



Draft Budget Consultation 2023-2024

About the consultation

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's constitution requires the organisation to consult on its draft budget proposals.

Prior to the 2022-2023 budget, consultation had been focussed on inviting comments from the business community and the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, as budget proposals now include changes to a range of services, including making financial savings through reductions in some areas, the Council has increased the promotion of the consultation to reach a wider audience, using a survey format to make it easier for everyone to give their views.

This report provides an overview of this year's process and a summary of the consultation findings.

Key Findings

The consultation received a total of 201 responses, and the majority of budget proposals received a positive response from at least 60% of respondents. However, there were areas where responses were predominantly opposed to the proposed approach.

- The proposal to increase Council Tax was supported by a majority of respondents, receiving 59% of responses in agreement, with 36% opposed and 5% other.
- The majority of Fees and Charges proposals were supported, but increases to garden waste and allotment fees were opposed, and responses were mixed on increases to community centre room hire charges.
- For Service Budget proposals, the reduction in grant funding for some voluntary sector partners was opposed by a substantial majority of respondents (69% disagreement). Views on IT costs around software licensing were also mixed, but other proposals were generally supported.

- For changes to Staffing Costs, all proposals were supported by a majority of respondents.
- Many of the comments received reported on challenges around the cost of living, both on the respondent's own behalf and for others. There was also recognition of the impact of inflation upon costs for the Council and support for adequate funding of key services. A number of comments were concerned with the Council operating efficiently.
- Many comments expressed a desire to see community services and facilities supported, particularly those relating to sports and physical activity, and noted the associated wellbeing benefits.
- Protecting vulnerable persons and those in need was a common sentiment, often accompanied by observations that these should be prioritised, and that costs should be borne by less 'essential areas' or by those most able to pay.

Methodology

The consultation on the draft budget proposals for 2023-2024 was conducted primarily through a structured survey. The public were also invited to send any general comments relating to the 2023 – 2024 budget proposal to the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council engagement email inbox or via Freepost.

This survey deployed 'closed' questions for each budget proposal for 2023-2024. These 'closed' questions asked respondents to indicate if they 'agreed', 'disagreed' or had an 'other' view of each proposed policy amendment. These closed questions allowed for a decisive snapshot of respondent sentiment to each proposed budget policy amendment.

In addition, for each section of the budget 2023-2024 survey, 'free text' comment boxes were available. These qualitative 'free text' boxes enabled respondents to provide any comments, concerns and suggestions relating to the 2023-2024 budget.

These 'free text' comments and non-survey returns were analysed using the 'thematic analysis' approach. The 'thematic analysis' approach involved reviewing the 'free text' comments and assigning codes to each comment. A code is a label assigned to a piece of text. These codes were used to identify and summarise the frequent themes expressed within the 'free text' comment data. This approach allowed for a significant volume of 'free text' data to be structured into digestible findings.

The survey did not use 'mandatory questions', except for confirming in which capacity respondents were responding. This meant respondents could skip questions and choose to only give their sentiments on budget proposals relevant to them. This mitigated the risk of

'survey fatigue' (where respondents would be overwhelmed by the number of questions) and meant respondents were discouraged from 'randomly' selecting an answer to a question irrelevant to them.

This mixed method approach allowed for both an assessment of overall sentiment towards proposals and provided an awareness of specific concerns from individuals. In addition, this mixed method approach allowed for a deeper understanding of *why* respondents 'agreed', 'disagreed' or expressed an 'other' view towards each 2023-2024 budget policy proposal.

The consultation was promoted through a press release, social media, council e-newsletters to residents and businesses, emails to approximately 350 stakeholders, and posters at council sites. Deadline reminders were also provided in the closing weeks of the consultation period.

The survey was available online through the Council's website, with accessible hard copies available upon request. Respondents were able to return completed surveys and comments online, by Freepost, or by email, and were also able to get in touch via telephone through the Council's customer contact team.

Respondents to the survey were invited to provide information on the capacity in which they were responding and demographic information to inform the overall balance of respondents. This survey did not collect any identifiable personal data. This meant that the respondents were able to take part anonymously. More information on participation in the consultation is available in the participation section of this report.

The consultation was open from 21 November 2022 until 16 January 2023 and received 198 survey returns, and 3 others. The survey responses include partially completed surveys, as the optional nature of the questions allowed respondents to provide answers only for their areas of interest or concern.

Results

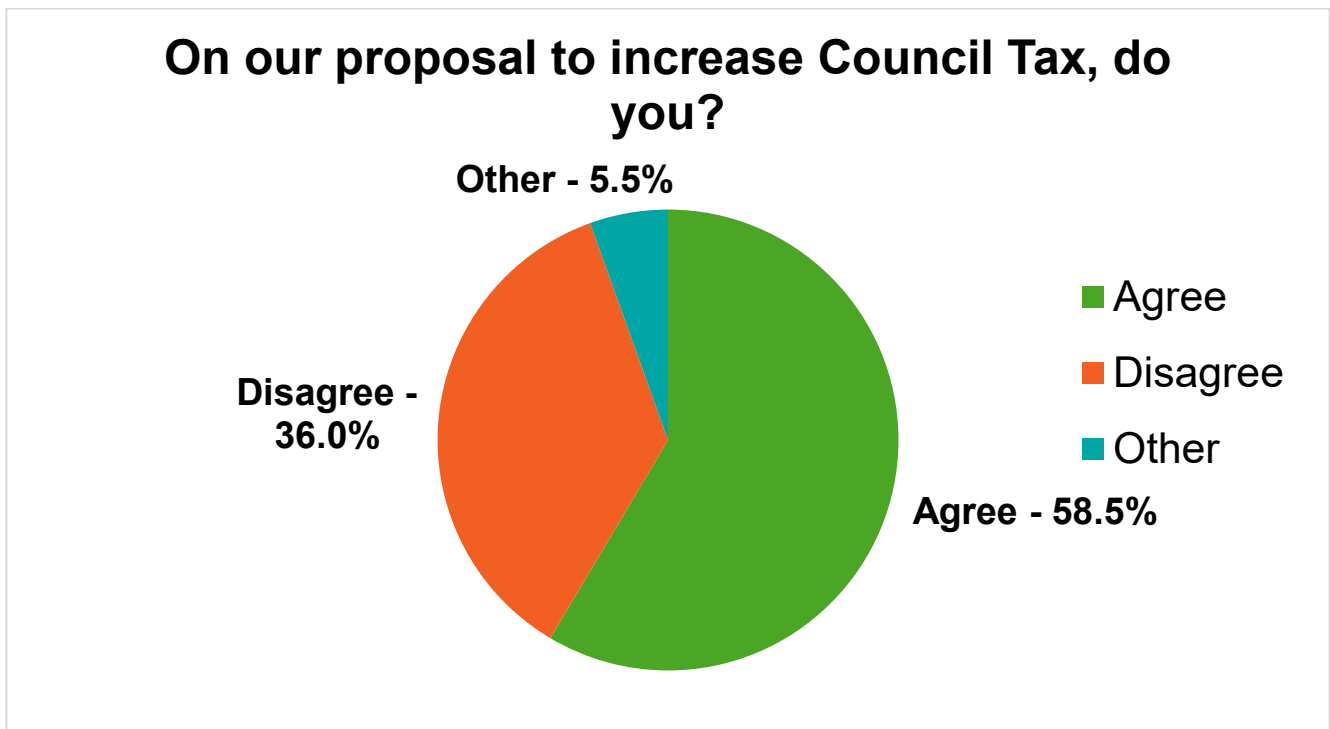
The survey was divided into sections, covering the main areas of the draft budget proposals – Council Tax, Fees and Charges, Service Budgets, and Staffing Costs. For each section, figures for overall sentiment and key themes of comments received are presented below. The feedback from other, non-survey, responses is also reflected in the results information below. The list of comments submitted is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Council Tax

The draft budget proposed an increase of 3% to the Borough Council's component of Council Tax (affecting approximately 12% of total Council Tax, and representing an annual increase of approximately £7.25 for a Band D property.)

The majority of responses (58.5%) were in favour of the proposed increase.

Figure 1: Support for proposed increase in Council Tax



Key Comment Themes

- Concern about the impact of increases in costs for residents facing cost of living pressures
- Support for the increase as necessary for the Council to meet inflationary pressures and continue to deliver key services.

On balance, the consultation response supports the proposed increase in Council Tax, highlighting both the financial challenges faced by many residents and the need for the support services the Council provides.

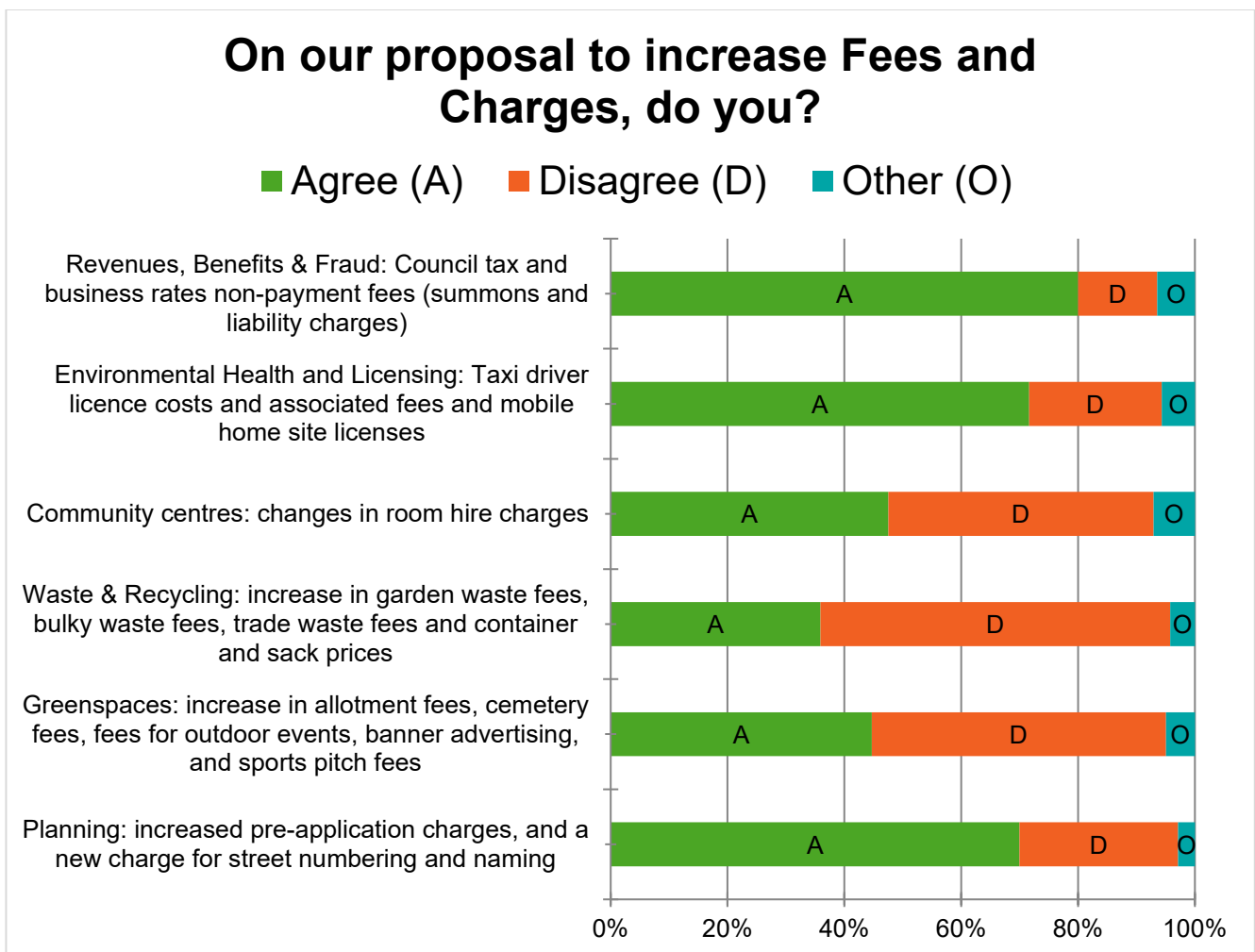
Fees and Charges

Proposed changes to fees and charges included increases across Community Partnerships, Neighbourhood Operations, Planning, and Revenues, Benefits and Fraud. These constituted:

- Increases to Council Tax and Business Rates non-payment fees (summons and liability charges)
- Increases to Taxi driver licence costs and fees, and to mobile home site licences
- Changes to room hire charges at the Council’s community centres
- Increases to fees for garden waste, bulky waste, trade waste and waste containers
- Increases in Greenspaces fees for allotments, cemeteries, outdoor events, advertising and sports pitches
- Increases to planning pre-application charges and the introduction of a new charge for street and numbering

A majority of respondents were opposed to the proposed increase to Waste and Recycling fees (60%) and to changes to Greenspaces and Community Centre fees (50%, with only 45% support), with comments suggesting that opposition was largely related to allotments, community facilities and outdoor spaces. Views were mixed on increases to community centre room hire costs.

Figure 2: Support for proposed increases to Fees and Charges



Key Comment Themes

- Disagreement with the increase to waste fees and concerns that this will lead to an increase in fly-tipping.
- Disagreement with community centre room hire increases, identifying concerns around fairness to community and voluntary partners and highlighting the wellbeing benefits of their use.
- Concern that increases to fees for allotments and sports pitches may discourage their use and reduce associated wellbeing benefits.

Proposals for increases to fees and charges relating to costs for business and industry were largely supported by the responses to the consultation. Some concerns around the overall level of business rates were expressed, but these are set by central Government and are outside of Council control.

Fees and charges relating to some Licensing matters (vehicle and operator licences), and parking charges were also proposed to be increased. Legislation requires that consultation on these matters be conducted according to separate statutory requirements, and there are therefore parallel consultations for these areas. Responses to these consultations will be considered separately and the approach to the proposed changes to the related fees and charges will then reflect these considerations.

Service Budgets

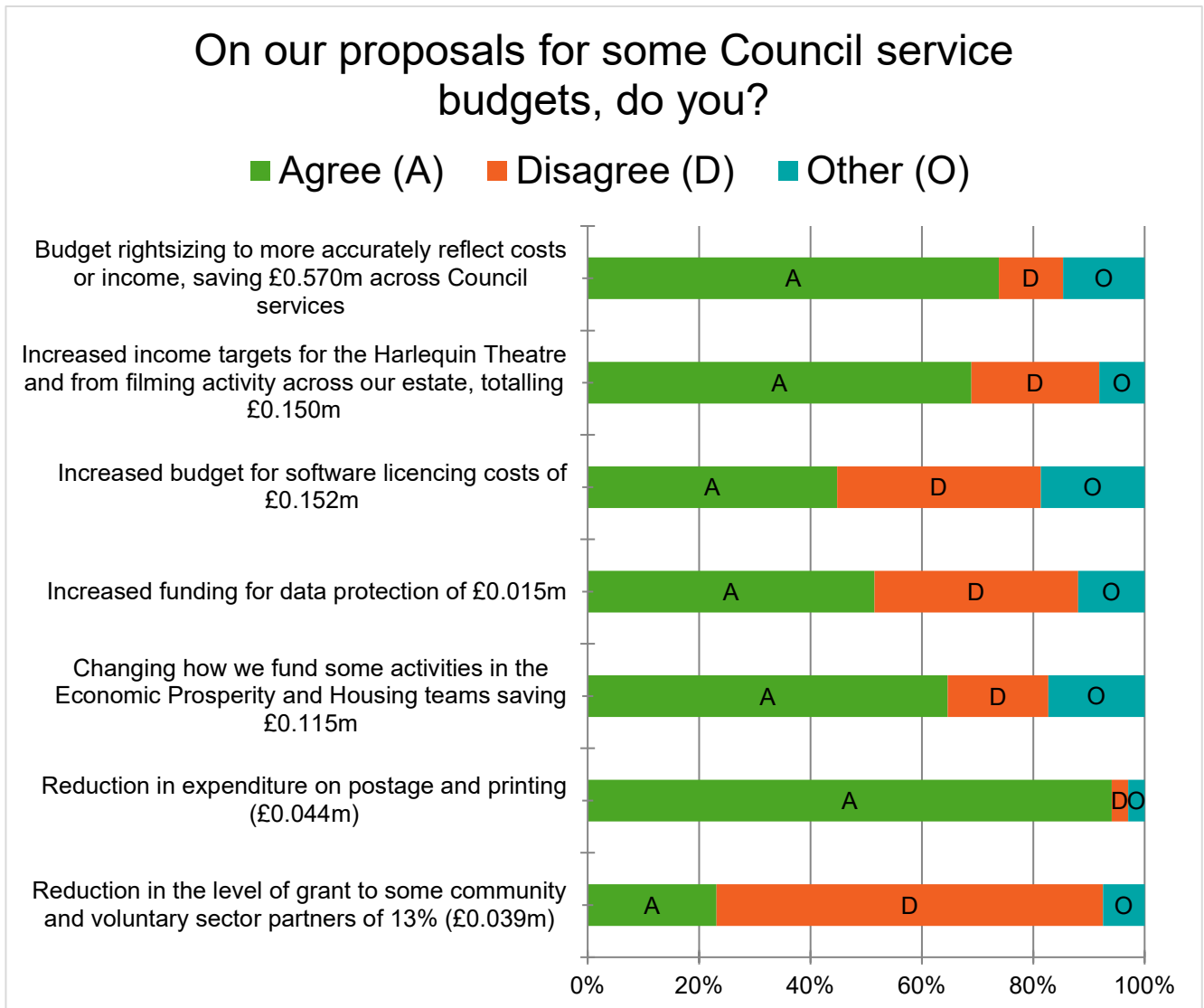
Proposals for changes to service budgets encompassed reductions in some grant funding, and a number of efficiencies and internal improvements. These constituted:

- An overall 13% reduction in the grant to some community and voluntary sector partners
- A reduction in expenditure on postage and printing of £44k
- Changes to the funding approach for some Economic Prosperity and Housing activities, saving £115k
- Improvements to IT for data protection and increases in software licencing costs, totalling £167k
- An increase to the income target for the Harlequin Theatre and filming across the Council estate of £150k
- Budget rightsizing to more accurately reflect costs and income across all service areas, representing a saving of £570k

Most disagreement was received regarding the reduction in community and voluntary sector grant funding, with 69% disagreeing with this proposal. There was more agreement than disagreement for the other proposals, but views were most mixed on the increases to IT

costs, with 37% disagreement for these, and only 45% agreeing with the increase to software licencing costs.

Figure 3: Support for changes to service budgets



Key Comment Themes

- Disagreement with the reduction in grant funding for some community and voluntary sector partners, stating the importance of these services
- Concern that the reduction in grant funding will cause harm to vulnerable service users, potentially also incurring greater costs in the long run
- Concerns and uncertainty regarding the costs and necessity of IT requirements around data protection and software licencing

The disagreement with the proposed reduction in community and voluntary sector grant funding is the most significant negative feedback from the consultation. Whilst the proposals seek to minimise the impact of these cuts and are accompanied by mitigation measures and monitoring, they are nonetheless clearly of significant concern to those responding to the consultation.

The comments on the proposed IT changes, particularly regarding software licensing, indicated that a number of respondents were unsure what these represented. Some responses disagreeing with the proposal may therefore not be fully representative of a more informed view. This indicates that additional information and clarity may be needed in future consultation on similar matters.

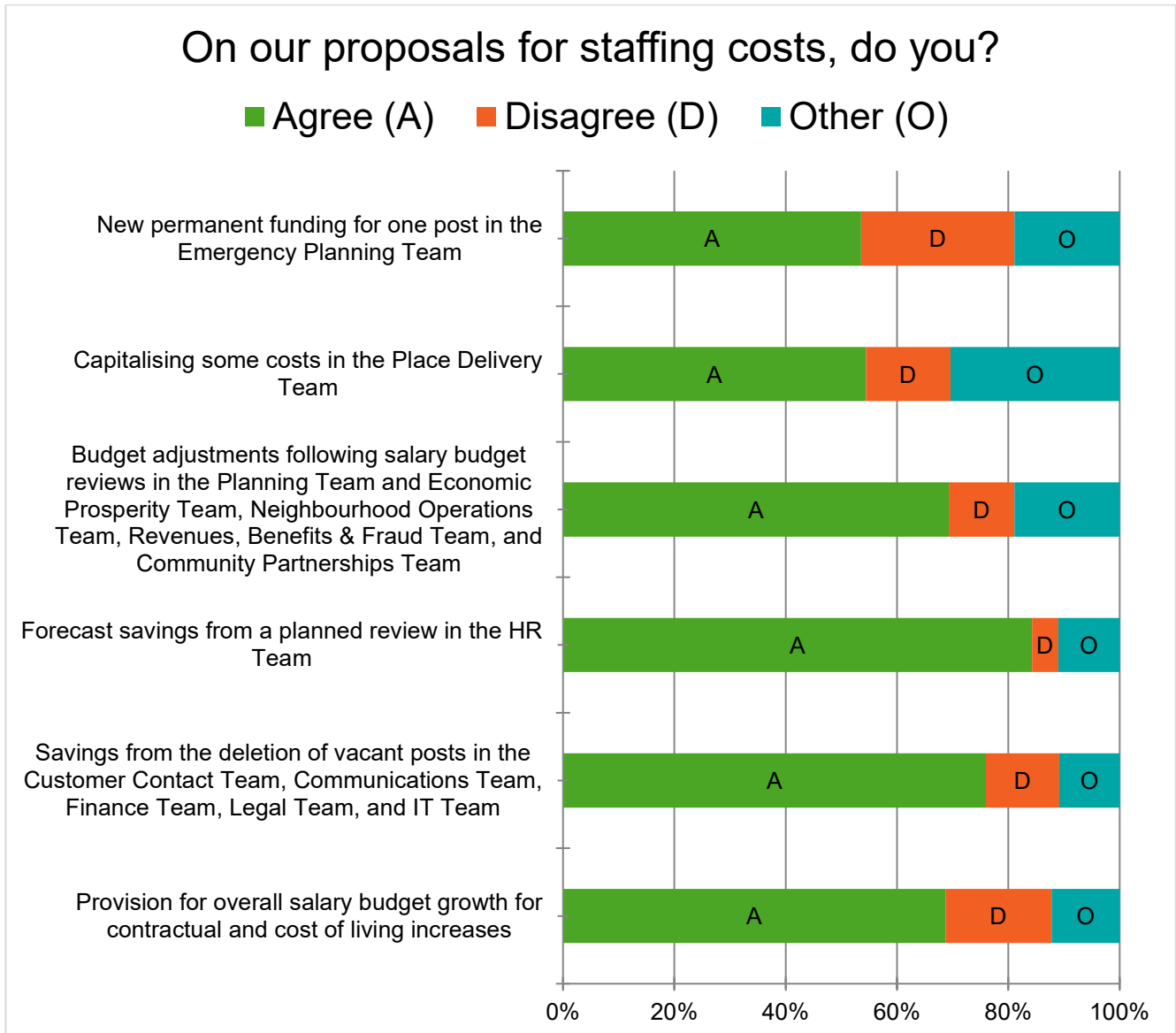
Staffing Costs

Proposals for changes to staffing costs reflected updates to salaries, savings from vacant posts and team reviews, budgetary adjustments and a new permanent post. These constituted:

- Provision for overall salary budget growth for contractual and cost of living increases
- Savings from the deletion of vacant posts across Customer Contact, Communications, Finance, Legal and IT
- Forecast savings from a planned review of the HR Team
- Budget adjustments from salary budget review across Planning, Economic Prosperity, Neighbourhood Operations, Revenues, Benefits and Fraud, and Community Partnerships
- Capitalising some costs in the Place Delivery Team
- New permanent funding for one post in the Emergency Planning Team

All of the proposals received support from a majority of respondents. Views were most mixed regarding the Emergency Planning post, with 28% disagreement, and there was some uncertainty around the capitalisation of some costs in Place Delivery, with 30% 'other' responses, many indicating that the question was not well understood.

Figure 4: Support for changes to staffing costs



Key Comment Themes

- Concerns that the Emergency Planning post may require only a part time role or may be redundant with efforts by county or national level organisation.
- Uncertainty regarding the meaning of capitalisation of some costs in the Place Delivery Team

Demographics

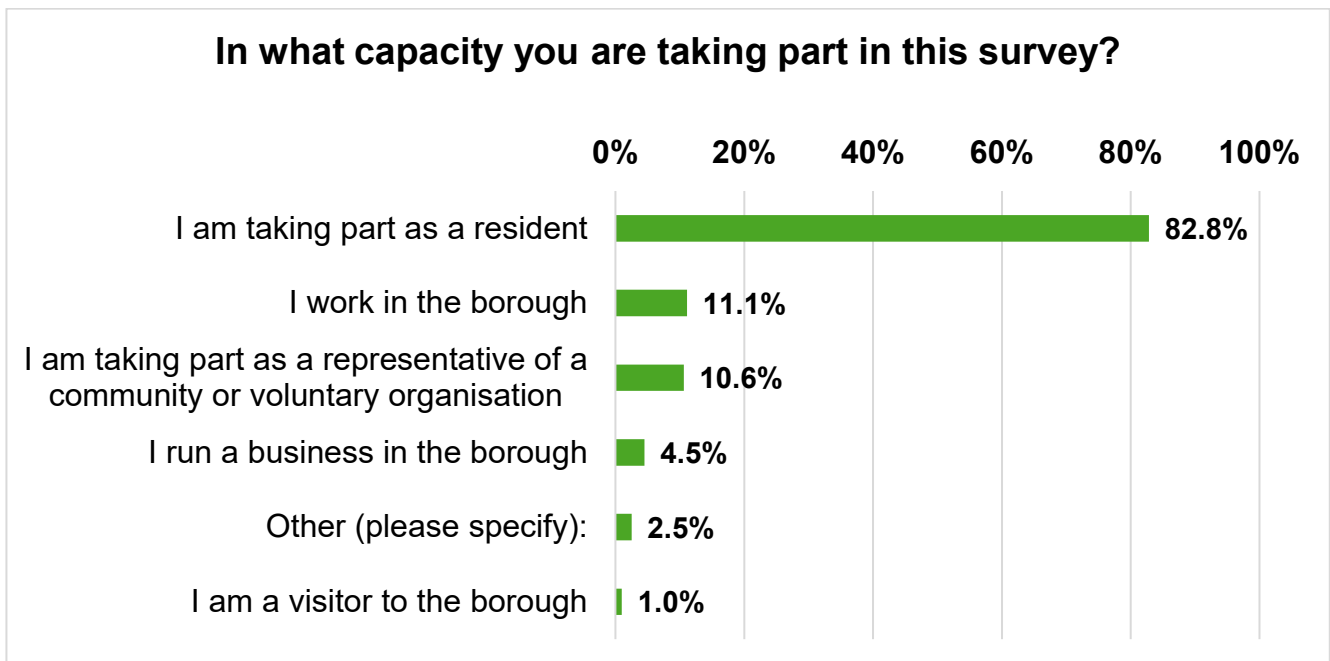
The Council received 201 responses to the consultation, including 135 completed surveys, 63 partial surveys and 3 other responses. All survey data was anonymised, and no personal

identifiable data was collected in the survey. Respondents were able to skip all questions other than regarding the capacity in which they were responding, or give a 'prefer not to say' response to any question.

Respondents

Survey participants were asked in what capacity they were responding.

Figure 5: In what capacity did survey participants take part in the consultation



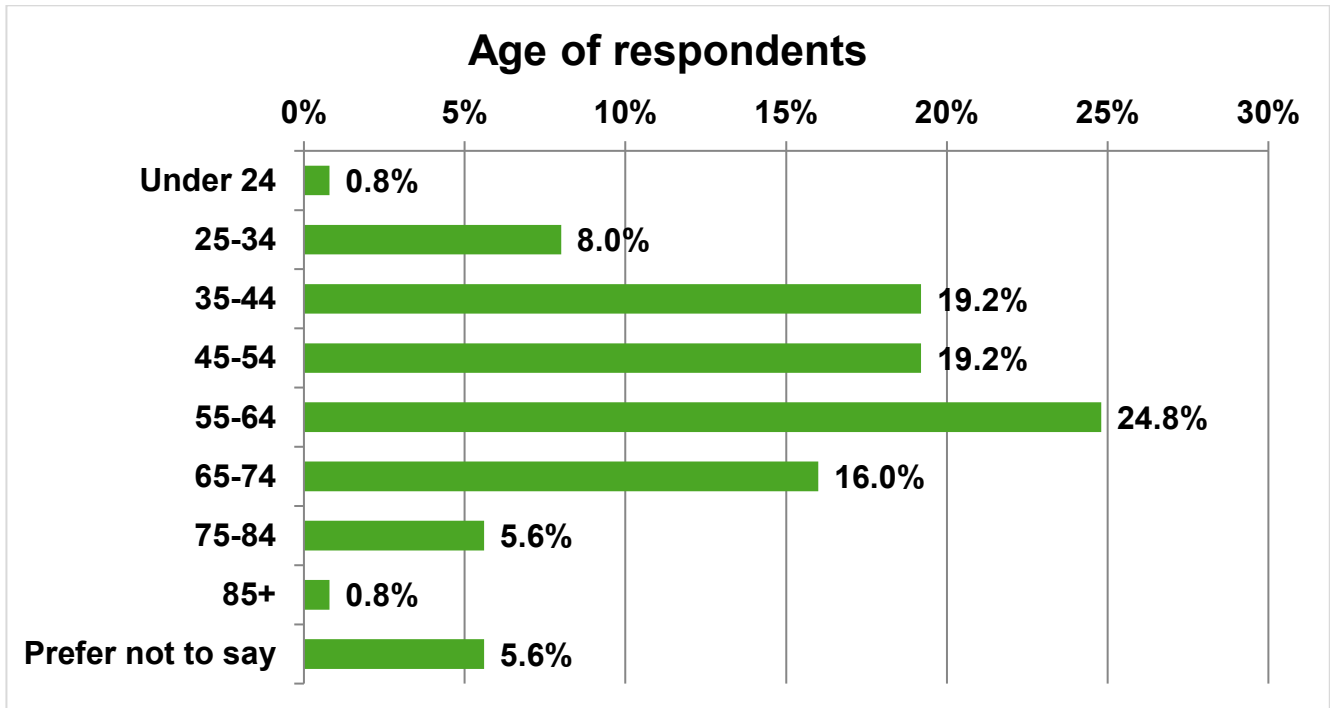
198 responses were provided to this question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, so the totals for each category sum to more than 100%.

The clear majority of respondents were borough residents, at 83% of survey participants. 21 responses were from representatives of community or voluntary sector organisations, comprising approximately 11% of the total.

Age

Survey participants were asked which age range they fell into.

Figure 6: Age of respondents

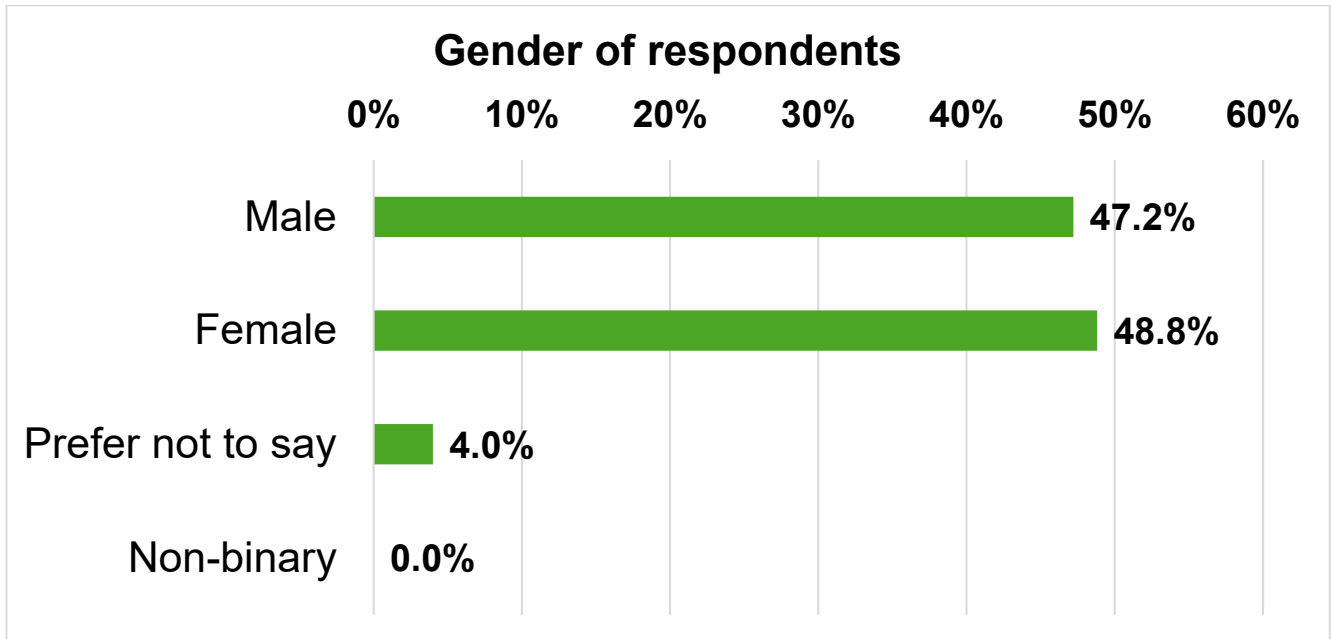


125 responses were provided to this question. Compared to population data from the 2021 Census, of those who provided an age range those aged 34 and under and those aged 85+ were underrepresented, whilst those age 35 to 74 were overrepresented in the responses received, with those aged 55-64 highly overrepresented, with a rate of response almost double the representative level.

Gender

Survey participants were asked to identify their gender.

Figure 7: Gender of respondents

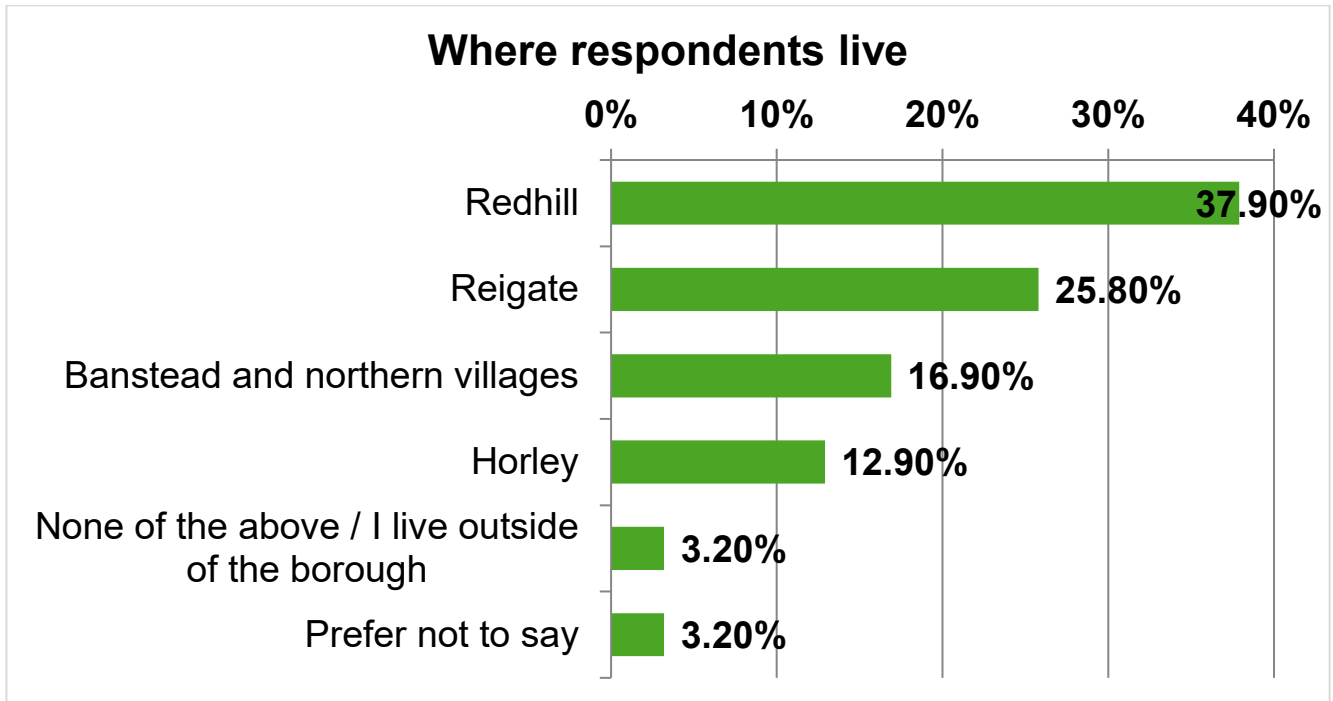


125 responses were provided to this question. This balance of responses is consistent with population data from the 2021 Census.

Area

Survey participants were asked which area best described where they lived.

Figure 8: Where respondents live

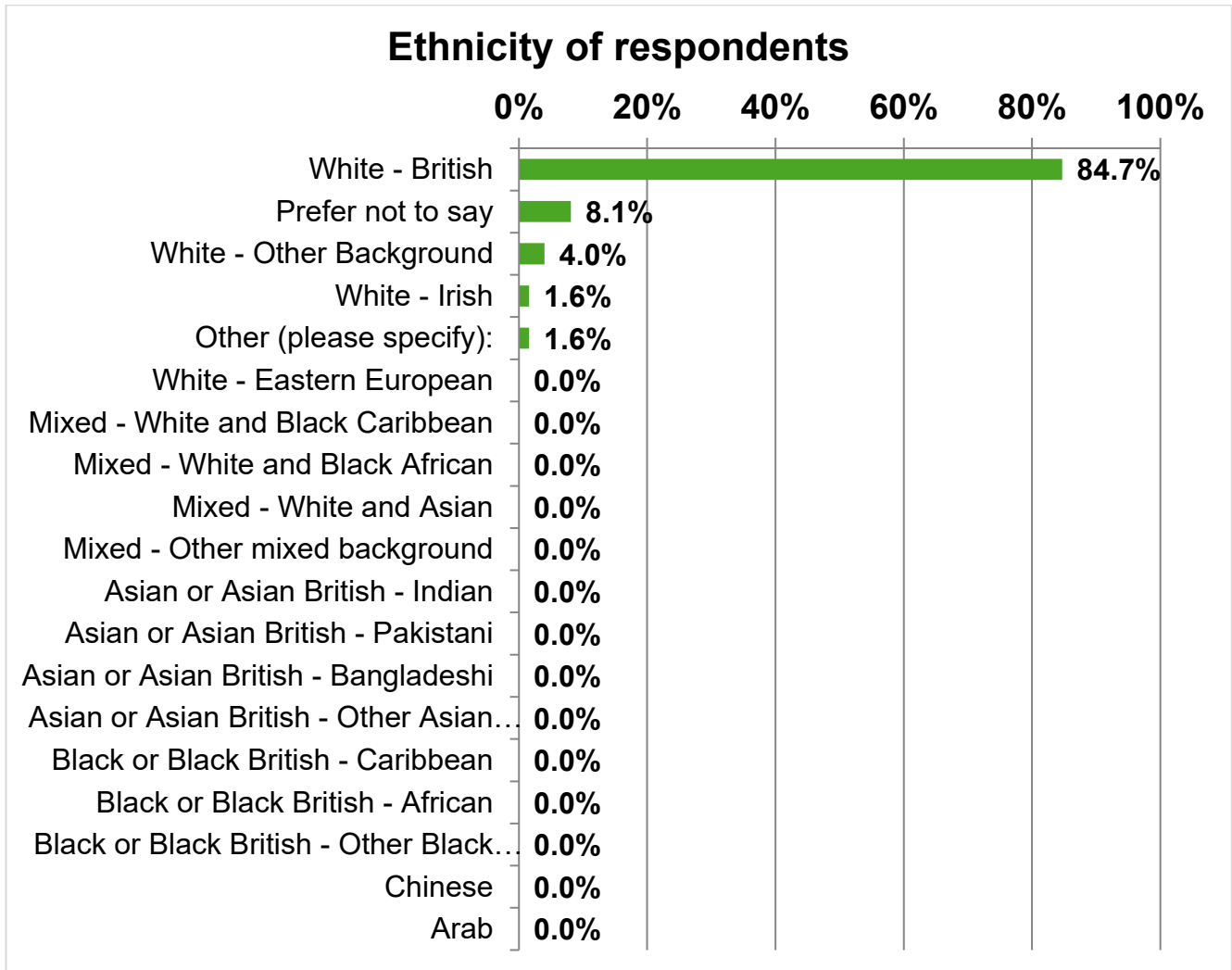


124 responses were provided to this question. As the boundaries of areas within the borough can be assessed in varying ways, the populations of each can be subject to interpretation. However, the responses provided suggest that Reigate is slightly overrepresented whilst Horley is underrepresented in the responses received.

Ethnicity

Survey participants were asked which description best described their ethnicity.

Figure 9: Ethnicity of respondents

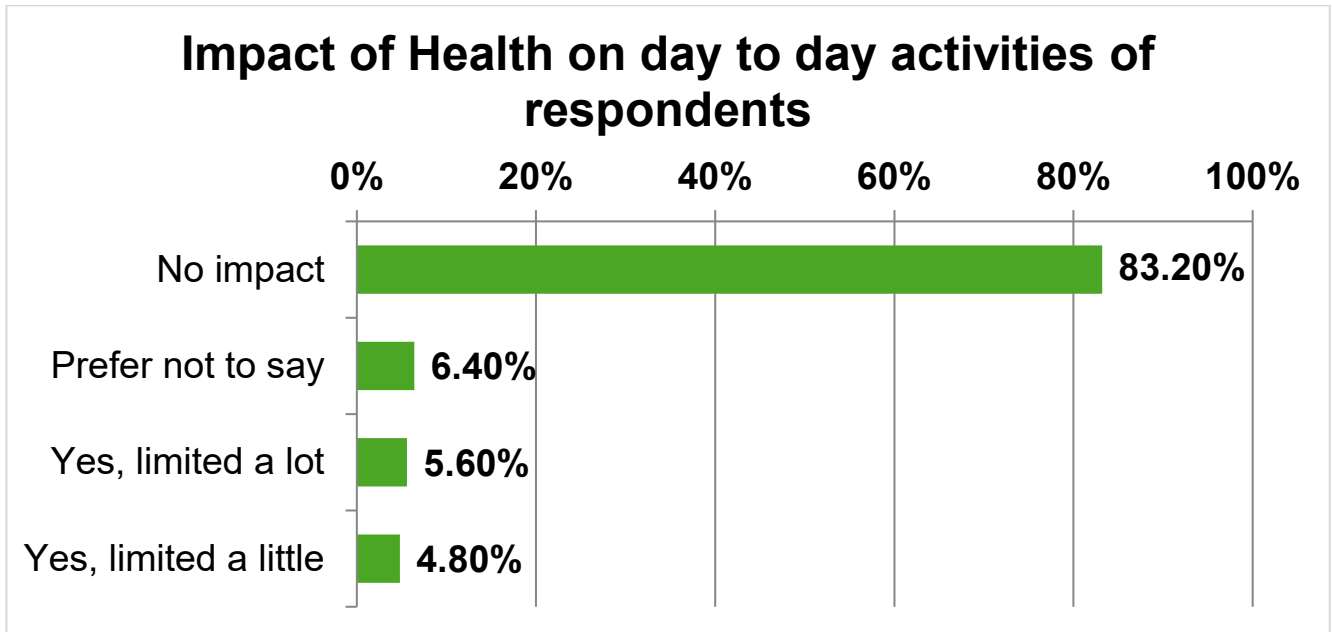


124 responses were provided to this question. Excluding those where preferred not to say, those identifying as White – British, White – Other Background, and White – Irish were overrepresented, whilst most other groups were underrepresented in the responses received. Data from the 2021 Census indicates that only approximately 84% of the borough falls within these groups, whilst 98% of respondents who provided an answer identified as one of these groups.

Health

Respondents were asked about the impact of health on their day to day activities.

Figure 10: Impact of health on day to day activities of respondents



125 responses were provided to this question. At the time of writing, information from the 2021 Census has not yet been released for health characteristics, but information from the previous census in 2011 indicates that those for whom health impacts on their day to day activities are likely slightly underrepresented in the responses received.



Draft Budget Consultation 2023-2024 – Appendix 1

Comments on the consultation

As part of the consultation on the draft Council budget for 2023-2024, respondents were invited to provide 'free text' comments. These qualitative 'free text' boxes enabled respondents to provide any comments, concerns and suggestions relating to the 2023-2024 budget.

These 'free text' comments and non-survey returns were analysed using the 'thematic analysis' approach, and the overall analysis of the comments was provided in the consultation report to which this document is appended.

In addition to this analysis, the full text of the comments on each topic of the consultation is provided within this appendix. Comments are presented as received, except where they would be personally identifiable, misleading or offensive, or where typing errors have been corrected or minor formatting changes made for clarity and readability.

Council Tax

The draft budget proposed an increase of 3% to the Borough Council's component of Council Tax (affecting approximately 12% of total Council Tax, and representing an annual increase of approximately £7.25 for a Band D property.)

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Property bands need revision as we pay the same as owners of £1 million+ properties which makes no sense. Senior staff on RBBC are paid too high salaries and a more realistic level would save significant sums of taxpayers money.
2. I feel that the property tax bands are far too wide, expecting people in lessor properties to pay the same as those with much more expensive properties. CEO's are paid too high, looking at management could save money.
3. We pay enough already

4. Three percent? Not a lot in comparison with inflation. If you want a referendum then I would say yes.
5. Too many residents are in lower banding than they should be due to extensive refurbishments, ensuring houses are in the correct banding will provide the council with sufficient funding without penalising everyone with increased council tax bills
6. For the council to achieve good outcomes for resident and businesses it must have the financial resources available to achieve this, and whilst no increase is welcomed in these trying times the council must be able to fulfil its obligations to all Council Tax payers.
7. Council is being asked by Government to do more and more with less and less. Continuing in this direction is unsustainable and particularly unfair to many households that are just getting by. Go back to Government and tell them! The whole council tax system need restructure, including making sure those with very expensive properties pay more, but also that the split of services is more fairly geared and central Government / taxation picks up more of the cost, e.g. health and welfare, policing, infrastructure such as schools and such like required because of new housing / demographics. Also, elected officials should receive less pay and very limited expenses, and likewise and even more so for Members of Parliament.
8. Conduct a referendum
9. Needs to be in keeping with central rising costs
10. If it means voluntary partnerships are supported then fine
11. Whilst I don't want to see our clients struggling further I understand the need for the increase
12. I live in Merstham and it feels like we are forgotten about in this area, less money is spent on us, more is focused on the higher regarded areas like Reigate, yet we are paying for it
13. I sympathise with your plight. However you need to stop ignoring Merstham residents and our repeated concerns about our third world roads.
14. Households are already squeezed. Find more savings such as reducing management and freezing their bonuses and pay.
15. Cost of living is already too high. Plus a new home owner the banding of my council tax is already hugely excessive and unfair. I pay an additional service charge for many of the services the council would normally provide which is also unfair. New build non council managed estates should receive a tax discount.
16. This is just common-sense. Inflation is over 10% therefore 3% will either mean cuts or spend of any reserves.
17. Rather than max amount this should be lower
18. Reasonable in the present day financial climate.
19. With electricity bills set to rise again in the new year and the squeeze on individuals finances already this is going to add even more pressure to households' ability to keep

up with payments. We just cannot afford for things to keep going up and up. It may not seem like much but when everything is increasing it becomes impossible to cover it all.

20. I think this would be an affordable compromise if it helped to retain vital services.
21. I value the services RBBC provides and think the increase is justified. I would vote in favour of a larger increase if proposed.
22. It needs to be one
23. I am not in band D so have no immediate way of knowing how much you are increasing it. I am concerned that the per-capita government payment is lower than in London - just a short distance to the north of my home - and that the Conservative government should address this before the Conservative council come to the residents for more money.
24. No more than 3% please.
25. Council tax is already unaffordable
26. I think in the current financial climate 3% sounds the best it could be for residents.
27. £7.25 increase per year is the cost of 2 Costas!
28. The council services have not increased (see proposed decreases instead) and residents have not received pay rises of 3% to match this suggested increase.
29. The council should be cutting services and salaries of anyone being paid over £85,000 per annum rather than increasing taxes.
30. No comment
31. If the tax increases fund additional/maintain current services then I agree in an increase
32. The delivery of services is very important.
33. Cost of Living Crisis?!
34. Allotments charges already make it difficult for it to be cost effective. Especially for a limited income pensioner. It has health advantages but if it becomes more expensive I won't be able to continue. Also there are numerous empty plots this will increase thereby reducing any profit to the council as well as increased health care costs
35. With a normal full time job and lots of overtimes we can't even afford a normal healthy life and currently living like a poor [person] inside the house. Please don't do this. It is cruel.
36. We pay enough and times are difficult enough at the moment
37. Money could be saved by better budgeting and less admin and middle management council workers.
38. Fees brings increased for allotments will discourage people from continuing to work the allotments especially as many are on difficult ground or have been neglected so are now full of weeds

39. Hasn't the government removed the cap on the % that Council tax can be increased by? Why not increase more and not make cuts to services?
40. Already costs too much. Greater savings should be made. Lower Councillors allowance. Get rid of the Mayor. Reduce staff headcount.
41. Has an audit on waste at management level been made. Can cuts be made to the aesthetics of the borough.
42. Please refrain from increasing the council tax during a cost of living crisis. My landlord has already said the rent will increase by 10%
43. There should be a super higher tax band for bigger/higher value properties
44. Agree to them, that is about an extra 60-70p a month. Think the services provided by R&B are good
45. A 3% increase in the R&B Council element of Council Tax is reasonable in the current economic climate.
46. If it sticks to the raise of less than eight pound a year that's manageable for struggling people
47. I am a pensioner who is property rich cash poor. Moved to current property in 2017 smaller property than previous but higher band tax. Only a 2 bed bungalow but excruciating council tax.
48. At a time where the average trip to the grocery store has increased 20% or more, and gas/electric bills are doubling, I think this move is ill-timed.
49. We do not object to a 3% increase if the condition of the roads are improved i.e. less pot holes etc.!
50. I'm ok to increase if we see tangible benefits
51. In the current climate and cost of living crises every penny counts. This is a lot of money for some residents
52. We are struggling with increasing costs of living and inflation. Some of us simply cannot afford to spend more. I think the figure of £7.25 per year is incorrect. Surely this is a proposed monthly increase?
53. There should be a range of higher tax bands to take in the range of very large properties
54. It's already high enough. By increasing further you're making it impossible to live in the borough. More business are popping up and I'm sure you want to keep residents here otherwise those businesses go bust.
55. You want to increase what I'm being asked to pay at a time when the government has lost all control of budgets? Get a grip - do the right thing and freeze council tax this year - people will die and/or become homeless due to your reckless budget proposals.
56. Social care reasons

57. Whilst I agree on principle with a max 3% in general, I don't agree that Horley area has a higher council tax than other areas. As a resident of Horley, I do not see any benefit from this. Please remove the Horley premium.
58. I fear that just 3% is going to leave you with a deficit, although they promise us that inflation will have halved by mid-2023. We do need to keep pushing as the general grass clipping, leaf clearance and road sweeping service seems to significantly deteriorated this year. This makes a bit of a mockery of our efforts to improve the roads in Tadworth by tree planting.
59. People do not have enough money. That's why there's a cost of living crisis.
60. It will soon be impossible for us to afford to live in our current house due to rising costs on all fronts, this 3% rise will not be helpful
61. Ensure residents know the reasons for the increase and how the money will be spent.
62. During a period of financial hardship for many I support the increase being restricted to 3%.
63. We work with older, isolated residents, many of whom are struggling with the impact of the cost of living crisis. The increase in food costs, utility bills and general living is very real for the majority. An increase in Council Tax will add to their worries and increase their financial burden further.
64. I appreciate that Council Tax has to increase but it has to be used on services for our most vulnerable in society
65. All residents are having to carefully watch and control their day-to-day expenditure, some possibly resorting to using their savings where available. It is not the time for the Borough to be increasing their expenditure. They need to look inwards, cut out unnecessary funding to obscure causes, review salaries, particularly at the senior management level, review the need for some posts, ensure better value for money expended, improve the level of service provided, and improve productivity. They cannot merely expect to 'milk' the public as an easy way to fill the coffers.
66. Too much for a rise given how everyone is struggling with the cost of living
67. Time are very hard for everyone putting up taxes will bring more hardship
68. Every year council tax has gone up. Cumulative so one year it goes up example £5, then next year same percentage but say £5.50, then next year £6 and so on... cumulative. Do not see any improvement to services. Bin collectors still do a slap dash job chucking bins back not placing them, leaving rubbish for residents to pick up, blocking pathways, road markings shockingly poor, road surfaces falling apart, more houses/flats appearing and local businesses having to move. SEN teams who cannot reply to emails. I certainly do not agree with yet another increase. Been increasing every year for the last 11 years we have lived here.
69. Council tax is already ridiculously expensive and our services in this borough are appalling. Bins aren't emptied on time, street lights are turned off and the roads are absolutely appalling. We are not stupid, we all know the increase will line pockets rather than be put back into the community.

Fees and Charges

Proposed changes to fees and charges included increases across Community Partnerships, Neighbourhood Operations, Planning, and Revenues, Benefits and Fraud. These constituted:

- Increases to Council Tax and Business Rates non-payment fees (summons and liability charges)
- Increases to Taxi driver licence costs and fees, and to mobile home site licences
- Changes to room hire charges at the Council's community centres
- Increases to fees for garden waste, bulky waste, trade waste and waste containers
- Increases in Greenspaces fees for allotments, cemeteries, outdoor events, advertising and sports pitches
- Increases to planning pre-application charges and the introduction of a new charge for street and numbering

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Agree with everything, just not the increased charges in refuse disposal for households.
2. Use of allotments, recycling of garden waste, sports pitch usage should be encouraged, not penalised
3. Garden waste service is not good, time and again we have had to ring up for missed bins over the years and is not encouraging recycling... trade waste is totally different. Sports pitches should be encouraging outdoor use... not penalising
4. We have paid too many years into this borough
5. I do not agree with an increase in garden waste fees, but agree with the other increases in Waste and Recycling
6. I see the effects of a diminished council. Put up fees or you will fade altogether.
7. Increasing waste fees will only encourage more fly tipping (already a major problem and expense for the borough). More aggressive crackdown on fly tipping.
8. Regarding Planning, people like me want to be able to discuss plans with someone before we submit them formally, but at present we cannot do this, and the current pre-application charge is off-putting - the whole system requires review, not an increase in charges. I very strongly disagree with increasing Greenspaces fees for any activity that involves getting people outdoors and into nature. Increasing Waste & Recycling fees, depending on the amount, will lead to an increase in fly-tipping that is such a blight on the landscape.
9. These are all essential for the smooth running of the Council and its business.

10. No increase for small self-build projects, or minor works by ordinary folk. Hit the large developer with the increase. Please don't increase garden waste fees, or fees that hit small scale community activities. Please be aware of possible increase in dumping and littering if waste costs increase.
11. Fit savings in your existing budget ... your gross expenditure increased by 8m from 2020 - 2021 which is ridiculous... you should give full transparency on all salaries not just senior managers: [Reigate & Banstead Council Management Team](#)
12. I disagree with increasing charges for waste because I suspect it will lead to an increase in fly tipping and hence an increase in clean-up costs. Plus a view that the council is impotent in dealing with fly-tippers.
13. A 10% increase would be in line with inflation.
14. Agree -Business rates non-payment, no to council tax non payments
15. Should encourage sports and physical activities. High waste disposal fees will encourage fly tipping, which costs far more to clear than regular organised clearance.
16. I agree with the increases to unessential services and the non-payment fees. However, I disagree with the increases for greenspaces, waste & recycling and environmental health because these are things people need, or affect people's livelihoods, or in the case of sports pitch fees, the grass roots sports programs, and if those fees go up so will the charges to families using those facilities. Also, I worry that there will be more fly tipping if the trade waste fees increase, and this will ultimately cost the borough more to clean up.
17. It needs to be done
18. This will just increase fly-tipping. Also you are increasing this because you can when a number of these waste items are just part of life and have been for many years.
19. I think use of green spaces is important and raising fees may reduce their use. I worry that raising waste fees may lead to more fly tipping.
20. I do not agree with an increase to the garden waste collection. It has increased almost every year since it started and I consider it high enough to be frozen at its current level. Allotment fees encourage residents to be more self-sufficient and be more active in the outdoors which is good for mental and physical health, so I do not agree with an increase here. Cemetery fees are already high. Sports pitch fees also encourage exercise which should be encouraged and that increased proposed income found elsewhere.
21. Sensible
22. There should not be any increased taxes during a cost of living crisis. Excess should be cut at the council.

23. Support needs to be given to community groups and residents who can least afford increases
24. Horley Town Council would like to see the parking charges for the short term stay in Horley car parks abolished if the other rates are to be increased.
25. The more fees are levied against waste and recycling the more likely fly tipping is to occur and as waste management companies are making revenue from the waste this feels like it should be subsumed into their costs. Community spaces and greenspaces are there for the community and provide enormous wellbeing benefits so should be protected as much as possible.
26. Increasing fees for garden and bulky waste may increase fly-tipping or issues with overgrown gardens. Increasing community centre charges may make it prohibitive to some individuals and organisations - have members been consulted?
27. I strongly disagree with increase in allotment fees and community hire services. Keeping an allotment has a positive impact on physical and mental wellbeing and can prevent health issues developing. Increase in fees could deter people, especially older ones from keeping them. I also disagree with increasing community room hire as they are very beneficial for voluntary and community groups."
28. Increased charges does not always lead to more income and possibly leads to other problems and expense
29. Increasing non-payment on business rates seems to work with the councils policy to not want small business. Most business in premises are closing due to business rates being so high already and all we get is the right to have a business in the Borough.
30. Any increase in waste disposal fees increases fly tipping.
31. No point in increasing fines on people who can't pay their bills.
32. Should be encouraging people to get outside and get moving, so don't increase fees for allotments etc"
33. Increase in waste disposal will lead to more fly tipping. Allotments are expensive enough already
34. Greenspaces, allotments need to run more efficiently, currently the price seems reasonable, but R&B does not appear to redistribute uncultivated plots, or sanction tenants of neglected plots. Income could be increased by running plot by the rules. Alternatively prices could be increased but the tenants need something in return, relaxation of the perennial tree quota, methods to redistribute surplus's for instance. Waste and recycling, don't increase the garden waste charge, but others yes, but being aware that will lead to more fly tipping and its associated cleaning up.

35. If you charge more for waste they will be more fly tipping. Business in the borough are already on their knees. If you charge more to business you will jeopardise jobs creating less opportunity in the area and unemployment.
36. Anything that promotes growth should be fixed. Community centre charges in council run centres are WAY too high. Whilst answering as a resident I also run a business and I don't use council facilities as they are too expensive. This not only stops me from growing my business but means locals miss out on activities which could support and enhance their lives. The same for business rates, you should be encouraging businesses not taxing them so highly.
37. Agree with increasing all, as long as they are reasonable and not excessive, everyone will be affected but it would be rare for one person to be affected by all increases.
38. I disagree with increasing charges for allotment, sports pitch and outdoor event fees. There is a local / national emphasis on healthy living & wellbeing. Poor living standards, lack of exercise etc all drive up the expenses of health and social care services so reducing access to the services which may counteract these seems short-sighted and counterproductive. I disagree with a blanket increase in fees for outdoor events and community centres. A more nuanced approach is needed. Charities and non-profits are facing funding cuts under this budget as well as national /local increase in demand and they can't cope with the council charging more as well as reducing funding support. Increase the fees for profit-making organisations by all means, but avoid a double edged sword of attack for the non-profit sector which is already propping up inadequate government investment in services for the most vulnerable in the community - and reducing the costs associated with social care and other locally funded services. It would be counter-productive. I disagree with a blanket waste fee increase. Garden waste is already costly to dispose of and could be used creatively as an environmental resource for councils and allotments. I think there is an argument for increasing bulky waste and trade waste fees - but again, a nuanced approach for no-profits (and an incentive for reducing waste could help to tackle the planetary crisis facing us.
39. It really depends on how much you are planning on putting prices up
40. Greenspaces and community centres provide some of the few remaining links between older residents and organised activities. Increasing the cost of these services is to increase the risk of isolating them socially.
41. Most are unacceptable
42. People have less money today than last year to provide entertainment or host events. Making it more difficult for them will strangle the option.
43. The Council need to stop giving in to developers & allowing them to build new houses or flats in peoples back gardens and take a more proactive approach. Often they are

inappropriate to the local community & environment. Obviously the Council have a vested interest in the planning process.

44. Room hire charges may disproportionately affect voluntary and community groups.
45. I agree costs need to increase but not at the current time with the cost of living increasing and people already under a lot of financial pressure
46. Allotment fees are ridiculously low and could easily be increased. We had one for years and thought so at the time. Increasing room hire costs in community centres will cause increased costs to some of the borough's most vulnerable residents.
47. Can I suggest you work with other small councils in Surrey and form a unitary council so money can be spent more wisely across a wider part of Surrey.
48. Your summons and liability charge should be based on the cost of your recovery costs, if your costs have gone up then this should increase
49. Not helpful to increase charges in the areas that I have disagreed with, especially Greenspaces and garden waste
50. Increase in room charges could impact on them being used by voluntary groups and elderly residents. Maybe concessions could be made for such groups. Allotments are used by many elderly, youth groups and those who use them as part of their recovery, maybe concessions could be made for such individuals and groups.
51. The Community Centre already charge higher room fees than other providers e.g. church centres, housing providers. An increase in room rates would make them prohibitively expensive for VCS organisations.
52. Having currently been searching for premises to hire within the borough recently I was out priced at most of these venues sadly and they were very expensive to hire - don't over price them any further
53. There is no justification in increasing any charges in the current economic climate
54. It's incredibly disappointing to see fee increases targeted at activities that I would expect the council to want to encourage, such as using sports pitches and allotments, while others, such as gambling licensing fees, are frozen. The cost to local clubs and individuals of hiring pitches is already quite significant and is ultimately paid for by club members, i.e. residents. The council is deluded if it thinks that all sports club members are wealthy. Similarly, allotment fees in are set to increase despite there being lots of evidence to show the health and wellbeing benefits of gardening and being outdoors. Why are betting shops avoiding fee increases while allotment holders and kids playing football (or their parents) being penalised? Similarly, it's depressing to see the increases to mobile home sites. Although these are relatively small increases, they will inevitably be passed onto residents in mobile homes who, I'd guess, generally aren't all that wealthy and have little choice - they can't necessarily just move somewhere

cheaper. This seems like an extra tax on those residents at a very tough time and I think it is unfair. For community centre room hire charges, although some of these equate to just a few pounds, some are very significant - to me, this undermines having what should be a great asset to people living in nearby. Instead, using the centre will become a bit less affordable.

55. Increase the costs for new buildings. No point increasing recycling fees as it counter intuitive as will lead to increase in fly tipping which costs more to clear up. Don't penalise people using community facilities
56. The high charges for things like community centres me as a business off from hiring. I know you've got empty rooms, which if lower fees would see more use. Garden waste collection etc should be encouraged, not charged even more for.
57. Where do you propose people using allotments etc will get extra money from?
58. We are in a cost of living crisis, this borough is so divided between rich and poor. Adding ridiculous charges to gain more money for the rich council workers is going to cause mass devastation to half of Surrey's population. We need to encourage more youth groups to prevent county lines and the gangs happening, increasing pitch fees will hinder sporting activities and cause more gangs and criminal activity.

Service Budgets

Proposals for changes to service budgets encompassed reductions in some grant funding, and a number of efficiencies and internal improvements. These constituted:

- A 13% reduction in the grant to some community and voluntary sector partners
- A reduction in expenditure on postage and printing of £44k
- Changes to the funding approach for some Economic Prosperity and Housing activities, saving £115k
- Improvements to IT for data protection and increases in software licencing costs, totalling £167k
- An increase to the income target for the Harlequin Theatre and filming across the Council estate of £150k
- Budget rightsizing to more accurately reflect costs and income across all service areas, representing a saving of £570k

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Charities and voluntary organisations are taking up the slack where statutory services have been cut. Families are struggling across the borough and the council teams themselves make referrals to these charities and expect a high level of service. It is

short-sighted and insulting to take away the small amount of support that is provided to charities like Stripey Stork but to still expect so much of them.

2. The borough has a significant number of vulnerable residents, higher than many in Surrey & Sussex. The council must recognise the duty of care they have to these residents. Little help is on offer apart from via voluntary sector partners, therefore my reducing grants by 13% will leave your residents more vulnerable. Increasing expenditure in areas such as data protection & software licencing whilst leaving the increasing number of your residents who need help and advice stranded is shameful.
3. Historically councils have spent money at the year-end simply to justify keeping the same budgets or indeed increasing them, so ensuring this does not happen in future is essential.
4. I feel all budgets should be under the same roof and applied for as necessary rather than have a budget that they then need to use up, like we have known new equipment be bought or be installed just to use up the budgets, rather than wait another few years.
5. I think that the Harlequin provides a service for the community and therefore not have the pressure of increased targets
6. I have volunteered.
7. A lot of great value for the community comes from volunteers and the voluntary sector, it increases the quality of life for everyone. In these difficult times more volunteer work should be encouraged. It is probably some of the best value you get. Also, protect community partnerships, this kind of cooperation is likely more important to help sustain a level of service as things get worst due to the catastrophic mistakes of the ERG conservatives. Cut the cost of councillors, their pay and expenses, cut top level pay of senior executives etc. If they care about the job, they'll do it for less. If they don't then they are not worthy of the positions - same with councillors. It has to be affordable and not at the expense of hard-working normal folks.
8. Do everything possible to keep sport facilities operational. Vital for the health and wellbeing of residents
9. Very concerned about level of grants
10. The grants which you give to local community and voluntary sector partners are low in comparison to the value of the services these partners give back to the local community. It is a false economy to cut these grants and see a reduction in these services.
11. Don't understand what this means
12. I think some of these need more context/breakdown for normal users to understand what this means to us
13. Merely increasing an income target is not to be relied upon; I would treat it as a bonus. I agree that grants should be reduced. I would prefer eliminated. It should be up to

individuals to donate to good causes, not the council. Agree with software and data budgets. A false economy, not to spend money in these areas.

14. Hard to have full understanding of the effects of each proposal but I have applied common sense.
15. Utter lack of detail makes a considered reply or comment impossible! The last question lumps together a range of disparate activities. This is not professional or competent!
16. I profoundly disagree with the reduction in the grant levels to community and voluntary sector partners. Many organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve their funding targets since the Coronavirus pandemic. There is simply not the funding available from Charitable Trusts and Foundations to meet the demand from the sector. Many small charities are already struggling and the reduction in the core funding grant will make it even harder. It will cost the Council far more if it has to pick up the pieces when the services are no longer financially viable and have no other option than to close. I believe that with some careful 'shopping around and sensible housekeeping', the council could achieve the software licensing requirements without resorting to an additional expense of £0.152m.
17. All areas including data protection and software licences need to be looked at or renegotiated to ensure the most effective use of funds.
18. Printing - use more electronic delivery - for example charge for the paper version of your news sheet. Use more open source software - follow the French model. Please expand the library service to cover more than the very basic types of books. For example restore ILL so that more obscure books can be sourced.
19. I would want to know more detail about the reduction in the level of grant to community and voluntary sector partners before agreeing or disagreeing.
20. Regulatory services must be supported to protect residents and increase public safety.
21. You should save on least important items, focus on efficiencies, remove parking charges because you could probably generate more income in town centre spending.
22. Horley Town Council is strongly against the reduction in the level of grant to community and voluntary sector partners and feel that this sector needs continues support. Horley Town Council would like to see an even greater reduction in the postage and printing budget if this is possible.
23. Reducing grants to voluntary sector partners in the midst of a cost of living increases is not right. This could put more people at risk of homelessness and may increase the numbers of children and families stuck in poverty. The voluntary sector is doing everything to support those in need and they themselves are feeling the impact of the cost of living rises. Reducing funding increases the pressure on them and could decrease the support they can provide. What will the council do to address the gap left by this funding reduction? Does increasing income targets make sense for the Harlequin when it is about to go into competition with the new cinema opening in

Redhill? Wouldn't make sense for the Harlequin to specialise in community theatre and events that provides a service to residents but may not be the biggest earner.

24. You do not supply sufficient information to allow a considered response
25. Reduction in grant to the voluntary sector, probably counterproductive, you may be relying on the voluntary sector to deliver services. Printing can be reduced by good procurement practice, and postage can be reduced by encouraging residents to accept email and text. Software, not sure what about without knowing software involved and use. Not sure what budget rightsizing is, but read poor budgeting practice is occurring.
26. If the council reduce funding to the voluntary sector, at a time when they are needed most, this will cause more pressure to the council services now and for years to come. Having a strong and Thriving voluntary sector is core to the 5 year plan, and a prosperous, healthy and supported community. It would be wrong to reduce this funding and we need to be showing support to our communities, not reducing it.
27. Fund the poorest groups as you will reap the benefits when they don't fall in the gaps and need more expensive intervention
28. More local police to be seen in Horley late at night
29. There is so much waste in so many areas of business. There are areas here that I don't understand. I can't see an explanation of what you mean by software licensing or data protection etc. This isn't clearly explained here.
30. Would like more info on software increases and benefit to residents
31. I don't feel well qualified to comment on all of these - but I do think reducing grant funding to community partners is short sighted and the council will end up facing increased costs in social care, increasingly poor CQC reports and the other consequences of under supporting the third sector at this time of crisis
32. The Council is proposing to reduce the Core Funding that is provided to Age Concern, Banstead (ACB) by £2,500 (25%) from £10,000 to £7,500. This proposal is short-sighted as such a funding cut will impact significantly and adversely on the ability of ACB to deliver its current level of services to its many elderly clients in the ACB catchment area and is likely to lead to an even greater corresponding increase in R&B Council costs, making the proposal entirely self-defeating. ACB is a small charity, the Trustees of which exercise great care in how its income is spent. Much of ACB's expenditure is allocated to providing services that would otherwise have to be provided directly by Reigate & Banstead Council. Thus, the likely outcome of this proposed 25% cut in core funding, if implemented, will be a reduction in the range or quantity of service provision to elderly, vulnerable clients, leading to increased costs for the Council which would need to step in and plug the service gaps created by this funding cut.

33. Funding on the Councils action for mitigation and adaptation for the Climate Emergency should be prioritised, with all spending using an internal Cost of Carbon to analyse the impact of the spend.
34. All changes should be seen as worthwhile and of benefit to the community at large. Some costs are essential i.e. data protection and software updates
35. You need to improve your Communications on this - you want to cut services but increase what you are asking residents to pay - either directly or indirectly? How many staff will you make redundant - and what will the cost of this be? I'm amazed you paid so much to get rid of your previous Chief Executive - was the cost inflicted on the council so significant that you have been unable to hire a proper Chief Executive to replace him? It's amazing how much previous mistakes have cost the council.
36. Strongly disagree with reduction of level of grant to some community & voluntary sector partners, they are struggling already. Also strongly disagree with increased funding for data protection and income targets for the Harlequin Theatre.
37. Many voluntary groups need support and reducing funding could have a detrimental effect on this valuable sector.
38. Below is a copy of the letter sent to the portfolio holder for VCS in October 2022
- Dear Members and Officers at Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
 - Following our most recent meeting on 11th October where the proposed 25% cut to our funding from 1st April 2023 was outlined, please accept this as the response from MHA Communities East Surrey.
 - We understand the need for councils across the board to make savings (and appreciate that you have not sprung this upon us without notice) but feel that the benefits of services like ours to one of the most vulnerable sectors of our community more than justify the continuation of these grants at their full allocation.
 - If reduced, it could increase costs to both the council and local health services, which in the long run will cost more than it saves. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) appear to understand the importance of our delivery as highlighted in the Reigate and Banstead 2025 Five Year Plan where your vision and priorities include to commit to high quality core services and continued service improvement, and effective partnership working to create strong, safe and welcoming communities with targeted and proactive support for our most vulnerable residents.
 - The cuts will mean that Reigate and Banstead's growing older population are at risk of losing vital services like those provided by MHA Communities and Age Concern. These services include a wealth of activities that cater directly to identified older peoples' needs. The services offer an answer to prevailing loneliness issues: offering befriending, transport, exercise, lunch, dementia support, social and special interest groups and activities, each playing a key

part in helping the older population of Reigate and Banstead to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, including promoting social cohesion. For hundreds of older people across our area, many of whom are feeling isolated and on the cusp of beginning to need extra support, these services are an essential lifeline.

- More specifically these cuts will impact directly on our ability to deliver the established and popular weekly social group at Regent Hall in Horley (it is unlikely we will be able to afford the room hire rates), and our active engagement in local networks, which are so effective at sharing good practice and maximising opportunities for those most in need.
- MHA Communities East Surrey's most recent outcome monitoring show that 75% of older people engaged in our services show improved outcome scores (measures include loneliness, motivation and self-esteem) after initial involvement with us (improvement shown between baseline and up to one year of involvement).
- Our concern is that many older people across RBBC will be left without the wide range of support they need to live their later lives well; causing them to lean on GPs and the council for day-to-day enquiries which local surgeries and council officers may not have time to resource. As the daughter of one service user told us, "the effect on Mum when she could no longer attend the clubs due to Covid demonstrates that taking away or curtailing these services would be akin to a permanent lockdown for many of the older people who benefit from them so much." We fear these implications are being overlooked by the Council.
- Currently, for MHA services we match every £1 that RBBC contributes with an additional £6, which is provided by other sources of funding from charitable trusts, subscriptions and other donations. This is a positive, cost effective partnership for RBBC, which is providing very good value for money.
- We are aware that RBBC have been allocated £1,000,000 from the UK Shared prosperity fund. We would welcome consideration that the proposed cuts to the three commissioned older people service providers could be bridged by an award from this fund?
- In addition, we would appreciate further information on the likelihood of our local ICBs commissioning services such as the ones we provide in the longer term? We appreciate this was touched upon in our meeting on 11th October. However, it might be prudent if initial discussions regarding possible funding (and the mechanisms of) were firmed up prior to the proposed cuts being enforced.
- We believe that the activities and services provided in RBBC are exactly the kind that the Government's Social Care White Paper aspires to – preventative, people-focused, and seeking to delay the need for adult social care. They should serve as the inspiration for future preventative services across the

country's health and social care system, and RBBC should support these services to grow, not curtail them.

39. You should not be reducing grants to community or voluntary sectors these people impact daily on the lives of the most vulnerable and needy in our community who are still paying the price emotionally and physically from 2 years of lockdown
40. Local charity and community organisations offer invaluable services that can save the council money in the long run. To reduce their funding at a time of spiralling costs is counter intuitive and may lead to the closure of some of these invaluable organisations
41. The emphasis on all budgets should be to seek reductions or the status quo. No salary increases or bonuses, review need for some posts
42. I've no idea what budget rightsizing means. I'm sure you know this is jargon that a lot of us won't understand. I also suspect it's a vague term used to avoid having to give a better explanation. Please do not cut community and voluntary sector funding. Fundraising is becoming increasingly difficult for organisations and there is increasing need for the likes of Stripey Stalk and Citizens Advice. Your equalities impact assessment highlights both these points. Furthermore, they very much complement the services the council provides - the weaker the community and vol sector, the greater the demand on council services. It's short-sighted and shows an uncaring set of elected representatives. I also think the equalities assessment of Stripey Stalk misses some important points around age and sex - the people impacted by this will be disproportionately women (it's women who suffer most when child-related help is diminished) and particular age groups are affected most, namely babies, young children and people of parenting age, most likely under 35s and perhaps some very young parents. It's noteworthy that Stripey Stalk say their services won't be affected but there will be greater pressure on their fundraising - this simply speaks to their commitment to serve the people they help and not because they can easily absorb the reduced funding.
43. Why are you spending so much on postage and printing and software in the first place that you can make such big savings? Have a thorough review and go to tender on contracts.
44. No idea what some of these mean!
45. Surrey is quickly becoming a really horrible place to live. There's increased crimes and legal activities, thousands of drug dealers openly dealing and running round the streets, thefts, burglary, youth crime; homelessness. Increasing budget for data protection and software should be the bottom of the priorities, you should look for cheaper suppliers and use this money to fund worthwhile charities and to build more affordable housing for your people. Charities need more support. Mental health and suicide is at an all-time low.

Staffing Costs

Proposals for changes to staffing costs reflected updates to salaries, savings from vacant posts and team reviews, budgetary adjustments and a new permanent post. These constituted:

- Provision for overall salary budget growth for contractual and cost of living increases
- Savings from the deletion of vacant posts across Customer Contact, Communications, Finance, Legal and IT
- Forecast savings from a planned review of the HR Team
- Budget adjustments from salary budget review across Planning, Economic Prosperity, Neighbourhood Operations, Revenues, Benefits and Fraud, and Community Partnerships
- Capitalising some costs in the Place Delivery Team
- New permanent funding for one post in the Emergency Planning Team

The following comments were received in response to this topic:

1. Very internally focused - you have a high percentage of vulnerable & residents needing help (debt, financial difficulties, housing, immigration, poverty etc). What are you doing to address this and by cutting funding to the volunteer sector leaves your residents more vulnerable and stranded.
2. Cost of living increases at what rate? Should only apply to lower paid workers at the present time
3. Regarding cost of living, only the lower paid should be given this. People on high salaries need not have this increase.
4. In-house IT reduction at the same time as increased software budget? Not a good idea. At central government level this has proven catastrophic.
5. Difficult to comment on any of these individually.
6. Reduce costs at the top, cut the better paid, cut expenses at the top, including limiting car schemes (lower value vehicles), etc. and ensure those that actually deliver the services are protected as best as can be. Increase workload for the top level - the real workload that is, and reduce the number of top-level staff. Protect the front line.
7. I think the detail you provide is nowhere enough or clear enough for the general public to be able give an opinion
8. Obviously staff should be paid a fair living wage, as long as this increase is going to lower paid staff and not just into higher manager's salaries. And again, a lot of these questions mean nothing to the general public without context, seems deliberate confusion is a continuously used tactic by governments.

9. I disagree with cost of living increases. That policy isn't translated to council taxpayers!! Council salaries should be as much as it costs to employ the best person for the job plus an additional amount for performance above what is required.
10. Again without knowing more details some of these questions cannot be commented on!
11. It is unclear whether the budget adjustments following salary reviews (item 4 above) would result in a cost saving or increase, so unable to comment. Regarding capitalising some costs in the Place Delivery Team - more information regarding cost savings would be required to make a comment here. I would suggest the new permanent post in the Emergency Planning Team could be a part time position, I have attended one of the meetings and it would be difficult to justify a full time role.
12. Not sure what the emergency planning team would do in addition to Central Government and Surrey County Council, there should be no replication
13. I am concerned that contact service levels have already fallen too low with covid still an excuse.
14. I would want to know more about deleting vacant posts before agreeing or disagreeing. These vacant posts may be critical to service delivery but just vacant because you have not yet managed to fill them.
15. The focus should be on core staff. Any mid level manager should be cut, salary increases should be minimalist for office based staff. Any excess on "woke" should be cut. Make everything more efficient. Cut the number of planning constraints and officers who are jobsworths and that will improve that department.
16. Horley Town Council believes that there is a need for the Communication Team to be fully resourced to facilitate better and more proactive communication with residents and with the Town Council. We also feel that the Finance team needs to be fully resourced as both the Finance and Communication teams are key contacts for HTC.
17. Agree with the need to rationalise teams but providing this does not affect services provided and response times and can be sustainably managed hopefully through natural wastage.
18. I agree with all of the above as they appear to make economical sense. Emergency planning is very important for residents.
19. Senior council managers are overpaid against outside employment
20. First of all you have to increase the common man's salaries in order to increase yours. By cutting down those posts, you're actually reducing the services providing. So don't do anything that harms the common man.
21. Staffing costs should go down if you do not have the money rather than raising costs to people and businesses in the borough putting them at risk.
22. Only merit pay rises are appropriate at current time

23. I don't see why I should pay more council tax so others can be better off. Any disposable income I have will decrease so others goes up.
24. Better training for contact teams would be better than more staff. When I had to call the service has been so bad that I have had to repeat my call four times to get the information required. Employ staff who really want to be there.
25. Civil servants seem to be paid higher than average in the private sector. We are in a period of squeeze following the covid pandemic. The council should play its part by freezing salaries and not fuelling inflation, or sitting in their ivory tower.
26. Would like more info, working for a different council and going through the same. Deleting a vacant post means expecting the rest of the team to work harder, so needs to be done in line with resources and workloads.
27. I do not agree with the reduction in contact centre staff. It's crucial that residents have decent access to contact the council.
28. Savings need to be made wherever possible.
29. Savings on staffing costs will depend on the roles being cut and any resultant impact on the service the council provides.
30. No one is achieving full cost of living increase so something like 5% should be set.
31. There should be no salary increases, CEO and senior management salaries should be reviewed and reduced.
32. I feel the savings proposed from deleting vacant posts is very misleading to the point of being dishonest. At least some of these posts are where staff have left and the council has chosen not to recruit to replace them. They are not, therefore, posts that are not needed, which I think is what you are indicating. You have not evidenced this proposal with information about reduced demand for those services. There will simply be more burden on those staff who are left.
33. Salary growth needs to be below cost of living otherwise we continue to fuel inflation.
34. Bring someone in whose job it is to save the value of their salary. This saving will then be felt year on year.
35. Depends on how much people earn . Giving someone on £13k a 5% increase possibly but someone on £113k probably not. Cannot have one size fits all approach. Again no idea what some of this means.

Other Comments

A number of other comments were received via email or social media. These comments were incorporated into the thematic analysis supporting the consultation report.

The following additional comments were received:

1. Can we focus our funds on less projects/issues, so our funds have a greater impact on a few clearly valuable and 'important to many' projects/issues? Without seeing exactly how and what the Council spends its funds on, it is difficult to suggest ways forward. Plus, most people don't seem to be aware that the majority of their council tax goes to the county rather than the Borough I expect the county loves this.
2. I am very concerned to hear that the Banstead Day Centre grant of £10,000 has been reduced by £2,500. The day centre is an important community facility, relied on by many local people. I hope that this decision is reviewed and the whole grant/ allowance reinstated.
 - *Note: Funding for the Banstead Day Centre is not being reduced, the reduction is in funding for the organisation Age Concern Banstead.*
3. Stripey Stork are fortunate to have been a core funded project of the council for a few years now. Whilst we only receive a modest grant (currently £3,000 a year) it means we get full business rate relief on the warehouse which saves us a lot of money. The current budget proposal seeks to cut this funding, or drastically reduce it which is a worry to us and other local charities. Especially at a time with local referral partners (including many of the Council teams) ask more and more of the service we provide. Small charities are a lifeline for local residents and often fill the gaps that statutory services no longer provide. These grants provide such a significant return on investment, and directly benefit the most vulnerable in our community.