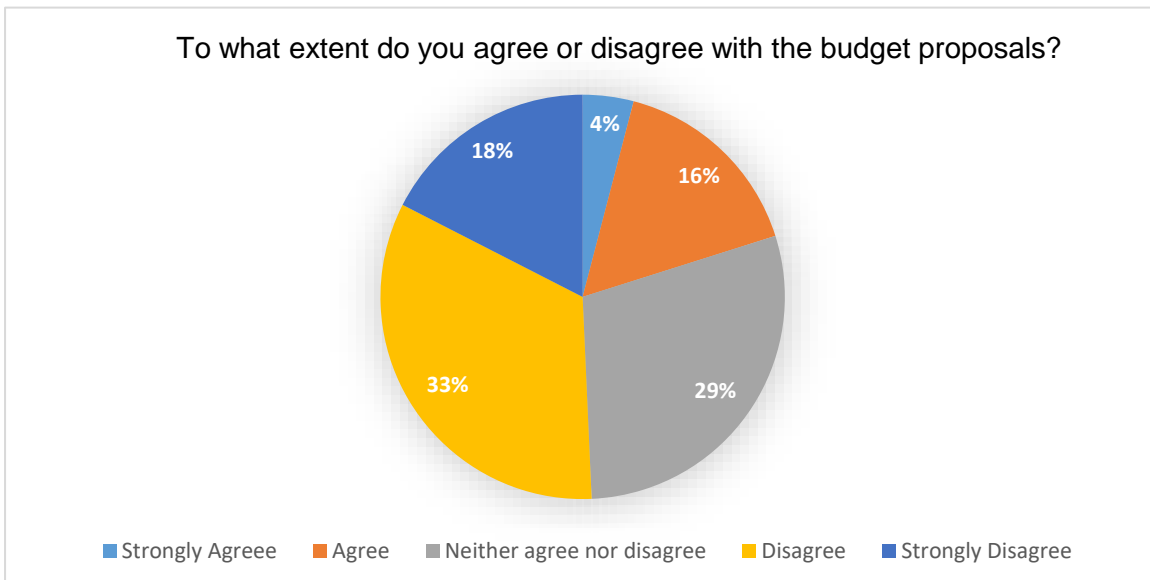
### Question 2

Question 2 asked respondents to share how much they felt they understood the Council's overall financial position and the need to both increase council tax and deliver savings in 2023/24 in order to deliver a balanced budget. The data shows that **15%** of respondents feel as though they understand the Council's overall financial position 'a great deal'. **44%** of all respondents felt that that understood the Council's position 'a fair amount' whilst **32%** amount answered that they felt they didn't understand the Council's overall financial position very much. **9%** felt that they understood 'nothing at all' about the Council's overall financial position.



### Question 3

The third question asks respondents to tell us to what extent they agree or disagree with the budget proposals. **4%** said they strongly agreed with the proposals, **16%** agreed, **29%** neither agreed nor disagreed, **33%** disagreed and **18%** answered they strongly disagreed.



#### Question 4

Here we asked respondents to provide any additional comments they may have for the budget proposals for 2023/24. The most popular theme for this question can be found below:

- Concerns over Council Tax increases
- Too little spending on green spaces and environmental services
- More support for adult, youth and community services

#### Question 5

This question asked respondents to share any other ideas for ways the Council could save money. A summary of the comments made are as follows:

- Focus on work from home agenda
- A reduction in overhead costs
- Cut back on physical marketing materials

#### Summary

Overall, the most common theme identified throughout the consultation survey was the concern regarding an increase in Council Tax. It is acknowledged that increasing Council Tax will be difficult for some households to manage in the current circumstances and section five the budget report set out the rationale the Council considers as part of its decision making. In summary, the increase will provide much needed funding to limit the impact inflationary pressures expected in 2022/23, 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 £32m of support for around 28,000 households who are financially vulnerable. In addition, the Council's Resident Support Fund has made available additional funds for residents who are having difficulty due to unforeseen financial circumstances as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Feedback and comments captured by the survey were varied and it is clear to see that Brent residents are concerned with what a reduction in spending means for them and their community.

#### Monitoring Questions

In addition to the questions above standard equalities monitoring questions were asked, to better understand the demographic of the residents who responded. Please note, answering these questions was not mandatory. A summary of responses can be found below.

A majority (**90%**) of respondents who took part in the survey answered as a Brent Resident. Organisations who answered the survey included **Brent NEU, Young Brent Foundation** and **Friends of Woodcock Park**. The most common areas the survey received responses from were; **Willesden, Cricklewood, Kingsbury and the post code area of HA9**. Respondents heard about the survey from a range of sources, however the most common source was an **email from a Brent Council Officer/Team member**. **44.6%** of those who took part in the survey were female, **50.8%** were male. **95.2%** also

answered that the gender they identify with is the same as their sex registered at birth. The survey was answered most by those between the ages of **51-60**. **18.2%** of people who answered were between the ages of **61-65** and **41-50**. **19.7%** were between the ages of **31-40**.

**40.6%** stated that they did not have a religion, **29.7%** of respondents were Christian and **15.6%** answered that they preferred not to state. **68.9%** of respondents answered they considered themselves **'heterosexual'**, **9.8%** answered they were **'gay or lesbian'** and **3.3%** stated they were **'bisexual'**. **41.3%** of those who answered belong to the **English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British** ethnic group. The second most common ethnic group for respondents was **White other (19%)**, and **14.3%** belonged to the **Indian** ethnic group. **7.9%** belonged to the **Black Caribbean** ethnic group. The most common 'other' ethnic group was **Spanish**. **80.6%** answered that English was their **first language**. **14.5%** answered that **English wasn't theirs first language**.

**71%** do not look after or give support to anyone with long-term physical or mental illnesses, or those with problems related to old age. **17.7%** do provide support for these groups. **71%** answered that they do not have any physical or mental health conditions lasting or expected to last 12 months or longer. **22.6%** said they did. **30%** of those who answered this question preferred not to state the nature of their impairment, **25%** stated they had a **mobility impairment**, **15%** stated they had a **mental health illness** and **10%** answered that they're impairment was **physical**. **78.8%** said their condition **didn't** reduce their ability to carry our day-to-day activities whilst **14.3%** answered that it **did**.

### **Budget Plan – Promotion**

<b>Engagement activity</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Promoted across Citizens Lab	2945	18 November, 6 December and 30 December
Promoted across the Community Newsletter	7607	15 November and 23 December.
Brent Connects	135 Brent residents	31 October, 4 November, 10 November, 15 November, 17 November

Total reach: **Over 10,500 residents**