

Northumberland County Council

BUDGET ENGAGEMENT

2024|25



Northumberland
County Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

Each year the Council must set a balanced budget, which sets out funding for its services as well as its plans for investing. The budget must also take account of new cost-pressures as well as making sure all its services are as efficient as possible. The Council's budget setting process is happening now.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET PROPOSALS

Your views are really important because the Council exists to serve you and your community. So, from Tuesday December 12th, 2023 until the 26th January 2024 you can give your views in our online questionnaire.

This document sets out key budget proposals – its purpose is to inform Members, residents and partners, and help them engage with the Council's budget-setting.

As part of the consultation the Council is also planning an online event in the New Year where residents can ask the Leader of the Council questions on services and the budget. Look out for details of this on the Council's Web Home Page.

This consultation runs for six weeks until 26th January 2024 with the Budget due to go before Full Council in February 2024. Once you have read this document you can have your say in the budget survey via the following link:

nland.cc/yoursay

Thank you for taking part.

HOW WE USE YOUR DATA

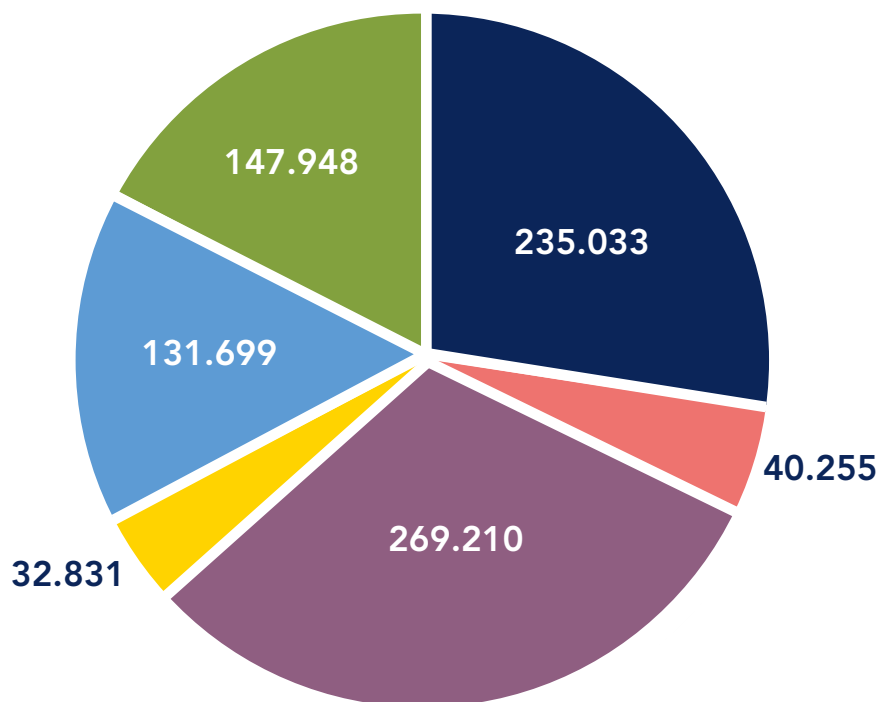
Northumberland County Council is the data controller of the information collected by us. The information collected will enable us to obtain feedback and valuable insights on the 2024-25 budget planning process. We will not provide your personal information to any external organisation or individual unless it is lawful to do so. For example, Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the prevention and/or detection of crime, where sharing is covered by a data sharing agreement or Service Level Agreement (SLA), or where you have provided explicit consent to do so. Personal data will be held securely, then destroyed in line with retention schedules. The Council's retention schedules, and Privacy Notice can be found on the website - www.northumberland.gov.uk

2. BACKGROUND TO THE COUNCIL'S FINANCES

In February 2023, Northumberland County Council agreed a balanced budget for the financial year 2023-24. The budget took account of the financial settlement from Government as well as the wider financial context, including significant price increases in the supplies we use to deliver services to residents.

Like most councils, our current budget sets out a range of efficiency measures and savings targets which are being delivered, even as we prepare the budget for next year. These measures ensure our services are value-for-money. However, in achieving this we will work hard to ensure residents and businesses do not experience cuts to their day-to-day services. As part of the budget setting process for 2023-24, the Council's Interim Executive Director of Finance was satisfied that the Council set a viable budget and confirmed that the Council had the required financial strength within its reserves to cope with any anticipated financial challenge.

Baseline Gross Budget 2023-24 (£m)



- Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing
- Children, Education and Young People
- Place and Regeneration (inc road, housing and climate change)
- Chief Executive (inc fire service, HR and policy)
- Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities
- Transformation and Resources (inc IT, finance and procurement)

THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET

OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

Northumberland: Land of Great Opportunities. With world-class facilities to stunning landscapes, spectacular castles, picturesque coastal and market towns, we believe there's no better place to live and work. Our economy boasts a growing, internationally-recognised offshore and renewable energy hub delivering clean and green growth. We also have a strong manufacturing base, including pharmaceuticals and life sciences. We are the largest and least densely populated local authority area in England. That makes for lots of communities with distinctive characteristics, heritage, functions and needs. We aim to build on all these strengths to ensure the county continues to be a land of great opportunities for current and future generations. To achieve this, Members and Council staff are focused on working together to deliver our three priorities: value for money; tackling inequalities; and driving economic growth.



ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY

operating
efficiently
and
effectively



TACKLING INEQUALITIES

supporting
everybody
to live their
best lives



DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH

enabling
prosperity
across the
county

Our corporate vision and priorities underpin the Council's budget and shape how we deliver all of our services and functions.

THE COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET

Councils have four main sources of revenue, namely:

- Council Tax;
- Government grants;
- Business Rates; and
- Fees and charges for services.

Unlike Government, our ability to raise other forms of taxes or income is very limited and we cannot borrow money to finance day-to-day spending on Council services. We use our revenue budget to meet the cost of day-to-day spending such as salaries, supplies and services.

Some of the funding we receive is 'ringfenced' to fund certain services or one-off projects such as for Public Health initiatives. This means that when the money is given, there are conditions attached stating how it can be spent. We can only use it for that purpose. It's for this reason that funding from some grants cannot be re-allocated to other service areas (e.g. from major road improvement schemes to libraries). The running costs of schools is included within the Council's revenue budget, but this funding is protected and therefore cannot be taken for savings.

OUR APPROACH TO BUDGET SETTING

Councils are required by law to deliver a balanced budget and so cannot spend more than is available. In previous budget consultations and budget monitoring reports we have mentioned growing demand for services such as social care for vulnerable children and adults and inflation as 'budget pressures'. These trends continue. The Council has a track record for managing its finances well and is high-performing in key services such as Children's and Adults' Services as well as School Improvement.

OUR FINANCIAL STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES FROM OUR CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES:

(i) Best customer experience

- Continuing the improvement in our customer contact.
- Encouraging more residents to use digital to contact & transact with us whilst maintaining other 'channels' of customer contact available.

(ii) Making the best spending decisions

- Making 'every penny count' – using our purchasing power and ensuring an efficient 'back office'.
- Making long-term, sustainable funding decisions and maintaining a prudent level of reserves.
- Ensuring a sustainable tax-base, and maximising use of external funding streams.
- Spending local.
- Achieving efficiencies and better ways of doing things from our service reviews, using benchmarking to ensure value for money in services.
- Maximising income and covering costs where it is fair and sensible to do so.

(iii) Working better, more efficiently

- Ensuring our 'back office' is as efficient and effective as possible.
- Making the best possible use of our estate – making sure our land and buildings are fit for purpose and are run efficiently.

(iv) Making a difference with digital

- Making sure the Council's IT systems are joined up and fit for purpose to provide the best services to residents.
- Encouraging more use of digital services and access for our residents.

(v) Empowered and resilient communities

- Continuing to support households in need of help and helping communities to do more through for example our Communities Together Team and support to voluntary and community groups.

(vi) Children and young people have the best start in life and grow up well

- Ensuring our statutory services to children and families continue to be top performing, investing in prevention to manage demand in the medium to long-term.
- Continuing to invest in facilities that young people and families value most e.g. new and refurbished school buildings and leisure facilities.
- Supporting School Improvement – maintaining the very positive levels of primary and secondary school performance.

(vii) All adults living well, regardless of age, background, illness or disability

- Continuing to prioritise our statutory services to the adults who need our help most and helping them to live independently and have choice and control over their lives.
- Investing in our communities to build resilience and capacity.

(viii) Residents have the building blocks of a good life

- Continuing to support households through Northumberland Communities Together.
- Continuing to help people into jobs including playing our own part as an employer e.g. through our commitment to apprenticeships and our graduate recruitment scheme.

(ix) Thriving places and culture

- Protecting frontline, local services which keep neighbourhoods clean, safe and pleasant places to live and do business.
- Investing in regeneration in towns.
- Improving our walking and cycling paths.

(x) A diverse and resilient economy

- Agreeing an ambitious Capital Programme to create the conditions for economic growth.
- Continuing our commitment to supporting local economies in town centres.
- Investing in our rural economy through the 'Borderlands Plan'.
- Ensuring we continue to maximise the benefit for Northumberland businesses and residents from the new Combined Authority.

(xi) Skilled and aspirational people

- Supporting adult skills and learning – in partnership with the Combined Authority and other providers.

(xii) A connected county

- Continuing to invest in maintaining and improving our roads.
- Driving ahead with work on the Northumberland Line.
- Supporting roll out of Superfast Broadband across the County.
- Protecting and enhancing our environment.
- Continuing investment in parks and green spaces.
- Protecting the local services residents and businesses value.
- Continuing our commitment to addressing Climate Change.

Budget Pressures

Like many councils, Northumberland faces, ongoing financial pressures, in particular:

- Rapidly increasing cost in all of our supplies and services which we need to absorb in order to continue delivering day-to-day services.
- Increasing demands on Children's and Education budgets.
- Increasing demand for care and support to vulnerable adults and older people.

Alongside dealing with these specific pressures, the expectations of our residents and businesses have not diminished. In fact, we are responding to changing demands as some residents opt for new ways of interacting with the Council and more personalised services, whilst others prefer traditional forms of contact.

Capital Budget Pressures

For every £1 million the Council borrows, the cost to the revenue budget is currently approximately £0.088 million if the borrowing is over 20 to 30 years. The Council is facing rapid increases in interest rates and that means we have to review our Capital Programme as the cost of borrowing is significantly higher than originally anticipated. This may involve some capital projects being deferred or reduced in scope or 'value engineered' to reduce costs. However, overall, the Council remains committed to an ambitious programme of investing for the future in infrastructure, facilities and equipment.

In response to these pressures, all services have been asked to consider all savings that could be made.

3. OPTIONS FOR ACHIEVING A BALANCED BUDGET

Options that could contribute towards balancing the budget are outlined below. Given the range of services we deliver alongside legal requirements there is no single solution. Instead, a blended approach to these options needs to be considered.

1. Making the case to Government for sustainable funding for local services

– our ability to deliver high-quality local services within a balanced budget depends largely on grant funding from Government. We continue to make the case to Government, alongside other councils, for sustainable funding for local services. We focus our case to Government on funding growth and pressures in Adults and Children's Services as these are services to the most vulnerable people in our communities, but we are also making the case for day-to-day services that are important for everyone such as roads for example.

2. Using the County Council's reserves

– the Council has been prudent in setting aside reserves from previous years which we have used to 'invest to save', manage budget shortfalls in-year as well as responding to unforeseen events and trends such as the recent inflationary pressures on supplies and services. However, continuing to use reserves to bridge the budget gap is not a sustainable option because the use of reserves does not address underlying budget pressures. If we continue to use reserves to meet budget pressures, we will quickly exhaust our reserves. This will result in two things: firstly we will not have reserves with which to respond to unforeseen events; and, secondly, unless changes are made, the budget pressures in services will persist, threatening the Council's overall budget position.

3. Use of grants

– the Council receives specific, external grants for services and investment. Most of these grants come from Government and are usually 'ringfenced' which means the Council is required to spend them on certain services in specific ways. However, there is often some, limited flexibility in grant conditions and where these flexibilities exist, we will think about smarter ways of using grants to secure the best services and outcomes for residents.

4. Generating income

- The Council can raise commercial income to fund services and help with costs, e.g. through renting property. When we sell assets such as land and buildings, we can only use the receipts for one-off capital projects and not for funding day-to-day services. There are limits to how much income we can make, not least ensuring we cover costs, so we are not putting pressure on core budgets and services. The Council is not generally allowed to make a profit from traded services.

We also have the option to cover the costs of some services by asking the people who use them to pay fees and charges. Whilst this only impacts residents who are using and benefiting from the services, this is not a choice we make lightly – we know many residents' household budgets have also been squeezed by rising costs and we want to avoid wherever possible adding to those pressures. We already charge for some services though the vast majority of our services are free at the point of use.

5. Management of vacancies – the Council has over 5,000 staff so, at any given time there will always be vacant posts across our services as people move on to other jobs inside and outside the organisation or reach retirement. Whenever there are vacant posts in any service, we encourage managers to consider the options. Could they delete the vacant post as a budget saving with no adverse impact on services to residents? Might they delay filling the vacant posts as part of budget management? Are there opportunities to discuss shared cover with other services? In some cases, there will be a pressing need to fill a vacancy to deliver critical care services and managers are supported to do that.

6. Changes to services – Our residents, businesses and partners value the services we provide. But they also expect us to think about how we might modernise these services keeping up with changes in society and technology as well as changing demands and expectations from customers. They also, rightly expect we will always strive to ensure our services are as efficient and cost-effective as they can be. We do all of that through a range of approaches including:

(i) Our new 'BEST' ways of working – now and moving forward into the coming months and years the Council is re-thinking how we deliver services, where there are potential overlaps and duplication and how we harness exciting new technologies to provide residents with what they want and at better value for money. Our budget proposals set out a number of BEST reviews.

(ii) Completing existing service reviews – prior to the launch of our 'BEST' ways of working, we already had a number of service reviews underway. As part of the budget proposals for 2024-25 we will complete and implement these reviews.

(iii) Ensuring we get best value from our contracts – where the Council contracts with businesses and external organisations, residents expect us to continue to review our contracts, ensuring we are buying the products and services at the best possible prices.

(iv) Making Straightforward efficiencies – where there are simple and straightforward efficiencies, we can make which don't require in-depth reviews or contract negotiations, we will get on with taking these – that is just common-sense.

(v) Managing demand – this may involve thinking of ways to safely reduce demand for some services, or 'smoothing' peaks and troughs in demand so that pressures on services and budgets are more predictable during the year and we avoid budget overspends wherever possible. Managing demand is important for higher-cost services such as care to adults and children. But this is not straightforward as these are services which help some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Managing demand can involve providing support in different ways – for example helping some families earlier so they don't need more intensive and high-cost support further down the line.

(vi) Reductions to services – the Council has worked hard in recent years to avoid service reductions and will continue to do so through these budget proposals. Generally, the Council will only propose reductions in services as a last resort.

4. SERVICE PROPOSALS

PLACE AND REGENERATION

WHAT WE DELIVER FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES:

Our roads and highways are critical to the lives of our residents, businesses and visitors. They ensure people can get to work or education easily and safely as well as able to access all the amenities and attractions Northumberland has to offer. Our Street Cleansing service ensure safe and clean neighbourhoods. Our vibrant towns and attractions across the county require well-maintained car parks and effective management of parking to keep our roads moving and ensures fair access for everyone. Our paths and cycleways support and encourage people to live healthily and do their bit for the environment. And let's not forget about public conveniences. In a county as large as ours, with fantastic beaches and open spaces we all value a network of well-maintained public toilets.

Access to good-quality and affordable housing options are basic 'building blocks' for the lives of all residents. Equally, residents and visitors want to enjoy well-maintained country parks and open spaces which give them access to nature and opportunities for healthy living. They also want all our open spaces to be attractive and well-maintained. Our residents and businesses expect their bins to be collected reliably and efficiently but, they also want opportunities to recycle and reduce waste too.

One of the Council's three corporate priorities is to drive growth and jobs because having vibrant and growing businesses and well-paid, good quality jobs for our residents is the best way of tackling inequalities in Northumberland. The Council, working with Government, the Combined Authority, partners and businesses has a vital role to play in: creating the conditions for businesses to flourish; attracting new investors to the County; building the infrastructure needed to support a modern economy; and ensuring our residents have the skills businesses need now and in the future.

We do all of this through:

1. Supporting business start-up and growth;
2. Regenerating communities;
3. Investing in towns and villages; and,
4. Investing in jobs and skills development.



CURRENT REVENUE SERVICE BUDGET

The Council spends some **£131.7 million** delivering these services.

Budget Pressures

- Significant inflationary increases are being experienced in relation to capital contracts as it becomes more expensive to build or repair everything from roads to buildings.
- These services are particularly impacted by rising energy costs and prices for supplies and services.
- Like all services, Place and Regeneration budgets are impacted by pay inflation.

Investing In The Future

In the coming year we propose continuing to invest in the future of the County through our 'capital programme', including in:

- Powburn Depot Recycling Facility
- Regenerating towns, including Cramlington, Bedlington, Prudhoe and Hexham
- Parks Enhancement / Green Spaces Programme
- Roads and pavements

What We Are Proposing To Do Differently

In these services, we propose to contribute to a balanced budget through the following measures:

- Generating new and additional income of £0.210 million
- Delivering efficiencies of £0.729 million
- Delivering contract savings of £0.010 million
- Delivering savings from BEST value for money reviews of £0.642 million

In summary these proposals will contribute £1.591 million towards the Council's balanced budget from a total budget for these services of £131.7 million.

What will these changes mean for people?

These proposals are substantially about generating additional income, delivering efficiencies, securing the best value for money in our contracts and doing things better and more efficiently through BEST reviews.

Proposals for proportionate increases to charges for some services will not result in any reduction in levels of service to customers. In fact, these charges will help us to maintain current levels of service at a time of rising costs. These services are optional – not all residents choose to use them, and alternatives are available to residents who do not wish to pay increased charges.

What We Are Not Proposing

In putting together these proposals we have considered a wide range of options but have ruled out the following:

- Introducing new car parking charges. In places where there is currently a free parking offer – such as our main town centres – we will maintain that offer.
- Introducing charges for public conveniences. These facilities encourage our residents to enjoy all of Northumberland and so will remain free to use.



Questions To Consider

1. Is it fair to ask residents and visitors to the County to pay modest increases in charges for services that are optional and where there are alternatives?
2. Are residents and businesses happy for the Council to get on with making sensible, cost and contract efficiencies where these don't result in noticeable reductions in service standards?
3. Are there any reductions in these services that you would be prepared to accept?
4. Do you have other potential savings, efficiencies or ideas for income generation?

PUBLIC HEALTH, INEQUALITIES AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

WHAT WE DELIVER FOR PEOPLE:

The Council is passionate about tackling the inequalities that exist between our most and least affluent areas. That is why one of our three core priorities is to tackle inequalities, backed by our Inequalities Plan and a commitment to work in new and more effective ways with partners to address this important issue. Building on the experience of the Equality Impact Assessment process we are working towards an Integrated Impact Assessment approach where we consider the impact of our decisions not only on our Public Sector Equality Duty, but on our key commitments to reduce inequalities and our impact on the environment. The work to tackle social and economic inequalities is bolstered by providing direct services to support public health improvement for people who need more intensive support, including for example, support to stop smoking or dealing with drugs and alcohol issues.

We also work through the Council's 'Communities Together' team to build community resilience, helping local people to get more involved in their neighbourhoods and take more decisions locally. This includes the Council working with voluntary and community sector groups (VCS) and funding them to provide services too and we will look for opportunities to work in new and different ways with the VCS going forward.

In previous years, the Council has supported some of the lowest income households with a local Council Tax Support scheme. Given the cost-of-living pressures on households we propose to continue this scheme in 2024-25.

Equally important to all our residents are the arts and culture services we provide directly or help fund such as local theatres and festivals for all to enjoy. And don't forget, the Council continues to maintain a network of libraries across the County as well as investing in high-quality leisure centres – at a time when, sadly, neighbouring councils are having to close down key facilities. We know investing in facilities, arts and culture are the lifeblood of our towns and villages and are also good for the visitor economy.



CURRENT REVENUE SERVICE BUDGET

The Council spends some **£32.8 million** delivering these services.

Budget Pressures

- These services are impacted by rising energy costs and prices for supplies and services.
- Like all services, these budgets are impacted by pay inflation.

Investing In The Future

In the coming year we propose continuing to invest in the future of the county through our 'capital programme', including in:

- A mobile Library Service vehicle.

What We Are Proposing To Do Differently

In these services, we propose to contribute to a balanced budget through the following measures:

- Delivering contract savings of £0.200 million
- Delivering savings from BEST value for money reviews of £0.500 million
- In summary these proposals will contribute £0.700 million towards the Council's balanced budget from a total budget for these services of £32.8 million. No service reductions in these services are proposed.

What Will These Changes Mean For Customers?

These proposals are not service reductions and should help us to deliver services which our residents want now and in the future.

What We Are Not Proposing

In putting together these proposals we have considered a wide range of options but have ruled out the following:

- Stepping back from our commitment to high-quality leisure facilities and provision.
- Cutting back in our Library provision in the ways some other councils have had to do in recent years.



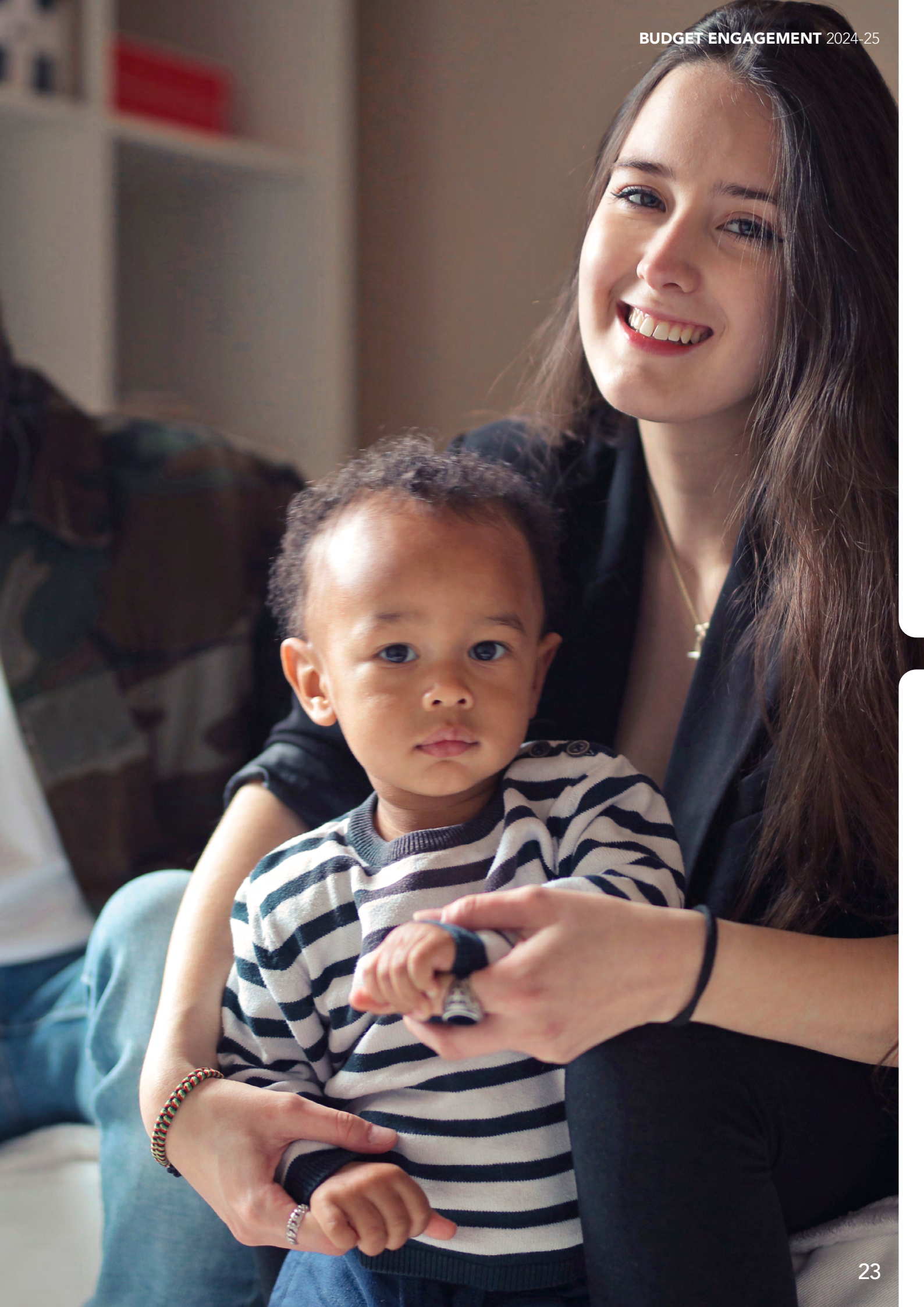
Questions To Consider

1. Are residents and businesses happy for the Council to get on with making sensible, cost and contract efficiencies where these don't result in noticeable reductions in service standards?
2. Are there any reductions in these services that you would be prepared to accept?
3. Do you have other potential savings, efficiencies or ideas for income generation?
4. Do you agree with the proposal to continue the local council tax support scheme in 2024-25?

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

WHAT WE DELIVER FOR FAMILIES:

We ensure the County's children and young people go to school in good-quality facilities and most importantly our Teachers and Head Teachers are supported to maintain and improve education opportunities and attainment for our young people. We also support young people and adults to develop the skills they need to fulfil their employment aspirations. Alongside education and skills, we provide support to families who need our help most, providing advice and guidance for parents and young people to make the best choices in their lives through our Family Hubs and other provision. In some cases, where families cannot cope and when young people are at risk, the Council has to 'step in' and look after some children, acting as a 'corporate parent'.



CURRENT REVENUE SERVICE BUDGET

The Council spends some £269.2 million on these services (including schools funding).

Budget pressures

- New children's homes that are being built / acquired to keep Northumberland children in the county which will in turn reduce the cost of out of county placements.
- Additional funding required for short break services for disabled children.
- The increased pressure resulting from a mandatory inflationary increase of 12.50% introduced by the Department for Education for foster care and special guardianship allowances.
- A significant increase in funding is required for external residential placements as the needs of the children are complex and the placements costly.

Investing In The Future

In the coming year we propose continuing to invest in the future of the County through our 'capital programme', including in:

- Our programme of school investment.
- Housing for disabled children.

What We Are Proposing To Do Differently

In these services, we propose to contribute to a balanced budget through the following measures:

- Delivering contract savings of £0.1 million
- Making best use of grants of £0.887 million
- Safely managing demand for services of £0.606 million
- Delivering savings from BEST value for money reviews of £0.136 million
- Making straightforward and sensible efficiencies of £0.100 million
- Delivering service reviews of £0.156 million
- Effectively managing staff vacancies of £0.099 million
- In summary these proposals will contribute £2.084 million towards the Council's balanced budget from a total budget for these services of £269.2 million. No service reductions in these services are proposed.

What will these changes mean for families and young people?

- Our proposals will save money to help sustain services. There should be no adverse impact in service provision and indeed these proposals will deliver benefits to young people and families.
- Using grants to sustain services is simply a smarter use of Government funding with no reductions for existing services. Completing service reviews will deliver more effective services.
- Managing staff vacancies are a sensible way of saving staff budgets which empower managers to make the right decisions.
- Delivering contract savings should not impact adversely on service standards and are a way of ensuring best value for money in the Council's 'supply chain'.

What We Are Not Proposing

In putting together these proposals we have considered a wide range of options but have ruled out the following:

- Re-thinking our commitment to investment in rebuilding and refurbishing our schools. The Council will progress its programme of investing in school facilities for our young people.



Questions To Consider

1. Do you have concerns on any of the budget proposals outlined for services to children and young people? If yes, what are these?
2. Are you happy for the Council to get on with making sensible, cost efficiencies where these don't result in noticeable reductions in service standards?
3. Are there any reductions in services for children and young people that you would be prepared to accept?
4. Do you have other potential savings, efficiencies or ideas for income generation?

ADULTS

WHAT WE DELIVER FOR ADULTS:

We provide help, care and support for adults who need our help most, including services for older people, disabled adults or adults with long-term illness. We do this through direct care and support as well as commissioning care and support services to meet the needs of our residents. We also support independent living, helping older people to live happily in their homes and communities for as long as possible. And we provide support for the voluntary and community sector for their work with adults who need care and support.



CURRENT REVENUE SERVICE BUDGET

The Council spends some **£235 million** on these services.

Budget Pressures

- The Real Living Wage has been included for Social Care contract budgets across the Medium-Term-Financial-Plan period.
- These services are impacted by rising energy costs and prices for supplies and services.
- Like all services, these budgets are impacted by pay inflation.

What We Are Proposing To Do Differently

In these services, we propose to contribute to a balanced budget through the following measures:

- Making best use of grants of £0.09 million
- Safely managing demand for services of £3 million
- Delivering savings from BEST value for money reviews of £0.057 million
- Making straightforward and sensible efficiencies of £0.277 million
- Generating new and additional income of £0.206 million
- In summary these proposals will contribute £3.63 million towards the Council's balanced budget from a total budget for these services of £235 million. No service reductions in these services are proposed.

What Will These Changes Mean For People?

- Our proposals will identify ways people's needs can be better managed, increasing their independence, providing more personalised and less formal care as well as reducing costs. They will lead to better integrated responses to individual needs.
- These proposals will also reduce delays in assessing or reviewing what charges people will be asked to pay as well as making smarter use of grants and managing vacant posts which are no longer needed because of changes in the way services are provided.

What We Are Not Proposing

In putting together these proposals we have considered a wide range of options but have ruled out the following:

- Reducing services for vulnerable adults who need our help.
- Making steep increases in charges.



Questions To Consider

1. Do you have concerns on any of the budget proposals outlined for services to adults? If yes, what are these?
2. Are you happy for the Council to get on with making sensible, cost efficiencies where these don't result in noticeable reductions in service standards?
3. Are there any reductions in services for adults that you would be prepared to accept?
4. Do you have other potential savings, efficiencies or ideas for income generation?

ENABLING SERVICES

WHAT WE DELIVER FOR PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES:

Like all councils, we require a range of professional and technical services which support and enable our frontline teams to deliver efficient and effective day-to-day services. These enabling services include for example human resources, finance, legal services, audit and risk. These types of services are often known as the 'back office' and will naturally be less visible to residents, though these play a vital role in enabling 'frontline' teams to do their jobs.



Investing In The Future

In the coming year we propose continuing to invest in the future of the county through our 'capital programme', including in:

- The Council's Network Infrastructure Modernisation.
- Fire & Rescue Service Fire Control Upgrade / Replacement.

What We Are Proposing To Do Differently

In these services, we propose to contribute to a balanced budget through the following measures:

- Delivering savings from BEST value for money reviews of £2.296 million
- Making straightforward and sensible efficiencies of £0.085 million
- Generating new and additional income of £0.101 million
- Delivering contract savings of £0.295 million
- Effectively managing staff vacancies of £0.077 million
- In summary these proposals will contribute £2.854 million towards the Council's balanced budget. No service reductions in these services are proposed.

What Will These Changes Mean For People?

These proposals will not impact adversely on our residents and the Council's enabling services will continue to provide support to frontline teams.



Questions To Consider

1. Do you have concerns on any of the budget proposals outlined for these services? If yes, what are these?
2. Do you have other potential savings, efficiencies or ideas for income generation?



Northumberland
County Council

For more information go to:

www.northumberland.gov.uk