

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24

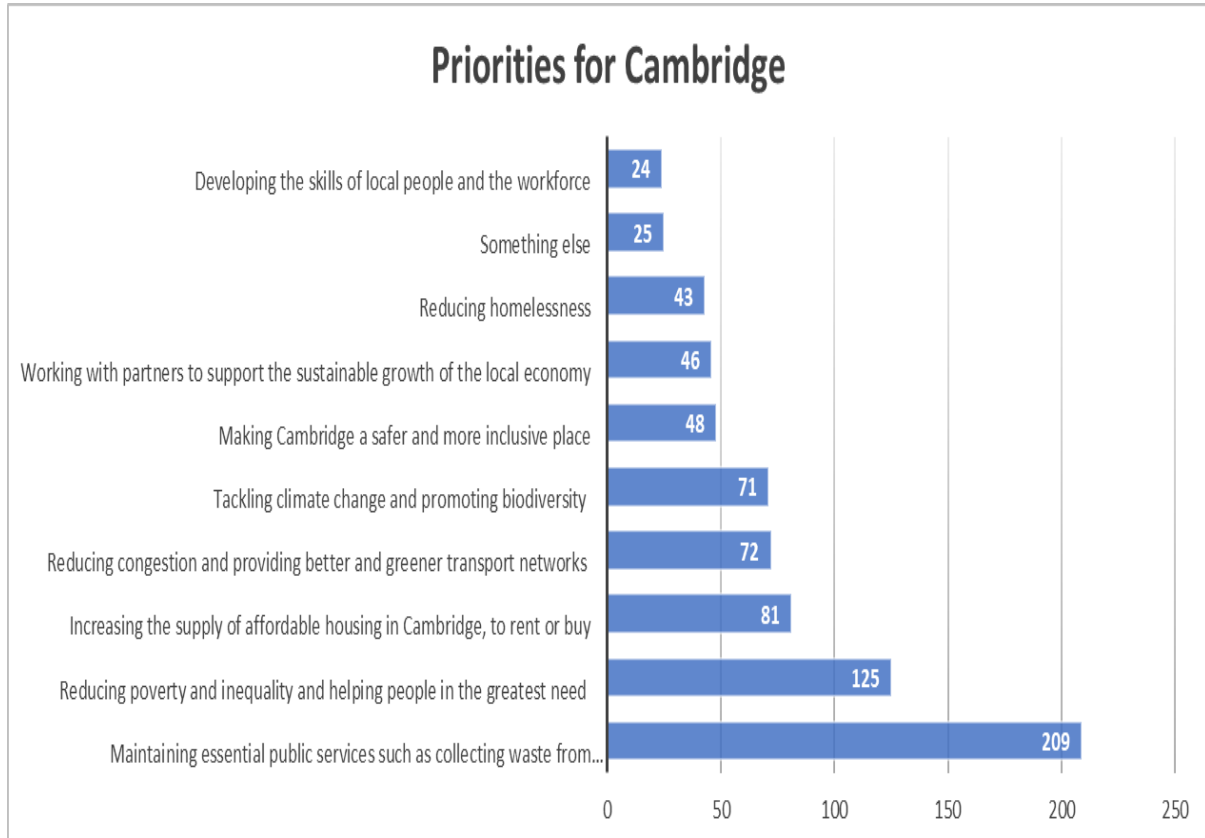
The total number of responses received between 12th December 2022 and 10th January 2023 was 248.

Of these, 91% stated they lived in Cambridge.

16% (39 respondees) said they owned or ran a business in Cambridge. 17 of those (44%) were self-employed; 7 (18%) were from not-for-profit organisations; 13 (33%) were from SMEs and 2 (5%) were from medium & larger businesses.

Priorities for Cambridge

Q4. When asked “What are the three most important priorities for Cambridge, in your opinion?”, respondees identified the following priorities:

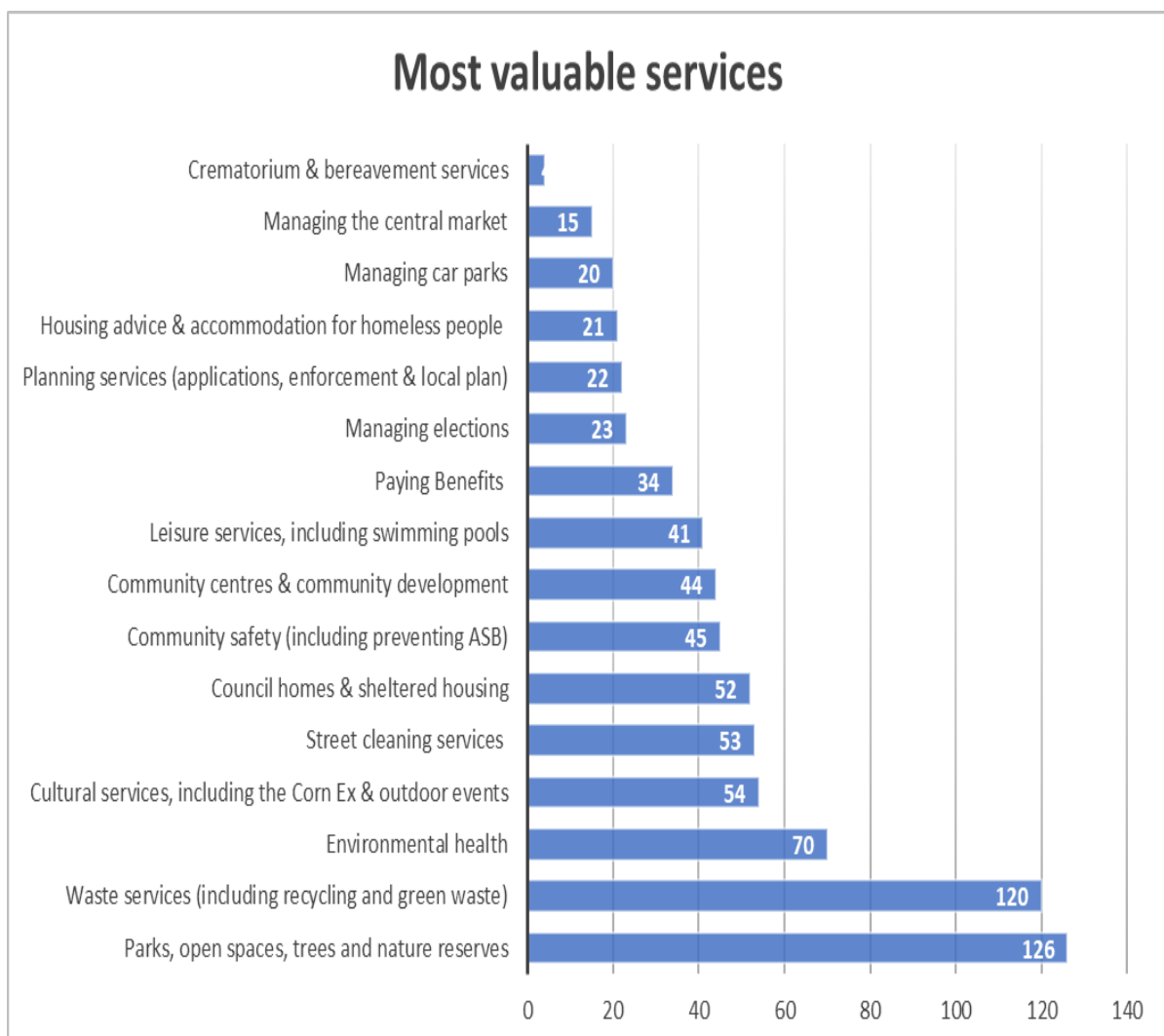


Suggestions for other priorities (“something else”) included:

- Reducing spend, including senior staff pay
- Waste & recycling (including gritting roads to allow bin collections)
- Protecting open spaces and the river Cam & protecting heritage assets
- Promoting arts & culture, providing people (including children) with activities, including skate spaces
- Supporting businesses including through local procurement
- Reducing crime
- Tackling the cost of living

Highly valued services

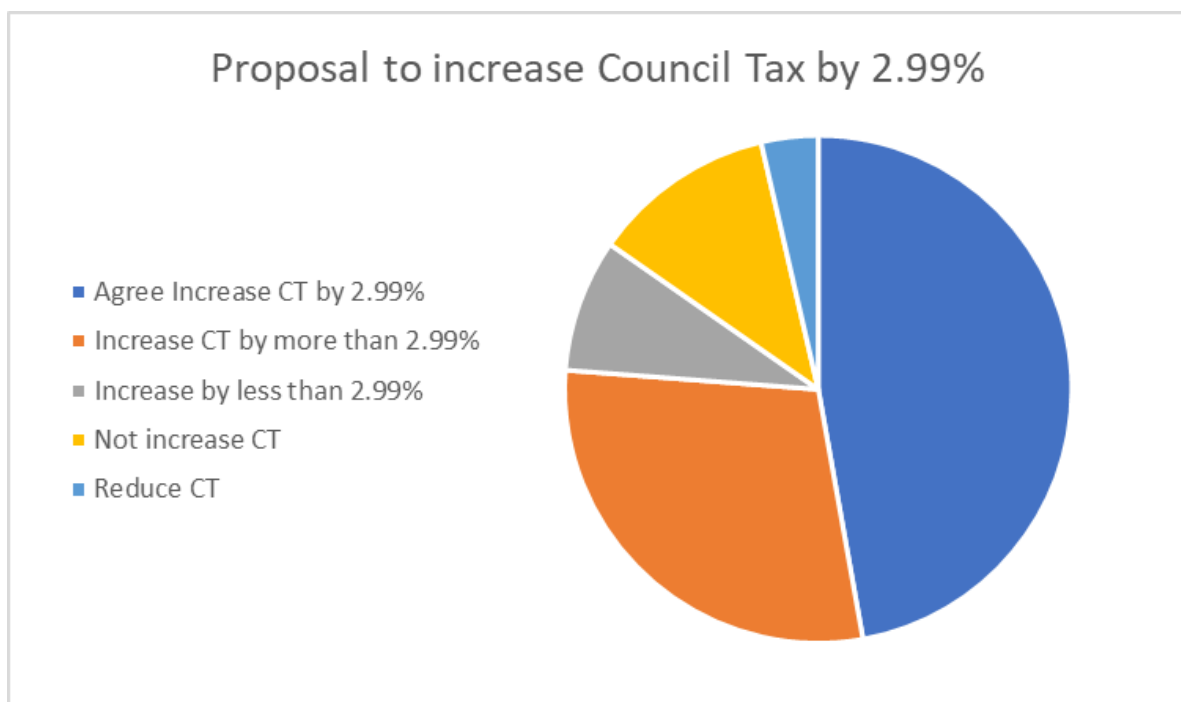
Q5. When asked to select the services that they valued most highly from a list of council services, respondents selected the following services:



Q6. Council Tax

47% of people agreed with the proposal in the draft budget to increase Council Tax by 2.99%, and 29% felt the Council should increase Council Tax by a greater amount.

8% felt the Council should increase Council Tax by a smaller amount; 12% felt the Council should not increase Council Tax this year and 4% felt the Council should reduce Council Tax.



Ideas suggested for alternative ways to finding the money the Council proposes to raise from increasing Council Tax included the following:

- Increase income from enforcement activity, fees and fines
- Increase or introduce fees and charges for services
- Charge businesses higher fees and taxes, increase sponsorship and donations
- Introduce a Tourist tax
- Boost business growth
- Reduce staff numbers or pay (particularly senior managers' pay)
- Reduce spend on offices / sell assets
- Outsource services
- More efficient/smarter working practices
- Reduce or stop services including "green" schemes and transport projects

Budget Proposals 2023/24

Respondee were invited to identify any of the specific proposals in the draft Budget 2023/24 that they particularly supported or opposed.

A list of the proposals likely to have the most impact on public services was provided, although it was explained that respondee were welcome to comment on any of the proposals in the draft budget.

The number of those indicating support or opposition to each proposal is shown in the table below. A summary of some of the reasons given follows the table.

Proposal	Number of respondee who support	Number of respondee who oppose
(URP5009) Providing mentoring, coaching, training and skills support for young people looking for work, training or further education	58	7
(URP5031) Continuing to employ additional youth liaison staff to respond to anti-social behaviour and safeguarding issues	52	3
(URP5090) Carrying out essential repairs to Jesus Green riverbank to prevent it from subsiding and to make it safer	37	7
(B5008) Providing financial support to low-income households who experience a gap between the level of benefits they receive and the cost of renting their homes.	44	6
(B5011) Carrying out an expert assessment of how the council can reduce carbon emissions from its fleet of vehicles in a coordinated and planned way	25	30
(B5032) Providing a budget to enable the Council to respond to needs that emerge during the course of the year for people in poverty	40	1
(B5059) Converting up to 20 refuse trucks to run on hydrotreated vegetable oil, to help reduce the Council's carbon emissions, as an interim measure until more electric or hydrogen-powered trucks are purchased	25	36
(S5102) Cancelling the Big Weekend, which currently provides a free summer festival for residents and visitors	69	62

Proposal	Number of respondees who support	Number of respondees who oppose
(S5106) Review of resources for public art delivery	35	13
(S5110) Removing subsidies for 3 current bus services provided by bus companies, from 2024 onwards. This could potentially lead to reduced operating hours and locations on the Citi 2 and Citi 3 route and the withdrawal of Citi 114 services on Saturdays, subject to bus operator decisions. However, any such change could potentially be compensated for by increased bus provision from 2024 onwards as part of the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Making Connections proposals, if those proposals are implemented	16	64
(S5112) Reducing the budget allocated for taxi-cards, which help disabled people on low incomes to pay for taxis, so that is in line with the current actual level of demand for taxi cards	26	15
(S5518) Closing underused public toilets (including full closure of Mill Road, Quayside and Chesterton Road facilities and weekend-only opening of public toilets at Chesterton Recreation Ground, Cherry Hinton High Street, Coleridge Recreation Ground, Romsey Recreation Ground and Victoria Avenue)	24	95
(S5139) Continue for one more year not to recruit to vacant posts in Street Cleaning and grounds maintenance teams, prioritising work within available resources	6	32
(S5143) Deletion of one full time Public Realm Enforcement Officer post	14	26
(URP5012) Increase in member (councillor) allowances in line with the National Living Wage increase of 6.6% for 2022/23	7	74
One resposdee also expressed opposition to URP5009 (Region of Learning); CAP5041, 5042 and 5046 (Swimming Pools); CAP5048 (CHUB); CAP5066 (laptop & desktop replacement); SC741 (Nightingale Rec Pavillion); SC752 (Byron's Pool) and SC806 (Timberworks nursery).		1

Respondees were invited to explain why they particularly supported or opposed the proposals they mentioned in answer to this question.

In general, the reasons centred on how highly valued the respective services were perceived to be, and whether it was right for the City Council to be delivering them.

So, support for proposals to provide additional resources for services or initiatives tended to be explained in terms of the services being useful or necessary, and tackling important issues (youth skills, anti-social behaviour, river bank maintenance, climate change, tackling poverty).

Support for proposals to reduce spend tended to be explained in terms of recognition that the council had to make tough financial choices and that “luxuries” or “nice to haves” were not priorities or not perceived to be a good use of public money (e.g. the Big Weekend), or where the proposal explained that the current level or resources was not essential (e.g. taxi cards, under-used toilets). A number of respondents commented on things they felt that the City Council should not be doing or funding.

Opposition to proposals for additional expenditure conversely tended to be explained in terms of a sense that some items were themselves not essential, nice to haves or luxuries (e.g. consultancy support for fleet decarbonisation; conversion of waste fleet to run on hydrotreated fuels).

Opposition to reductions in expenditure tended to be explained in terms of the perceived importance or value of services (e.g. Big Weekend, bus subsidies, public toilets, street cleaning and public realm) or concerns about the potential impacts of proposed reductions (public toilets – impacts for elderly and disabled and impact on city public space cleanliness).

As shown in the table, there was strongest opposition (compared to support) for S5518 (public toilets), S5110 (bus subsidies) S5139 (vacant posts in street cleaning & grounds maintenance) and URP5012 (member allowances). On the latter, there were strongly worded comments around apparent lack of equity with public sector workers, among other comments.

There was also significant opposition to the proposal to cancel the Big Weekend (S5102). However, there was numerically more support for this proposal than opposition. While some people cited it as a valuable cultural event, more people felt it was not something that should be prioritised, or that it was not valuable. A number of people who opposed the proposal to cancel felt that alternative sources of funding (sponsorship or ticketing) should be explored first, or that it should be reduced.

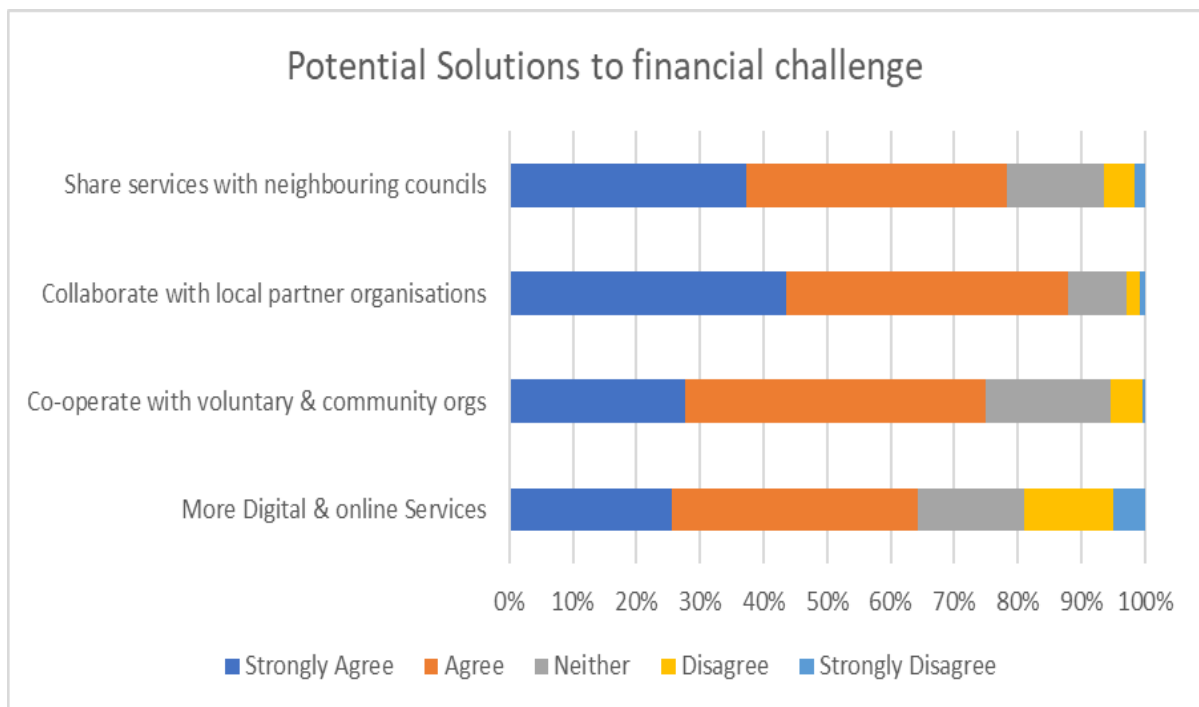
There was also strong support (compared to opposition) for youth skills (URP5009), youth liaison re anti-social behaviour (URP5031), Jesus Green riverbank repairs (URP5090), financial support for low income households (B5008), tackling poverty (B5032), and review of public art resources (B5106).

[To note: The trade union UNISON also submitted a response, suggesting that there may be additional equalities, community or staff impacts relating to proposals S5118 (public toilets), S5106 (public art) and S5102 (Big Weekend).

Officers will review the Budget EqIA to see whether any amendments are required in the light of the UNISON input ahead of the meeting of The Executive on 9th February 2023].

Q9. Potential Solutions

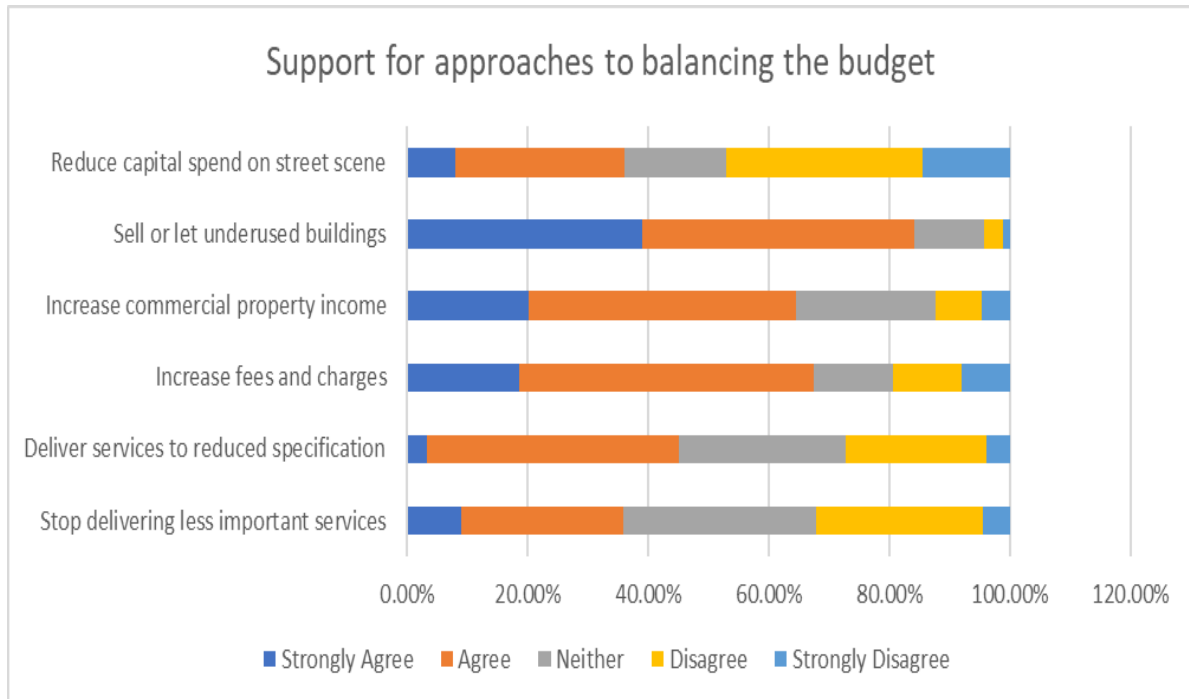
The strength of support for the following ways of addressing the council's financial challenge was as follows:



As the chart shows, there was strong support for each option, with between 64-88% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with each.

Q10. Options for balancing the budget

The strength of support for the following ways of helping to balance the council's budget was as follows:



- There was strongest support for selling or letting underused buildings and assets to generate income, with over 84% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
- There was also clear support for increasing income from commercial property (where viable) and increasing fees and charges for services, with 64.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
- On stopping or reducing services, 36% agreed or strongly agreed with stopping less important services, and 32.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 45.1% agreed or strongly agreed with delivering services to reduced specification or frequency, and 27.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- On reducing capital spend on physical assets and street scene projects, 36.1% agreed or strongly agreed, and 47% disagreed or strongly disagreed.