

# Shaping Bridgend's Future

## Consultation report

**Date of issue: 12 December 2016**

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## 1. Overview

A public consultation reviewing Bridgend County Borough Council's corporate expenditure and a range proposed budget reductions to 2020/21 was undertaken over an eight week period from 6 October and 1 December 2016. The consultation received 2,533 responses from a combination of the consultation survey, 15 engagement events held across the county borough, social media interactions and by using the authority's Citizens' Panel. This paper details the analysis associated with the consultation.

## 2. Introduction

A public survey based on Bridgend County Borough Council's corporate budget and proposed budget reductions to 2020/21 was conducted over an eight week period between 6 October and 1 December 2016. The survey was available to complete online through a link on the consultations page of the council's website<sup>1</sup> or by visiting [www.bridgend.gov.uk/future](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/future). Paper copies of the consultation were also made available at local libraries, the 15 community engagement events or alternatively, they could be sent directly to the residents upon request in either English or Welsh. The content of the page remains available online.

In total, there were seven budget reduction questions which required a reply from respondents; all other questions in the survey were optional. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity. The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included with the survey, as is now recommended good practice for all public facing surveys carried out by the council.

Comments regarding the consultation were also invited via letter, email and phone call.

## 3. Promotional tools and engagement methods

Details of the consultation were sent as part of a press release emailed to the following stakeholders: Bridgend business forum and business directory, councillors, town and community councils, members of the Local Service Board (LSB), the Youth Service Cabinet (YSC), Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF), all secondary school head teachers and admin and local media outlets.

Those who attended last year's engagement events and all residents who have previously identified themselves as 'interested in key consultations' were sent HTML emails directly to encourage interaction regarding the Shaping Bridgend's Future consultation.

The consultation questions were sent to all 1,248 members of the Citizens' Panel on 6 October 2016 for online submissions – with a deadline of 7 November 2016 – and 12 October 2016 for paper submissions – with a deadline of 19 November 2016 to allow sufficient time to complete the survey.

Facebook and Twitter have widely been used to promote the consultation, which has included sharing a collection of short videos and holding two social media Q&A sessions.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/services/consultation/hub/shaping-bridgends-future-2016.aspx>

Respondents were offered a free seven day pass to Halo Leisure facilities (16+) and could also opt-in to a free prize draw for a one year Halo Leisure membership, a family pantomime pass (two adults and two children), a £50, £30 and £20 ticket token. The ticket tokens could be used for events held at Porthcawl Pavilion and other supporting locations.

### 3.1 Social media

Information was posted to the council's corporate Facebook and Twitter channels throughout the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the proposals.

The council currently has 8,075 followers on its corporate Twitter account and 6,386 'fans' on its Facebook page, and while content is most likely to be seen by these users, it is also displayed to users who are not connected to the accounts. During the period, the authority 'tweeted' 150 times and posted to Facebook eight times about the consultation. This content was seen 85,179 times and 178,750 times respectively.

Live Twitter and Facebook question and answer sessions were held with the Chief Executive on 19 October and 9 November 2016 between 18:30 – 20:00 to generate awareness and interest, and to encourage debate.

The Chief Executive opened the sessions by inviting questions, which were themed around the consultation review. The Twitter account's tweets were seen 30,880 times on the day of the debate, a decrease of 19% from 38,011 last year. The Facebook session was seen 11,304 times, up by 4% from 10,842 last year.

### 3.2 Social media videos

A collection of five videos was created to help promote the consultation and its key issues, and to improve citizens' understanding of the current situation and what the consultation exercise is designed to achieve.

The videos comprise of one general four-minute video about the consultation and current situation, which was embedded on the Shaping Bridgend's Future web page and shown at community engagement events, and four shorter videos which focused on key issues and proposals within the consultation, which were promoted via social media.

The videos received a total of 13,017 views during the consultation period, and the duration of 30% of these views was 10 seconds or longer.

### 3.3 Local press

The consultation featured on Wales Online on 18 October 2016<sup>2</sup> and the front page of Glamorgan Gazette newspaper the following day. Information on the budget also featured in members' columns in local publications.

A three week radio campaign on Bridge FM was undertaken to create awareness of the budget consultation and encourage members of the public to take part via the online survey and/or attend a community engagement event. Bridge FM also placed a link to the budget

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/darker-dirtier-streets--how-12039518#ICID=FB-Wales-glam>

consultation document on the front page of their website and promoted the day and evening events throughout the campaign. All information was made available on the Bridgend County Borough Council website via the consultation webpages or by visiting [www.bridgend.gov.uk/future](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/future).

### 3.4 Member's budget workshop

Ten of the 54 councillors attended the Member's budget workshop on 30 November 2016. The workshop was designed for councillors to experience using the budget survey and response cards. Councillors were then asked to discuss the most disputed outcomes from the presentation and share their collective opinions on how the council could save money and create income.

The event was carefully scheduled for the same day as a council meeting with the aim of increasing member attendance. However, the turnout was the lowest for the last three years, and further work will be undertaken to better understand and mitigate reasons for poor attendance at future years' events.

### 3.5 The budget survey

The online survey included an interactive tool designed to give respondents the ability to allocate the council's budget in relation to the specific budget reductions proposed. The tool used sliders to allow respondents to alter each budget, which triggered positive and negative consequences designed to increase understanding of the impact of making changes to the council overall. A qualitative section within the survey allowed respondents to suggest how the council can save money and create income.

The survey was available on the council's website and promoted through all internal and external emails sent from and to council staff via a footer encouraging readers to visit [www.bridgend.gov.uk/future](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/future). A small image was also placed on the front page of the website and intranet homepage linking directly to the consultation page.

### 3.6 Youth survey

For the first time, a bespoke youth survey was created using a largely image based design in order to attract a younger audience. There were 15 questions selected from the standard online budget survey relating to areas that would potentially impact on a younger audience. All questions were optional and written in as simple a way as possible to maximise understanding.

For the first time, a bespoke survey was designed for youth engagement and made available online between 8 November and 1 December 2016. Responses were invited via direct email to all head teachers, administrative inboxes and third sector/voluntary organisations on 8 November, and reminder emails were sent on 17 November 2016. Despite this proactive approach, we had a low response rate of 46, which is an area that could be built upon next year.

The third sector network used consisted of front line youth support services provided through the voluntary sector. These are provisions working with young people aged 8-25 both through day and evening time. The youth council distribution list is made up of current members, but previous members were also made aware of the survey.

The survey link was tweeted to active school twitter accounts (36) and ten youth groups for additional promotion. A Facebook advert which specifically targeted young people in the county borough was also used to promote the youth survey.

### **3.7 Community engagement workshops**

Three community engagement workshops, led by members of the Corporate Management Board, were undertaken across Bridgend County Borough, namely at Caerau Community Centre, Brynteg Comprehensive School in Bridgend town and Porthcawl Rugby Club. The events were all conducted through the support of other community groups to encourage a higher attendance than in previous years. Attendees answered questions during the presentation using response cards; a participant worksheet also accompanied the response card to collate personal and qualitative data. Engagement events followed the pattern of the qualitative section of the online budget survey, allowing individuals to add to their presentation responses or suggest alternatives.

### **3.8 Community engagement stands**

Ten community engagement stands were arranged across five locations in Bridgend County Borough, namely Sainsbury's (Sarn), Tesco Extra (Bridgend), John Street (Porthcawl), Maesteg Market and Bridgend Market. All engagement stands were manned between 11:00 – 15:00 unless stated otherwise. During the events, passers-by were invited to take part in a small straw poll coin game to determine whether they would support or reject three proposed service reductions. Comment cards, event sign up forms, paper surveys and business cards directing recipients to the online survey were also made available at the stand.

### **3.9 Posters**

Posters promoting engagement events and the budget survey (including the incentives for completing the survey) were circulated to the library service for use in their 12 branches, local PACT co-ordinators and county borough councillors. Organisations including University of the Third Age, Caerau Community Centre, Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF), Bridgend Business Forum (BBF), and the Bridgend Youth Council also received promotional posters.

## 4. Response rate

In total, there were 2,533 interactions totalling 1.8 per cent of the Bridgend County Borough Council population. The response rate has been segregated into several areas: consultation survey responses, Citizens' Panel responses, community engagement event presentation responses, comment cards received at community engagement stands and social media interactions.

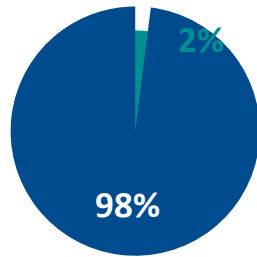
- We received 1,630 survey responses in total (1,210 online submissions and 334 paper versions). Of these, 832 were received from members of the Citizens' Panel (498 online submissions and 334 paper versions) and we received 46 responses to the youth version of the survey. The remaining 86 responses were received at the three community engagement events (76 attendees) and elected members' meeting (10 attendees).
- There was one difference when analysing results by male and female respondents. When considering automating services, women did not support the proposal with just over one in three females selecting agree (36% agree, 49% disagree) in comparison to nearly half of men (46% agree, 38% disagree).
- There were 262 individual interactions at public community engagement stands across the county borough and we received 125 comment cards. The engagement stands also resulted in 453 counter game interactions, whilst 86 interactions came out of the engagement workshops.
- During the consultation period, there were 518 interactions on our social media channels. This includes two social media question and answer sessions, where 123 interactions were recorded on Twitter and Facebook.
- No comments were received by letter, email or telephone call.

Method	Detail	#	%
Shaping Bridgend's Future survey	Online responses	666	26.3%
	Offline responses	0	0.0%
Youth survey	Online responses	46	1.8%
Citizens' Panel survey	Online responses	498	19.7%
	Offline responses	334	13.2%
Community engagement events	Caerau Community Centre	10	0.4%
	Brynteg Comprehensive School	14	0.6%
	Porthcawl Rugby Club	52	2.1%
	Members' workshop	10	0.4%
Engagement stands	Ten engagement stands	262	10.3%
Social media Q&A	Corporate Twitter and Facebook	123	4.9%
Social media interactions	Corporate Twitter and Facebook	518	20.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,533</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5. How effective was the consultation?

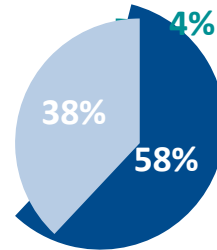
The budget consultation was conducted over an eight week period in which a range of marketing methods were used to create awareness of the consultation and encourage members of the public to engage with the council. The social demographic data reflects a good cross section of the county borough's population (1,464 respondents lived in Bridgend County Borough and 32 outside the area).

Are you a resident of the County Borough?



■ No

Do you have a caring responsibility for a child?

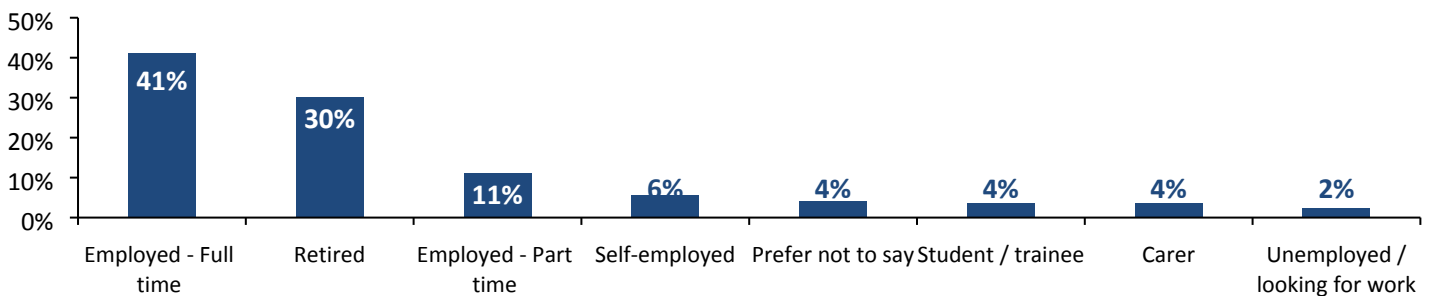


■ PNTS ■ No ■ Yes

In total, 1,496 respondents confirmed their residency status. Almost all (98%) identified they were currently living within the county borough with the remaining four per cent residing elsewhere. Of the 1,380 responses to the 'Do you have a caring responsibility for a child?' question, two in five (38%) identified themselves as caring for a child with approaching three in five (58%) stating the opposite, the remaining four per cent preferred not to say.

Two in five (41%) of the respondents to the survey identified themselves as working full time, one in three (30%) were retired, followed by 12 per cent who were employed part-time. Six per cent of respondents classified themselves as self-employed.

Employment status





Age	Shaping Bridgend's Future survey	Citizens' Panel	Youth survey	Total
Under 18	5	0	26	31
18 - 24	18	3	0*	21
25 - 34	146	37	0*	183
35 - 44	153	74	0*	227
45 - 54	181	113	0*	294
55 - 64	122	180	0*	302
65 - 74	42	157	0*	199
75+	7	107	0*	114
Prefer not to say	7	8	3	18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>29*</b>	<b>1,389</b>

\*17 respondents identified themselves as 18+

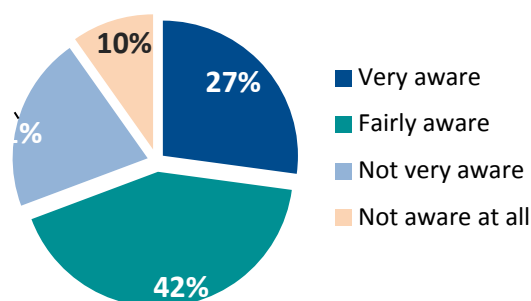
The data collection methods, which include the online survey, a paper survey, the Citizens' Panel and a community engagement participation form, were all developed using plain English to maximise understanding. These response methods were designed to give a consistency to the survey across multiple platforms.

Data validation measures have been undertaken to ensure that the same respondent could not submit more than one response by cross comparing the consultation response details with the Citizens' Panel respondent details. A sample of 1,630 is robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of  $\pm 2.03$  per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level on an observed statistic of 50 per cent. Thus, we can be 95 per cent confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, if a census had been conducted, to within  $\pm 2.03$  per cent of the percentages reported. This means that if the total adult population of Bridgend had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50 per cent was observed, we can be 95 per cent confident that the actual figure lies between 47.97 per cent and 52.03 per cent.

Seven in ten (69%) respondents stated they were either fairly or very aware of the current financial situation the council is in. One in ten (10%) said they were not aware at all, and the remaining two in ten (21%) selected 'not very aware'.

Overall, respondents perceive themselves slightly less aware of the financial situation in comparison to when the question was asked last year, but more so than 2013 – 14 when the question was first asked.

**Awareness levels of the council's current financial situation**



Awareness of council financial position	2016 – 17 (%)	2015 – 16 (%)	2014 – 15 (%)	2013-14 (%)
Not aware at all	10	11	0	13
Not very aware	21	19	13	22
Fairly aware	42	39	36	40
Very aware	27	31	50	23
<b>Summary: Not aware</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Summary: Aware</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>No. of responses (n)</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>721</b>

## 6. Headline figures

- 6.1 Automating council services was the only proposal to receive more respondents disagreeing (44%) than agreeing (42%). The older the respondents, the less likely they were to support the proposal. Those aged under 44 supported the proposal.
- 6.2 Collaborating with other authorities was the most supported proposal with almost nine in ten (86%) agreeing with its introduction. This was closely followed by reviewing our arts, culture and libraries partnership (85%), reviewing vigilance on residents' eligibility for council tax discounts or exemptions (77%) and investing in property (77%).
- 6.3 Three in four (77%) respondents believed certain services should be protected over others. These were care for older people (86%), schools and social services (81%) and waste and recycling (64%). Areas selected to receive a reduction in order to protect other services were libraries, arts and adult education (48%), sports and recreational services (39%) and environment health and development (27%).
- 6.4 Streamlining staff, resources and procedures (18%), reviewing staff wages (14%) and merging with neighbouring authorities or town councils (14%) were the three most popular suggestions for saving money.
- 6.5 Investing in property (17%), enforcement charges (16%) and using in-house skill to provide paid for services (15%) were the three most popular suggestions for making money.

## 7. Question and analysis - consultation survey

Section seven of the report looks at the questions asked in the consultation survey – with 1,630 respondents in total. This includes 46 youth survey completions which have been included below (where stated).

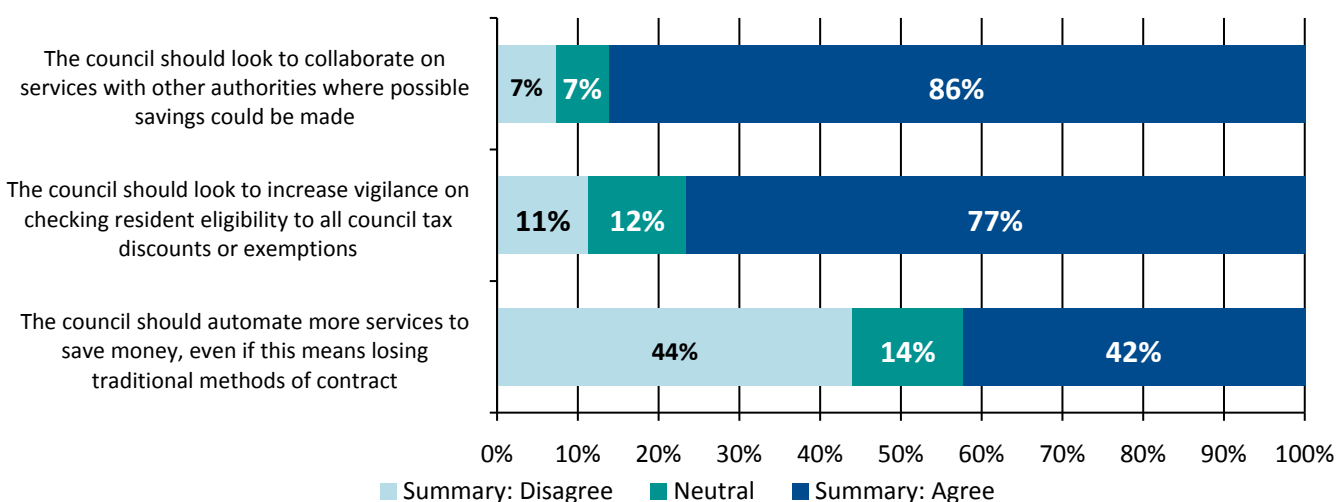
### 7.1 Please select a language to begin the survey.

Respondents to the consultation survey were initially asked which language they would like to complete the survey in. Overall, 98.9 per cent of respondents selected English with one per cent selecting to complete the survey in Welsh.

Language	#	%
English	1,612	98.9
Welsh	18	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 7.2 Corporate priorities

#### 7.2.1 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Of the three statements, respondents were most supportive of the council working in collaboration with other local authorities in order to seek potential savings with almost nine in ten (86%) respondents agreeing overall. Seven per cent disagreed with the suggestion. The majority of respondents (77%) also supported increasing vigilance on the misuse of council tax discounts or exemptions. More residents (44 per cent) opposed the digitalisation of projects where traditional methods of contact may be lost, 42 per cent supported the suggestion.

When considering automating services, further analysis into the demographics revealed that after the age of 45, support steadily falls:

Age category	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75+
Support (%)	42.7	39.1	33.0	27.0

Support is defined as the number of respondents selecting to implement or increase the proposal against the number of respondents who oppose it by selecting a reduced introduction or not introducing the proposal at all. Whilst disabled respondents were more

likely to say no to the proposal (52.7%), it is important to note that those stating they were disabled were also typically older.

By gender, women did not support the proposal, with just over one in three females selecting agree (36% agree, 49.4% disagree) in comparison to nearly half of men (46% agree, 38.4% disagree). Carers were more likely to disagree (52%) than agree (36%).

Those working full time were the only professional status category to support the proposal (52.9%).

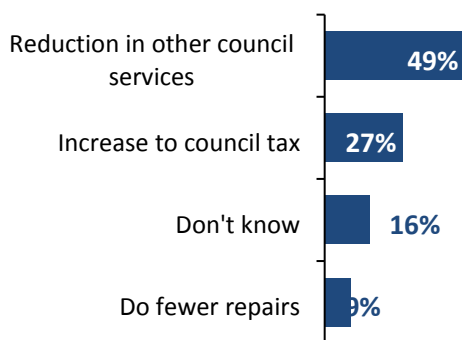
### 7.2.2 Highway repairs

Options	#	%
Increase day time operating hours	379	24.2
Focus on cost efficiency	960	61.2
Increase night time operating hours	229	14.6

Respondents supported the concept of focusing on cost efficiency (61.2%) regardless of the environmental impact.

For respondents selecting ‘increase night time operating hours’, a further question was asked regarding where the necessary savings should come from.

#### How to offset increased cost of highway maintenance



Of the 229 respondents selecting to ‘increase night time operating hours’, 200 residents completed the proceeding question. The most popular response to generate income to support the additional cost of night-time highway maintenance was to reduce other services the council currently provides (49%), followed by an increase to council tax (27%). Doing fewer repairs was the least popular option with nine per cent selecting this.

### 7.2.3 Current level of service funding

All respondents were asked if they believe the council should protect the level of funding for any of its service areas over others in the future. Those who agreed with this were subsequently asked which services they would reduce in order to protect services important to them. Three in four (77%) respondents believed certain services should be protected over others.

Should the council protect certain services?	#	%
Yes	1,136	76.6
No	347	23.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,483</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Which service areas would you protect or reduce?

Respondents who selected 'yes' to protecting certain services over others were then asked which particular areas they would like to protect and which areas they would like to reduce.



Care of older people, schools and social services, and waste and recycling are the three most protected services. Meanwhile, libraries, arts and adult education, sports and recreational services, and environmental health and development are the most reduced services within the consultation. There were 24 'protect' responses selecting other, detailed below.

Protect: Other (1)	#	Protect: Other (2)	#
Cleaning (including verges)	4	Climate change resilience	1
Care for all rather than prioritising individuals	1	Music provision	1
School transport	1	Cemeteries	1
Regeneration (including employability support)	1	Welsh language services / Welsh education	1
Substance misuse	1	Public toilets	1
Animal welfare	1	Help for disabled people	1
Local business	1	Adult education	1
Homelessness	1	Local theatres	1
More rising three's provision	1	Outsourced services improving on council's capability	1
Energy improvements	1		

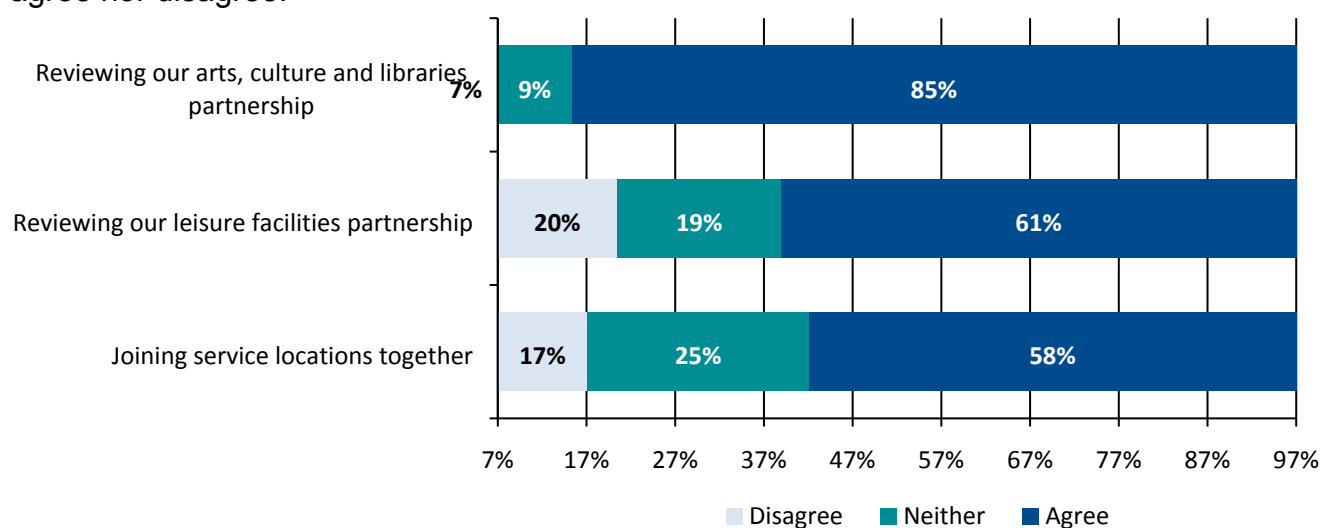
There were 81 'reduce' responses selecting other, detailed below.

Reduce: Other (1)	#
Cut highest council earners	16
Cllr wage and allowances	14
Improve inefficient processes	8
Administration	7
Reduce / remove external contractors	7
Reduce internal staff	6
Do not reduce anything	5
Reduce council staff benefits (i.e. parties and free meals)	5
Any new infrastructure needs careful consideration (i.e. river walk bridge)	3
Welsh translation	3
Continue reduction in services	2
Reduce street lighting in non-populated areas by 50 per cent	2
Review salary pension options / long term absence	2
Ask internal staff	1
Residents purchase their own black bags	1
Charge companies for road works	1
Cllr wage cap at £35,000	1

Reduce: Other (2)	#
Corporate directorate	1
Drug abuse	1
English medium schools	1
Estate properties	1
External cleaning of council offices	1
Focus on services for majority not minority (i.e. remove mobile libraries)	1
Give officers greater responsibility	1
Incorporate adult education into schools / youth services	1
Increase council tax	1
More scrutiny of benefits (i.e. council tax)	1
Reduce architecture (i.e. Porthcawl 'Mermaid')	1
Reduce funding spent in the town centre	1
Reduce less essential services	1
Sack anyone earning over £30,000	1
Sell empty buildings	1
Stop elected member claims	1
Traffic wardens	1

### 7.2.4 Working with our partners

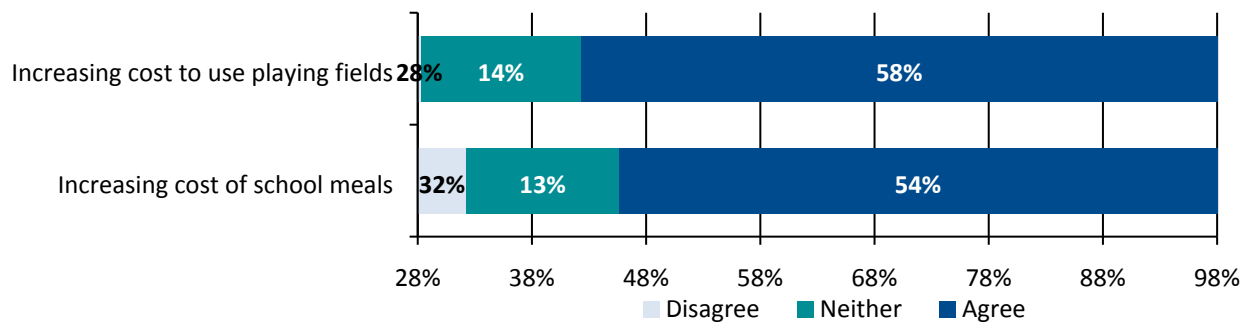
The majority of respondents were most supportive of reviewing the arts, culture and libraries partnership with over eight in ten (84%) supporting a review. Seven per cent opposed this. Joining service locations together was supported by the majority (58%), almost two in ten (17%) opposed this with the remaining one in four (25%) selecting neither agree nor disagree.



There were no significant differences when analysing the three questions by demographics.

### 7.2.5 Subsidies

Both questions regarding subsidies were supported by the majority of respondents. Just over half (54%) agreed with increasing the school meal subsidy against one in three (32%) selecting disagree. Increasing the cost of using playing fields was supported by 58 per cent, whilst 28 per cent disagreed.



There is only one significant difference when analysing the two questions by demographics. Although both sub-groups agree with the proposal, playing fields are more supported by respondents without children (61%), than respondents with children (53%).

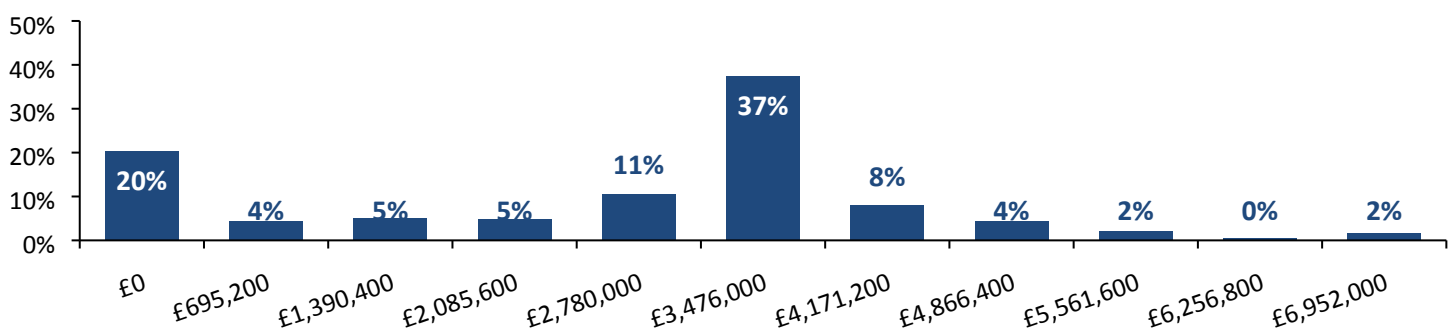
### 7.3 Budget reductions

#### 7.3.1 Removing the protection of school budgets

Rank	N	Cut elsewhere (%)	Reduce less than proposed (%)	Introduce proposal (%)	Reduce more than proposed (%)	Av
3	1,465	20	25	37	17	£2,627,677

The proposed reduction of £3,476,000 was supported by 37 per cent of respondents. 20 per cent suggested making the cuts elsewhere, whereas 25 per cent supported introducing a reduction in the current provision, but lower than the proposed fund. The remaining 17 per cent of respondents suggested reducing funding by more than the proposed amount.

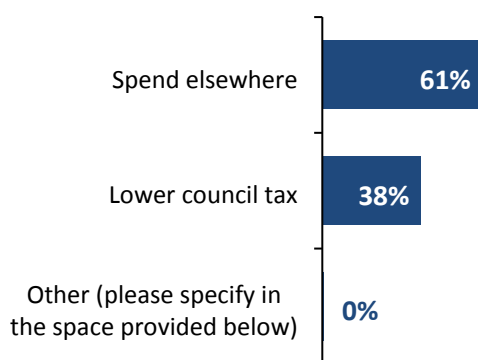
Responses to changes to school budgets



Respondents aged 45+ were more likely to support the proposal. In fact, support steadily rose from 58 per cent for 45 – 54 year olds to 69 per cent for those aged 75+. Similarly, those identifying themselves as ‘retired’ were more likely to support the proposal (66%) against an average of 54 per cent overall. In total, 44 per cent of parents supported the proposal against 61 per cent of respondents without a caring responsibility for children.

#### School budget – reducing more than the proposed budget

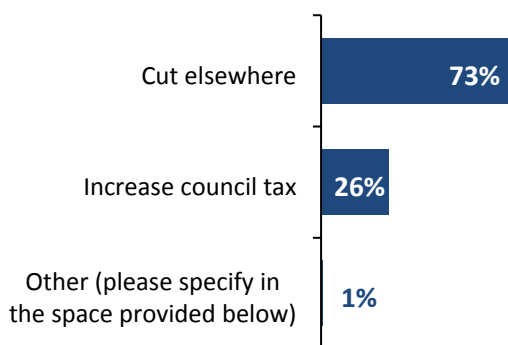
### School budget - Reducing more than proposed



Of the 18 per cent who selected to reduce more than the proposed funding, each respondent was subsequently asked to select how they would spend the saving they had made. Spending elsewhere was the most popular option with six in ten (61%) selecting this. Just under one in five (38%) would like to see the reduction result in lower council tax.

### School budget – introduce at a reduced amount or cut elsewhere

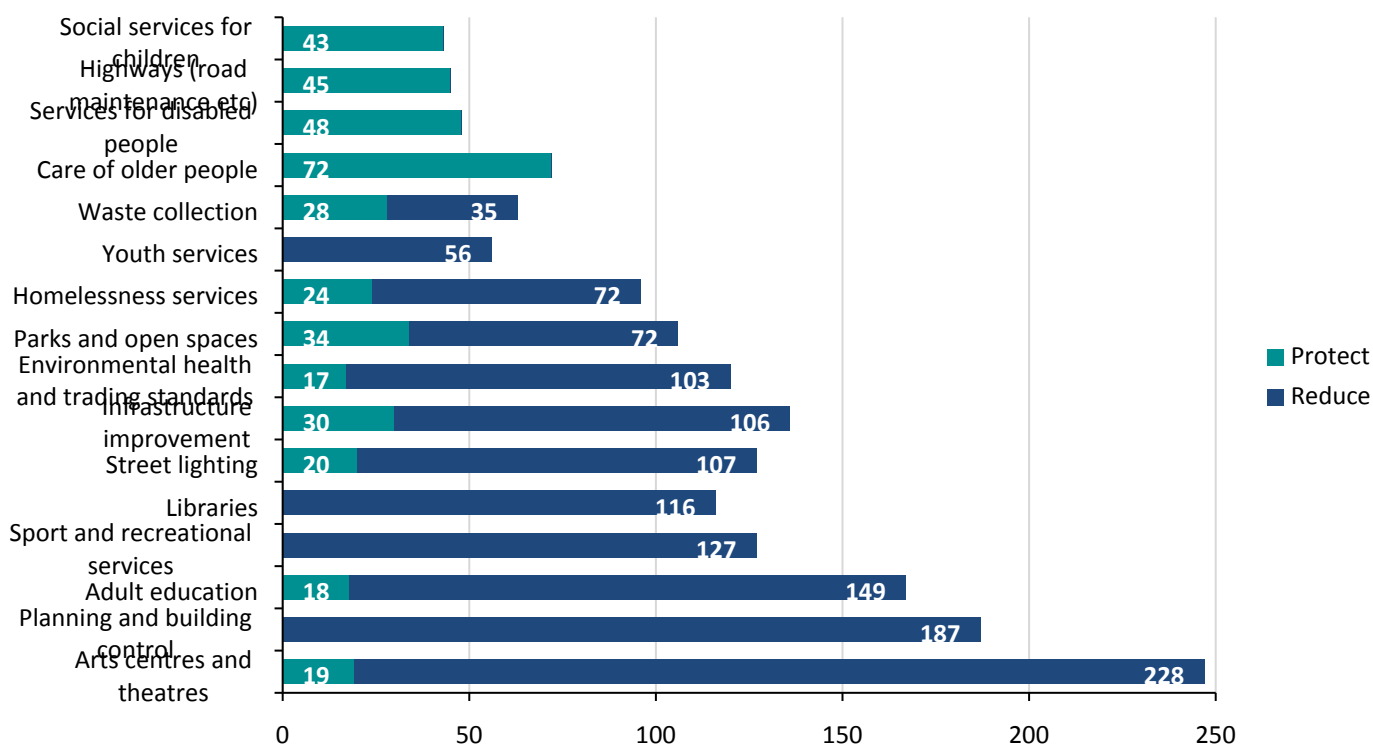
#### School budget overview



Almost three in four (73%) of respondents who selected reducing the proposed school budget suggested balancing the budget by cutting services elsewhere.

Increasing council tax was supported by 26 per cent of respondents. The remaining one per cent suggested making the reductions through other means.

### Service areas against the school budget proposal – protect or reduce





398 areas overall. Care for older people was regarded as the most popular selection with over half selecting this option (50.7%).

Respondents who had suggested making the cut elsewhere in relation to the school budget proposal were asked where they would make this reduction. There were 389 respondents selecting 1,358 areas overall. The most popular choice was art centres and theatres with 228 (16.8%) responses. This was followed by planning and building control (187 or 13.8%) and adult education (149 or 11.0%).

### 7.3.2 Review of cleaning in the community

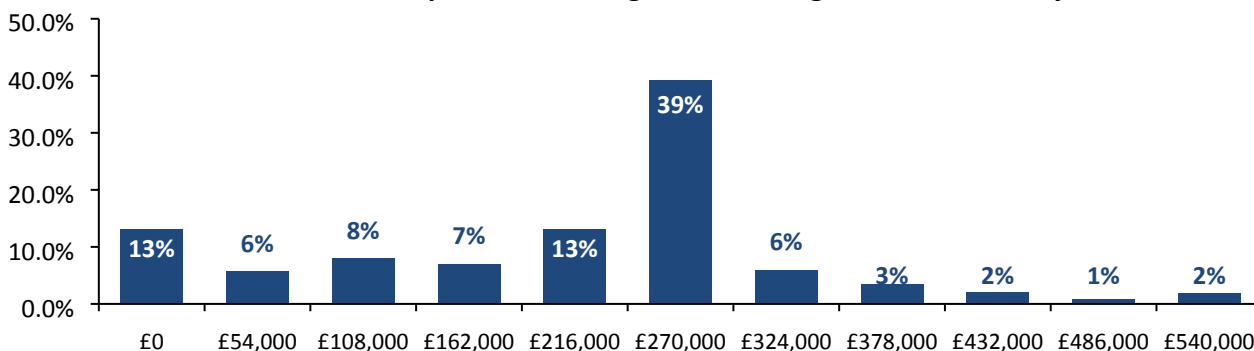
Rank	N	Cut elsewhere (%)	Reduce less than proposed (%)	Introduce proposal (%)	Reduce more than proposed (%)	Av
4	1,445	13	34	39	14	£210,628

We received a total of 1,445 responses to the review of cleaning in the community. The proposed reduction of £270,000 was supported by 39 per cent of respondents against 13 per cent who suggested making cuts elsewhere.

In total, 53 per cent agreed with the proposal or suggested increasing the reduction, whilst the remaining 34 per cent suggested introducing the proposal at a lower level.

The most popular response was to introduce the proposal. However, the average sum proposed by residents was £60,000 lower at £210,628.

Responses to changes to cleaning in the community



When considering responses by demographics, 45 – 54 (50%) and 55 – 64 (53%) year olds were the two age categories not to support the proposal. Similarly, professional status had a variety of responses with self-employed (54%), unemployed (56%) and students (52%) more likely to select less than the proposed £270,000 reduction.

### Cleaning in the community – reducing more than the proposed reduction

#### Cleaning in the community

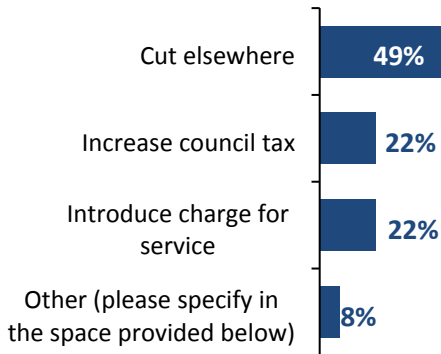


Of the 14 per cent who selected to reduce more than the proposed funding, each respondent was asked to select how they would spend the saving they had made.

Spending elsewhere was the most popular option with seven in ten (69%) selecting this. Three in five (59%) would like to see the reduction result in lower council tax.

### Cleaning in the community – introduce at reduced amount or cut elsewhere

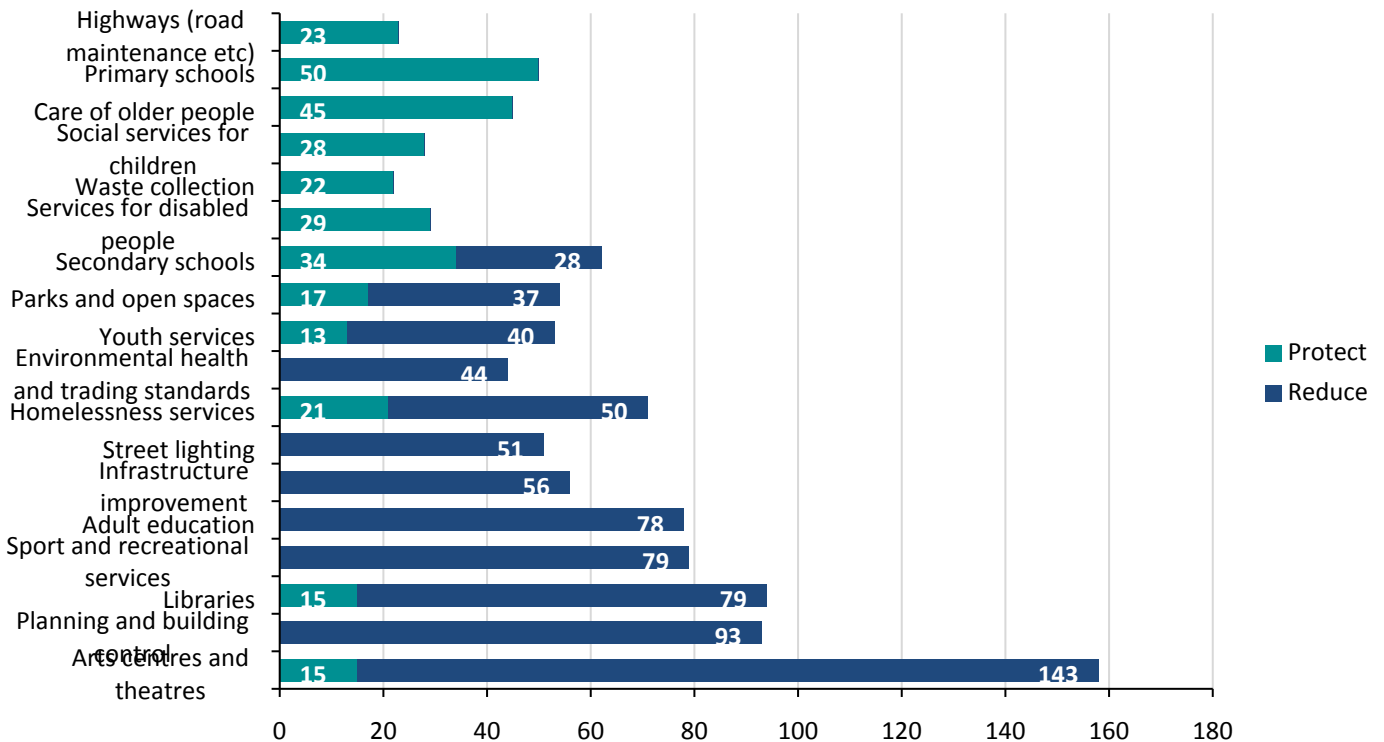
#### Cleaning in the community overview



Almost half (49%) of respondents who selected reducing the proposed cleaning in the community budget suggested balancing the budget by cutting services elsewhere.

22 per cent selected increasing council tax, whilst introducing a charge for the service received 22 per cent of responses. The remaining 8 per cent suggested making reductions through other means.

#### Service areas against cleaning in the community proposal – protect or reduce



Respondents who had suggested making savings in relation to the cleaning in the community proposal were asked where they would spend this saving.

Primary schools were regarded as the most popular selection with 50 (39%) individual responses. Care for older people 45 (35%) and secondary schools 34 (26%) completed the top three areas to spend the saving generated from the proposal.

Respondents who had suggested making the cut elsewhere in relation to the proposal were asked where they would make this reduction. The most popular response to reduce was art centres and theatres with 143 respondents (53%) answering in this way. Planning and

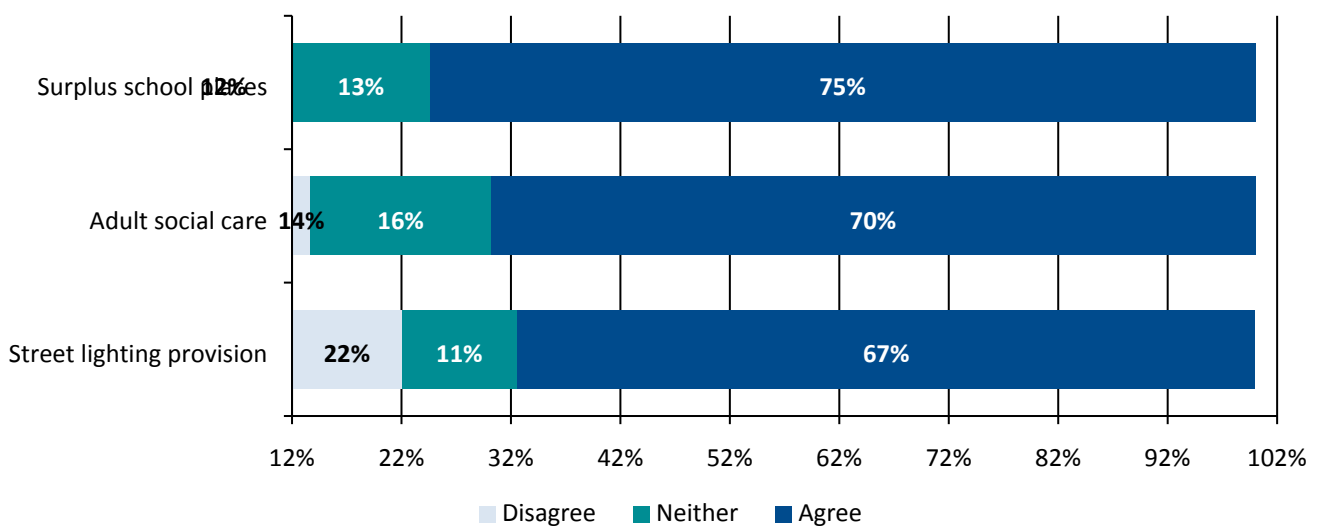
building control was selected by one in three respondents (34%). Libraries (29%) and sports and recreational services (29%) were both selected 79 times.

### 7.4 Proposed reductions

Regarding proposed reductions, a second section offered respondents to simply comment between strongly disagree and strongly agree to three proposals. All three proposals were supported by the majority of respondents.

Three in four (75%) respondents supported the concept of reviewing school surplus places with 50 per cent selecting agree and the remaining 25 per cent selecting strongly agree. Of the 12 per cent disagreeing with the proposal, four per cent strongly disagreed and eight per cent selected disagree. The remaining 13 per cent selected neither agree nor disagree.

Adult social care was agreeable to 70 per cent of respondents whilst street lighting was the least supported of three with 67 per cent of respondents accepting the proposed saving of up to £500,000 by reducing street lighting where it is safe to do so. There were no significant differences when analysing the three questions by demographics. Three in four (75%) of parents supported the review of surplus school places.



## 7.5 Investment proposals

### 7.5.1 Investment in property

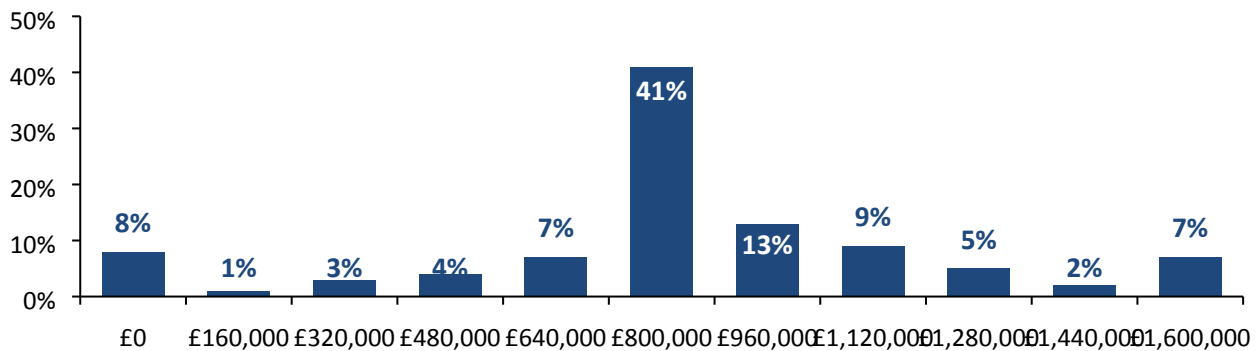
Rank	N	Do not invest (%)	Invest less than proposed (%)	Introduce proposal (%)	Invest more than proposed (%)	Av
2	1,395	8	15	41	36	£830,509

In total, there were 1,395 responses to the investment in property proposal. The proposed return of investment of £800,000 was supported by 41 per cent of respondents. Eight per cent suggested not making the investment at all. The average proposed income to generate was £830,509.

Nearly four in five (77%) suggested introducing the proposal or creating more income from property investment than the proposal suggested.

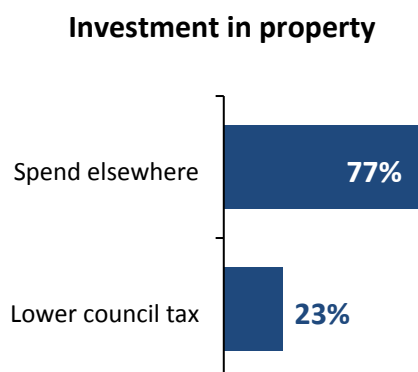
One in six (15%) proposed introducing the proposal with a lower investment.

Responses to investment in property



Those aged 25 – 34 (85%) and 75+ (82%) were most likely to support the investment against 45 – 54 year olds who had the lowest level of support at (72%).

### Investment in property – creating more than the proposed income generation

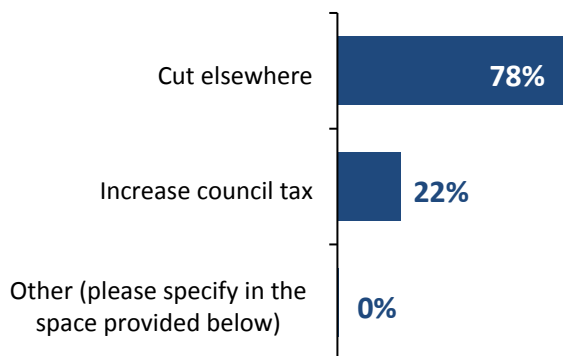


Of the 36 per cent who selected to create more income than the proposal suggests, each respondent was asked to select how they would invest the additional revenue they had made.

Spending elsewhere was the most popular option with almost four in five (77%) selecting this. Approaching one in four (23%) would like to see the reduction result in lower council tax.

## Investment in property – Introduce with reduced income or do not invest

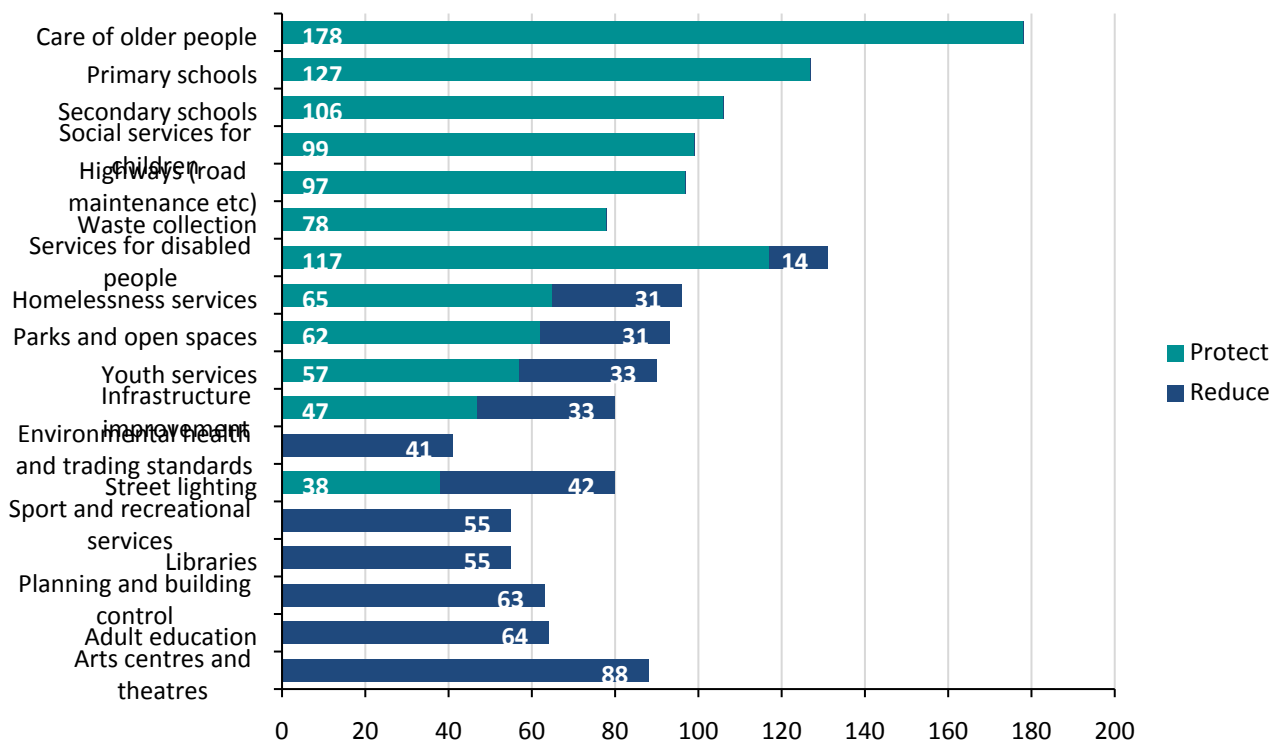
### Invest in property overview



Four in five (78%) of respondents who selected reducing the proposed investment income suggested balancing the budget by cutting services elsewhere.

Increasing council tax received a response of one in five with 22 per cent selecting this option. Only one respondent selected 'other'.

## Service areas against the investment in property proposal – protect or reduce

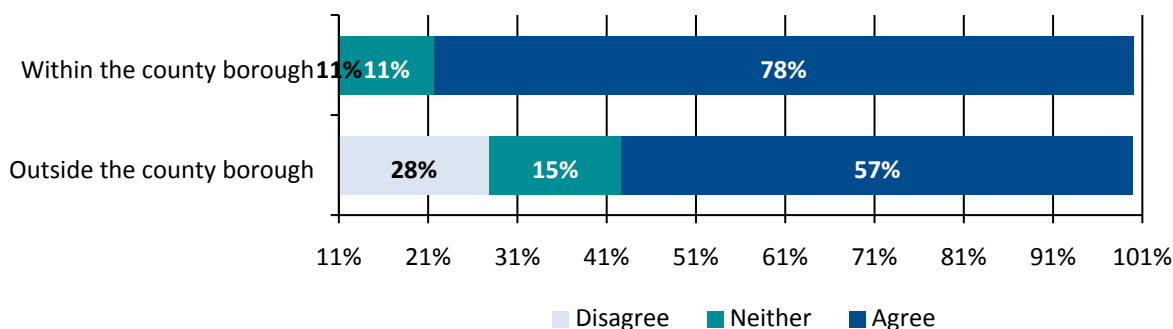


Respondents who had suggested increasing the level of income generated from property investment were asked where they would spend this saving.

Care for older people was regarded as the most popular selection with 178 (49%) individual responses, followed by primary schools 127 (35%) and services for disabled people 177 (34%).

Respondents who had suggested a lower level of investment or none at all were asked where they would generate the savings required as a result of the loss of potential income. The most popular response was to reduce art centres and theatres, with 88 respondents

(50%) answering in this way. Adult education (64) and planning and building control (63) were both selected by 36 per cent of respondents.



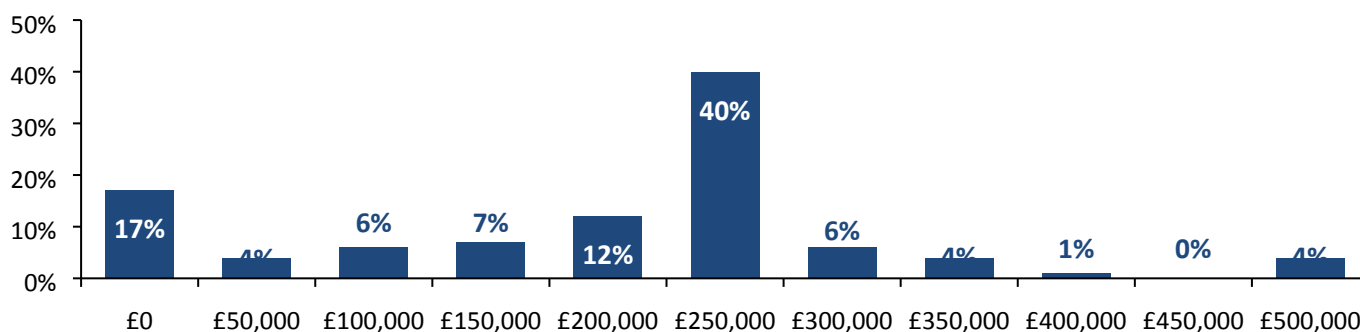
Respondents were asked to what degree they would support the concept that investment should only occur within the county borough and similarly, to what degree they would support the concept that investment should only occur outside the county borough. Investment in the county borough was supported by almost eight in ten respondents (78%), whilst investment outside the county borough was supported by six in ten respondents (57%).

### 7.4.2 Community action fund

Rank	N	Do not invest (%)	Invest less than proposed (%)	Introduce proposal (%)	Invest more than proposed (%)	Av
1	1,398	17	29	40	15	£195,520

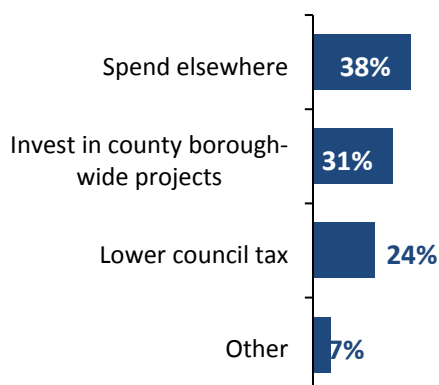
In total, there were 1,398 responses to the investment in community action fund proposal. The proposed investment of £250,000 was supported by 40 per cent of respondents. Nearly one in five (17%) suggested not to make the investment at all, 55 per cent suggested introducing the proposal or creating more income for the fund than the proposal suggested, and almost one in three (29%) suggested investing less than the proposed £250,000. In total, the average suggested spend was £195,520, which would result in a budget of £3,760 per councillor.

#### Responses to community action fund investment



## Community action fund – invest less than the proposed investment

### Community action fund



Of the 46 per cent who selected to introduce the community action fund at a reduced investment, or not at all, each respondent was asked to select how they would invest the additional saving they have generated.

Spending elsewhere was the most popular option with two in five (41%) selecting this. One in three (33%) would like to see the money invested into county borough-wide projects. One in four (26%) selected to lower council tax.

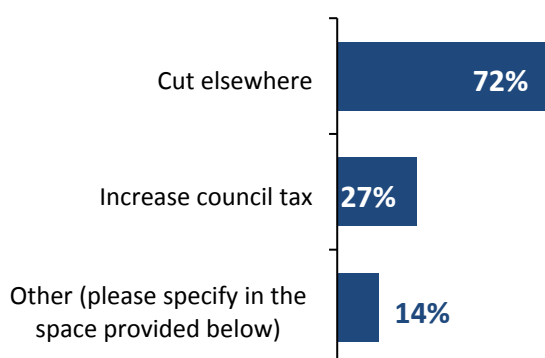
Seven per cent selected 'other'.

Other	#
Education	5
People with disabilities	3
Offset against other deficits identified	3
Town centre investment	2
Fund voluntary organisations	2
Social services	2
Invest in environment	1
Staff reduction	1
Energy management	1
Fix the roads properly	1

Other	#
Local environment	1
Children with learning difficulties	1
Fundraise instead	1
Invest in Welsh services	1
Adult social care	1
Purchase buildings	1
Introduce bidding system for tenders	1
Project for older people	1
Cleaning	1

## Community action fund – Introduce with an increased investment

### Invest in property overview



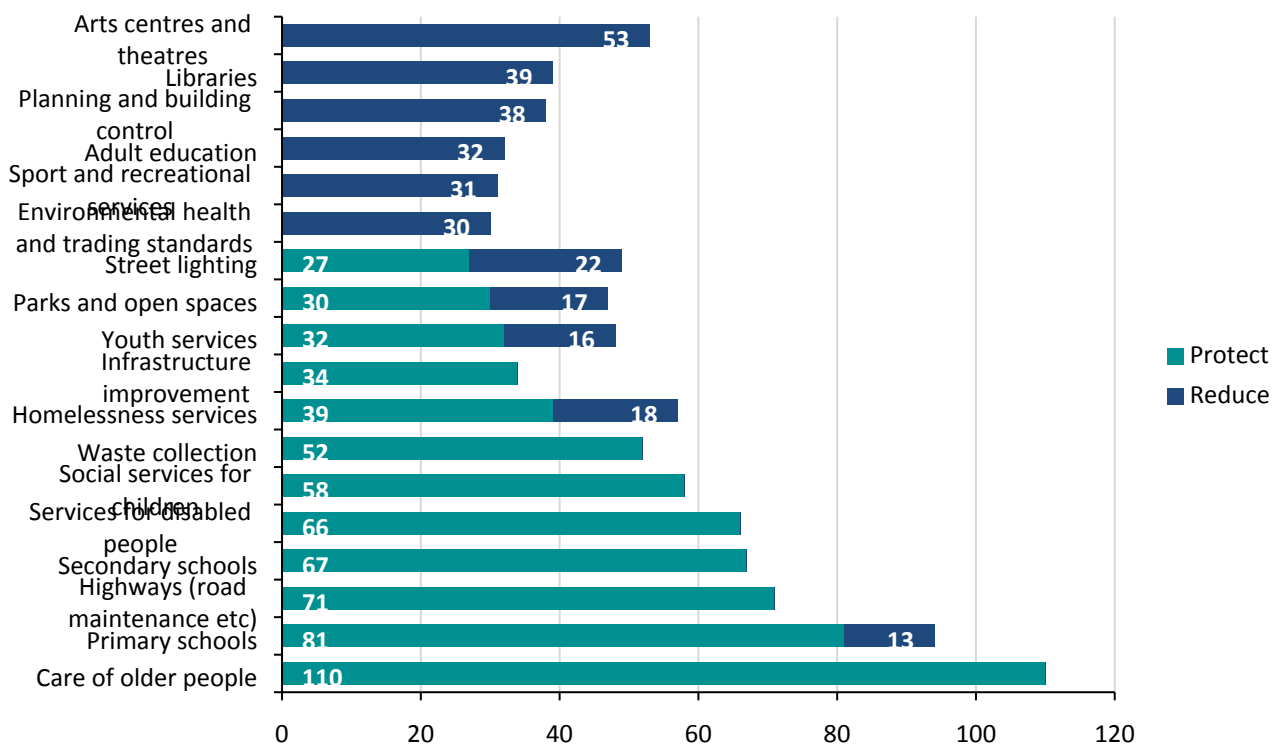
Seven in ten (72%) of respondents who selected increasing the community action fund suggested creating the additional investment by cutting other services.

Increasing council tax received a response of one in four with 27 per cent selecting this option.

Over one in ten (14%) selected 'other'.

Other	#	Other	#
Better use of resources	3	Cut education budget	1
Reduce officer salaries	3	Dissolve Welsh Assembly	1
Cut senior officer salaries	3	Improve tourism (i.e. Caravan park)	1
Improve procurement	2	Stop investing in the town centre	1
Cut spending on the town centre	1	Councillor reduction	1
Cut corporate directorate	1	Borrow money	1
Cut street lighting	1	Means test council tenants	1

### Service areas against the community action fund – protect or reduce



Respondents who had suggested decreasing the level of investment for the community action fund were asked where they would spend this saving.

Care for older people was regarded as the most popular selection with 110 (49%) individual responses, followed by primary schools 81 (36%) and highway maintenance 71 (32%).

Respondents who had suggested increasing the level of investment were asked where they would generate the savings required. The most popular response was art centres and theatres, with 53 respondents (43%) answering in this way. Libraries (39) and planning and building control (38) were the only three areas to receive over 30 per cent selection rate with 32 per cent and 31 per cent respectively.



## 7.5 Qualitative responses

Each response received from all methods across the survey were read and subsequently themed. Each theme was then measured to provide a quantitative figure to the qualitative responses.

### 7.5.1 Saving money

In total, there were 839 suggestions associated to this question. There were an additional 51 comments not relevant to the question asked. Respondents were asked to put forward suggestions on how the council could save money in the future. The most popular answers were:

Key themes	#	%
Streamline staff, resources and procedures	159	17.9
Review staff wages, especially senior management	128	14.4
Merge/amalgamate services with neighbouring authorities or town councils	125	14.0
Improve management of staff/meetings/working practices/systems	109	12.2
Reduce councillor salaries and expenses	105	11.8
Reduce number of councillors	102	11.5
Engage and educate residents to create community responsibility	81	9.1
Spend money more efficiently	72	8.1

The two most referenced themes both related to internal processes regarding staff and make up a combined total of one in three (32%) of the comments received. Merging services with neighbouring authorities or town councils totalled 14 per cent of comments received.

### 7.5.2 Making money

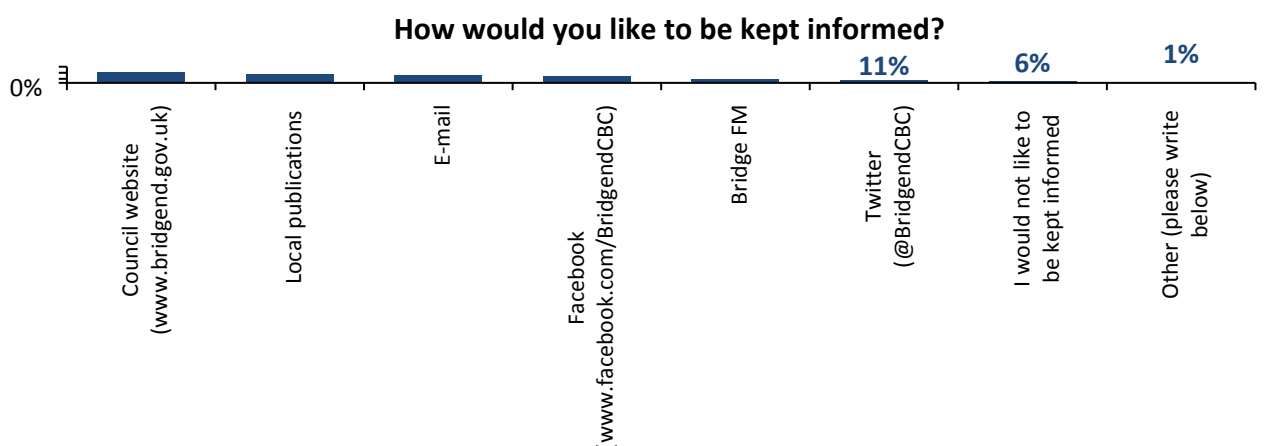
After completing the qualitative question on saving money, respondents were then asked to suggest how the council could potentially make money. In total, there were 568 responses to the question. There were an additional 168 comments not relevant to the question asked. The most popular response supported the proposal to invest in property (17%), followed by generating income through enforcement charges (16%) and using in-house skill to offer a paid service (15%).

Key themes	#	%
Invest in property	80	16.7
Enforcement charges (i.e. fine people for parking, littering)	77	16.1
Use in-house skill to provide paid for services (i.e. gardening)	71	14.8
Greater use and promotion of assets	66	13.8
Invest in tourism	63	13.2
Create a profit from unused land	43	9.0
Market charges for council owned facilities	42	8.8
Review subsidies / charges for all services and increase price marginally	30	6.3

## 7.7 Communications regarding the consultation

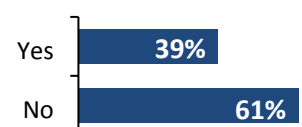
### 7.7.1 How would you like to be kept informed about the council's current financial situation?

This question was a multi-choice question where respondents had the opportunity to select from six promotional options as well as opting to provide a specific response as 'other' or to select 'I would not like to be kept informed'.



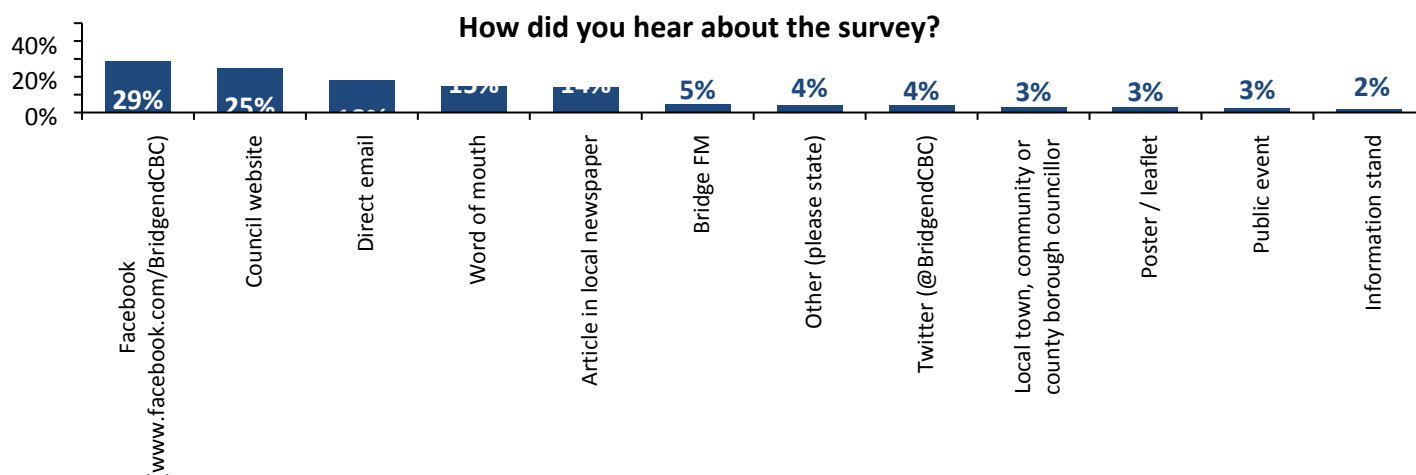
The council's website (52%) was the only method of engagement that was selected by over half of those responding. Local publications (40%) and email (36%) concluded the three most popular methods of interaction. Facebook was the most popular social media platform, with almost one in three (30%) selecting this method. From the 1,584 responses received in relation to the question asking if respondents would like to receive emails on important council changes in the future, two in four (39%) answered positively.

#### Receiving future emails



## 7.7.2 How did you hear about Shaping Bridgend's Future?

Respondents to the survey were asked where they had heard about the consultation in order to inform next year's marketing and engagement plan. Facebook (29%) was the most popular way to find out about the survey, followed by the council website (25%) and direct mail (18%).



## 8. Social media responses

Social media comments received during the survey's live period were also analysed. There were 518 responses to the question. Of those, 116 were not relevant and as such, were removed from the table below. The themes have been divided into four areas: internal council process, communities, proposal comments and miscellaneous.

Internal council process - key themes	#	%
Councillors/management paid too high/cut salaries	64	12.9
Spend money more efficiently/effectively in the county borough and manage budgets better	61	12.3
Transparency of BCBC ie. spending, decisions	42	8.5
BCBC need to listen to and act upon the views of residents / engagement welcomed	27	5.4
Reduce the management tiers in BCBC	25	5.0
Council staff are unproductive and uneducated	13	2.6
Maximise efficiency and remit of staff	12	2.4
BCBC poorly run / have a bad attitude	10	2.0
Merge / collaborate with other councils	6	1.2
Be more innovative with income generation ideas	6	1.2
Reduce the amount of poorly executed works in the county borough	4	0.8
Other	6	1.2

<b>Communities - key themes</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Review waste/recycling provision	55	11.1
Improve street cleaning	27	5.4
Reduce street lighting and car park lights eg. Rhiw and traffic lights	11	2.2
Risk of fly-tipping with reduced waste services	9	1.8
Do not switch off street lights – important for safety	6	1.2
Work in partnership with third/voluntary sectors eg. community groups	5	1.0
Encourage residents/volunteers to look after their communities eg. grass cutting, litter picking, don't drop litter in the first place	4	0.8
Improve transport services eg. increase frequency of buses	3	0.6
Introduce free car parking / later parking	3	0.6
Other	3	0.6

<b>Proposal comments – key themes</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Reduce council tax to reflect service	10	2.0
Happy with reasonable increase to school meals	8	1.6
All council services are important including the ability to access them	7	1.4
Increase to school dinner costs could lead to parents changing to packed lunches which could impact on the budget and jobs.	6	1.2
Don't penalise working parents with increasing costs for their children	5	1.0
Will the free school meal entitlement be protected	4	0.8
Review/improve/protect the provision of services for the elderly and disabled	4	0.8
Primary and secondary school meals should differ in cost	2	0.4
Other	3	0.6

<b>Miscellaneous - key themes</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Civic office building maintenance too timely and/or expensive/inappropriate	19	3.8
Reduce rates/rents to attract more businesses to town shops	6	1.2
Invest in tourism	5	1.0
Provision for youngsters is vital eg. youth clubs, special needs	4	0.8
Review/improve the arts provision within the county borough	3	0.6
Sell/rent council land/assets	2	0.4
Other	2	0.4

## 9. Budget Overview

Each of the proposals have been outlined below combining the totals of either introducing or increasing the current proposal, introducing the proposal at a reduced level or to not introduce the proposal at all.

Rank	Proposal	Introduce or increase proposal (%)	Introduce at lower level (%)	Do not introduce (%)
1	Invest in property	77	15	8
2	Invest in community action fund	55	29	17
3	Remove school budget protection	54	25	20
4	Reduce cleaning in the community	53	34	13

The table below has budget reductions where the response options varied between strongly disagree and strongly agree.

Rank	Proposal	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)
1	The council should look to collaborate on services with other authorities where possible savings could be made	7	7	86
2	Reviewing our arts, culture and libraries partnership	7	9	85
3	The council should look to increase vigilance on checking resident eligibility to all council tax discounts or exemptions	11	12	77
4	Surplus school places	12	13	75
5	Adult social care reform	14	16	70
6	Street lighting provision	22	11	67
7	Reviewing our leisure facilities partnership	20	19	61
8	Joining service locations together	17	25	58
9	Increasing cost to use playing fields	28	14	58
10	Increasing cost of school meals	32	13	54
11	The council should automate more services to save money, even if this means losing traditional methods of contract	44	14	42

## 10. Conclusion

A response rate of 1,630 to the survey questions is robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of  $\pm 2.03$  per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. This means that if the total population of Bridgend had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50 per cent was observed, we can be 95 per cent confident that the actual figure lies between 47.97 per cent and 52.03 per cent. The response rate to the overall consultation was 2,533 which is a 26 per cent increase on last year's response rate of 1,819.

### 10.1 Prioritising particular services

Three in four (77%) respondents believed certain services should be protected over others. Care for older people (86%), schools and social services (81%) and waste and recycling (64%). The latter has recently had major changes agreed by cabinet which may have impacted on respondents' awareness and tendency to support the area.

Areas selected to receive a reduction in order to protect other services were libraries, arts and adult education (48%), sports and recreational services (39%) and environment health and development (27%).

### 10.2 Budget proposals

14 of the 15 proposals had the majority of support, collaborating services with other authorities was the most supported proposal with approaching nine in ten (86%) agreeing with its introduction. Reviewing our arts, culture and libraries partnership (85%) was the second most supported proposal. Reviewing vigilance on residents' eligibility for council tax discounts or exemptions (77%) this was also one of the most popular areas to reference in the qualitative section by respondents.

The only proposal not to be supported by the majority was the automation of council services. Respondents were informed that agreeing with the proposal could result in the loss of traditional engagement methods. Measuring by demographic revealed a split in ages with those aged 44 or over, where agreeability fell from 43 per cent (45 – 54 year olds) to 27 per cent (aged 75+). Considering ONS data on age in the county borough, 45 per cent of residents (62,509) are aged 44 or over. Thus, further research on the proposal is necessary.

### 10.3 Saving money

Respondents encouraged an internal review of staffing, resources and procedures when asked where money could be saved from (18%). Similarly, 14 per cent suggested reviewing staff wages in particular. The third most popular response supported the proposal to collaborate/merge with neighbouring authorities or town councils (14%).