

# Northampton Disabled People's Forum

on Tuesday, 21 January 2014 at 5:30 pm until not later than 7:30 pm

in The Holding Room, The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE

## Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes and Matters Arising**
4. **Disabled Facilities Grant - Rachel Frondigoun, DFG Team Lead (NBC)**
5. **Budget 2014/15 - Cllr. Alan Bottwood**
6. **Taking the Forum forward**
  - (A) Code of conduct
  - (B) Action Plans
  - (C) Events Calendar
7. **Community Information Exchange**
8. **Items for Next and Future Meetings**
9. **Date of the Next Meeting**

Map and directions at: [www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall)

For more information about this meeting please contact:  
Alice Morgan, Community Development Officer



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Tel: 01604 837795



More information about the Forum generally is at: [www.northampton.gov.uk/forums](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/forums)



Facebook page: [www.northampton.gov.uk/dpf](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/dpf)

Please note that this Forum is supported and funded by Northampton Borough Council. The Forum may work in partnership and collaboration with other community groups, councils and local services from time to time. The views expressed and decisions taken by the Forum are not necessarily those of Northampton Borough Council.



NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**NORTHAMPTON DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM**

**Tuesday, 19 November 2013**

Members: Co-Chairs Councillor Larratt and Martin De Rosario  
Councillor Mennell, Christine Woodhams, Madeline Boys, Adore Perrie, Larry Barber, Barbara Barber, Rashmi Shah and Ann Timson

Officers: Alice Morgan, Vicki Rockall, Matt Steele, Graeme Wilson, Steve Johnson and Nathan Birch,

Guests: Gracie Okusanya, Elliot Boyd and Dean Eales

## **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

## **2. APOLOGIES**

Lindsey Ambrose

## **3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes were AGREED.

Feedback regarding the new Railway Station was still awaited and would be reported to the next meeting.

The Group's comments on the parks consultation would be reported to the Scrutiny Panel next week and then to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in due course.

## **4. CONSULTATIONS**

### **4A. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2014/15**

The Group received a presentation from Matt Steele, Benefits Manager, regarding the current consultation on changing the amount of funding available from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). A Funding gap of £1million had been identified and the proposal was to reduce the CTR from 91% to 85%. The Council was required to undertake a consultation each time they wished to change the CTR Scheme. The consultation was underway and would run until 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

Members of the public could take part in the consultation by visiting the Council website, calling the Council direct or visiting the One-Stop-Shop.

Further information is available at <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/ctrs-year2-consultation>

## **4B. NEXUS PLANNING LTD - PROJECT ANGEL**

Elliott Boyd, from BDH Architects, outlined the proposals for a new County Council building in Angel Street, Northampton. The new offices would bring together around 2000 staff, currently based in 12 buildings across the county. The design had been based on truly accessible building, one that could be an exemplar of disability access in a new build. The ground floor would be a public space, with a public square in the North-East corner (Angel Street/Fetter Street). There would be level access, with special attention to all details with regard to access including; surfaces; lighting; contrast of materials; an integrated hearing loop; acoustics; fire safety; door handles and toilets.

It was expected that this public space would be available for a variety of uses, including meetings, as well as serving as the reception for the building. There would be disabled parking available immediately outside the entrance and in the underground car park. It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted in February/March 2014 and construction completed by December 2016.

Further details on Project Angel can be viewed at:

<http://www.northamptonez.co.uk/alive/project-angel/>

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/environ/economic/pages/projectangel.aspx>

## **5. DISCUSSIONS / EVENT PLANNING**

### **5A. DISABLEDGO**

Dean Eales, Account Manager with DisabledGo made a presentation to the Group. DisabledGo is a free online access information resource, featuring detailed access information to over 100,000 public venues across the UK. In Northampton, DisabledGo have surveyed over 400 public venues. DisabledGo are due to review all the information contained on the guide in March 2014, at the same time there will be an opportunity to add between 25-100 new venues to the guide. Suggestions for new venues can be sent direct to Dean.

DisabledGo will shortly be launching a new and enhanced website, if anybody is interested in 'road testing' it before it goes live they should contact Dean. The new website will include:

- More accessibility options
- Improved usability and ease of navigation
- A venue review system so that best practice can be highlighted and shortfalls identified
- An online shop selling around 900 mobility products

- Features on financial services
- Dedicated partner/sponsor area to access reports on accessibility and compile bespoke hard copy guides
- There will also be mobile/tablet friendly versions of the site

DisabledGo are currently looking at meeting with key local groups and organisations with an interest in disability in the Northampton area to see if there are ways we can work together with promotion of services. Individuals can contact Dean if there are any local groups they feel would benefit from meeting with DisabledGo.

The website can be viewed at:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/northampton-borough-council>

Contact Dean Eales at: [dean.eales@disabledgo.com](mailto:dean.eales@disabledgo.com)

(T) 01438 842710 (M) 07920 238082

## **5B. HEALTHWATCH**

Gracie Okusanya made a presentation on behalf of Healthwatch Northamptonshire. This was new organisation, set up in April 2013, which act as the consumer champion for health and social care. Healthwatch did not undertake individual casework, but gathered information to improve and develop local services. There are 152 local groups, of which Northamptonshire is one, and these feed into the national body Healthwatch England which can advise on national trends within health and social care.

Full details of local consultations and meetings can be found online at:

<http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/>

## **6. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

Graeme Wilson and Steve Johnson of Northampton Leisure Trust reported that the Danescamp Leisure Centre was to undergo a review of its disability access. This was part of continued aim to widen access and remove barriers to participation. They suggested making a future presentation to the Group on access at local leisure facilities.

Details of the Leisure Centres are available on the DisabledGo site or at:

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200166/leisure-centres>

## **7. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

To be agreed by the Chair and the Community Development Officer.

## **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Disabled Peoples Forum will be held on **Tuesday, 21 January 2014.**

The Meeting Concluded At 7:43 pm

## Budget in a minute 2014/15

- Extended free parking including every Saturday and 2 hours free during the week
- Business incentive scheme
- Capital budget projects and investment
- Providing an additional neighbourhood warden, two park rangers and a new vehicle
- Increase opening hours of Northampton Borough Council's museums
- Maintaining the investment of small community grants
- Senior management savings and review
- Staff terms and conditions

### Extended free parking including every Saturday and 2 hours free during the week

#### Proposal:

To provide more free parking to shoppers visiting the town throughout the year, including free parking every Saturday in multi-storey car parks (St John's, St Michael's, Grosvenor and Mayorhold) plus an extension of the previous one hour free stay to two hours in St John's, St Michael's, Grosvenor and Mayorhold.

#### Background:

- Northampton Borough Council is committed to providing convenient, safe and reasonably priced parking to help businesses, attract shoppers and visitors and improve the local economy
- In September 2011 Northampton Borough Council introduced cheaper parking in the town. Measures included: free parking on Sundays in all car parks; a stay of up to an hour free in the town's St John's, St Michael's and Mayorhold multi-storey car parks with two hour stays reduced by 25 per cent; and a 25 per cent reduction in the price of parking for two hours in Northampton's premier surface car parks and the Grosvenor Centre car park
- In summer 2013 and in the run up to Christmas, Northampton Borough Council offered free Saturday parking in the council's multi-storey car parks ( St John's, St Michael's, Grosvenor and Mayorhold) plus free parking on Thursdays from 3pm in all NBC car parks and continued free Sunday parking in all NBC car parks also
- The extended free parking will start April 2014

#### Budget investment if approved:

Free Saturdays: £282,348

First two hours free: £382,435

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## Business incentive scheme

### Proposal:

There will be more help for businesses looking to grow or join our town centre. Working with town centre businesses we want to invest £250,000 in improving the business environment and making our town centre a more vibrant and attractive location for shoppers and investors.

### Background:

- In consultation with businesses we will be looking at supporting existing businesses as well as attracting new enterprise to our town centre.
- We will set up a business incentive scheme, with an initial contribution of £250,000 to fund measures aimed to fill empty properties and encourage small businesses.
- The scheme would be in addition to the cap on business rate increases and doubling of Small Business Rate Relief that were announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.
- The scheme could see money invested in improving the appearance of the town centre and shop fronts of both occupied and vacant stores.
- The Council will also be looking at a range of incentives for business to take over vacant shops and premises.

### Budget investment if approved:

£250,000

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## Capital budget projects and investment

The Council's Capital Budget is used for investments in land, infrastructure and equipment.

### Proposals:

- Following the decommissioning of Greyfriars Bus Station work will start to demolish the building and free up land for redevelopment. The demolition programme will cost £3.5million and save the Council around £500,000 a year.
- The restoration work at Delapre Abbey will continue with over £1.1million being invested next year in essential work to restore the buildings and roofing.
- Work is also set to start on reopening Abington Street. Next year the Borough Council will invest £2.85million in supporting businesses and making it easier for shoppers and businesses to come into Northampton town centre.
- To support our Cultural Quarter we will be investing £2million in public realm improvements to establish the identity of the area, promote the features of the Quarter and make the area more welcoming to visitors who want to spend time enjoying what the area has to offer.
- This would include work to widen pavements for example, which would allow for street entertainment or pavement cafés

**Budget investment if approved:**

£13,663,567

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## **Providing an additional neighbourhood warden, two park rangers and a new vehicle**

**Proposal:**

To provide one new post for a town centre warden, two new posts for park rangers and a new vehicle for park rangers' use so that parks across the town can be more effectively patrolled and monitored

**Background:**

- Northampton Borough Council is committed to helping look after the town's parks and make Northampton a better place to live and visit
- In September 2011 Northampton Borough Council introduced dedicated park rangers to work with other agencies and community groups to look after three of the town's premier parks (Abington Park, Delapre Park and the Racecourse)
- In 2012 the council committed to investing further in the service to recruit one more fulltime and one part-time park ranger to look after other parks and green spaces in the town.
- There are currently 14 wardens working for Northampton Borough Council and 3 park rangers
- The previous town centre warden was established by 'borrowing' a warden from another area. This new post will make the position permanent
- The new warden will be responsible for environmental issues and supporting proactive projects designed to improve local quality of life in the town centre
- The two new park rangers will also be responsible for environmental issues and coordinating projects that provide other interests and attractions in our parks
- The aim of this proposal is to get the greatest efficiency from park rangers by making them as mobile and visible as possible. The new vehicle will mean that they can cover a greater number of parks more quickly.

**Budget investment if approved:**

£121,750

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## **Increase opening hours of Northampton Borough Council's museums**

**Proposal:**

To increase the opening times of Abington Park Museum on winter weekend afternoons and to re-open Northampton Museum & Art Gallery on Mondays.



### **Background:**

- The current opening hours of Abington Park Museum are April to October on Thursday – Sunday 1pm – 5pm
- The current opening hours of Northampton Museum & Art Gallery are Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 5pm and Sundays 2pm – 5pm all year round
- The extended opening hours will help increase tourism to Northampton and raise the town’s profile
- Many of the town’s cultural venues are shut on a Monday and it would therefore be beneficial to open Northampton Museum & Art Gallery on this day
- Abington Park is used all year round and the museum is a favourite with locals. Extending the opening hours of Abington Park Museum in the winter will make for a more effective use of the building and provide facilities for visitors using the park throughout the year

### **Budget investment if approved:**

£41,000

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## **Maintaining the investment of small community grants**

### **Proposal:**

To maintain the current investment of £50k to help community based projects in Northampton through the small based grants process.

### **Background:**

- Northampton Borough Council recognises the excellent work being done by community groups and voluntary groups in the town
- So far in 2013/2014 the small grant scheme has helped 10 local community and voluntary groups
- The small based grants are administered by Northampton Community Foundation (NCF) on behalf of NBC
- The funding of the grants will be reviewed in the future

### **Budget investment if approved:**

£50,000

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## **Senior management savings and review**

### **Proposal:**

The cost of senior management at Northampton Borough Council has reduced by more than 40% over the last three years. Since 2010/11, the number of senior managers has been cut from 21 to 10.

**Background:**

- These savings are a result of work to streamline the organisation and create efficiencies.
- Savings have been achieved through sharing back office functions such as HR and finance with other authorities through the LGSS scheme.
- Savings in the cost of senior management has helped to protect frontline services at the Borough Council.

**Budget saving since 2010/11:**

£850,000

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## **Staff terms and conditions**

**Proposal:**

Consult staff and Trade Unions on the review of a number of terms and conditions of employment, which will be discussed with trade unions and employees starting today.

**Background**

NBC is having to make £2 million worth of savings in 2014/15. These are unprecedented times and we have very difficult budget choices to make.

Last year the council removed the essential car user allowance and ended payment of professional fees on behalf of employees. A proposal to charge for parking for NBC staff was agreed but deferred until April 2014 and will now be implemented.

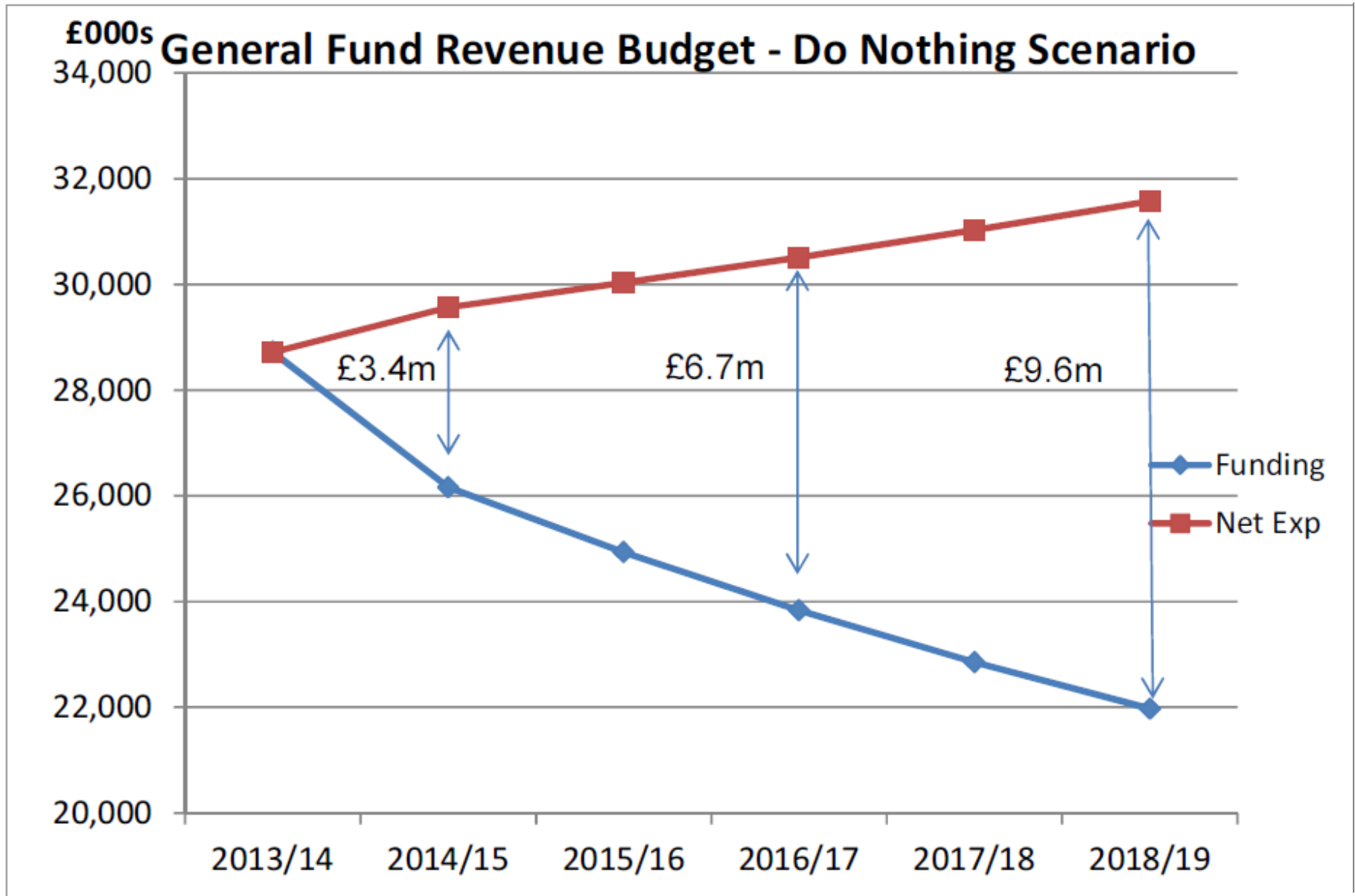
We have no option other than to look at reducing employment costs, which currently stand at £19.5 million a year. In 2014/15 it is anticipated that we will need to reduce this figure by £365,000.

The alternative we face would be making further difficult decisions about reducing services and jobs.

**Budget saving if approved:**

£365,000

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## Your views are wanted!

Northampton Borough Council is facing an unprecedented financial challenge. Cuts in Government grants and increasing demands for our services mean that we will need to find £2m of savings over 2014/15 in order to balance the books.

We know you will understand these pressures, with households across the county sharing the challenge of making ends meet as living costs continue to rise and money coming in is harder to find.

We have already transformed the way we work, reducing our back office and senior management costs. We are now working more efficiently with fewer resources and will continue to make savings wherever possible.

We have a duty to rise to the financial challenge and this will involve some very tough choices.

Despite this bleak picture, the Council is committed to ensuring that we provide quality services, focusing our efforts in helping our economy to grow and those people who most need our support.

Your views will also help us understand how our proposals may affect you and our communities so that we can consider whether and how we can mitigate, if possible, the impact of any changes we introduce. Our decisions will only be made after listening to your views and we will continue to support the most in need and vulnerable in our society. Full details about the budget are also available on our website or can be obtained upon request.

Please complete this survey online. Alternatively, you can post your completed questionnaire to:

Corporate Policy and Consultation Manager  
Northampton Borough Council  
FREEPOST MID 17237  
Northampton  
NN1 1WJ

If you need help with this form or require the information in a different format, please visit our Customer Contact Centre at our One Stop Shop at the Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE or call on 01604 837837 or by minicom on 01604 838970  
Closing Date: 31 January 2014

Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the Council. The Council will not share any personal information collected as part of this survey. The Council's Data Protection Registration number is Z5256045.

## Council Tax Level

Despite the significant financial pressures faced by the Council, Council Tax levels were not increased since 2010.

The Council is considering keeping council tax levels the same for 2014/15. Do you agree or disagree with this approach?

- Strongly agree     Tend to agree     Tend to disagree     Strongly disagree

Please use this space for comments that will help us understand your response

## Draft Budget Proposals

A challenging programme of internal cost-cutting measures is proposed to tackle the shortfall and prevent the budget gap growing even further in 2015/16.

At the same time, order to promote growth, there will be a focus on investment, despite the need for the Borough Council to make savings to deal with a budget shortfall of £3.4 million in the next financial year.

# Northampton Borough Council Budget 2014/15 Consultation

A list of the draft budget proposals and background information can be found at [www.northampton.gov.uk/budget2014](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/budget2014)

These proposals, if/when agreed, will help the Council balance its budget for 2014/15. This is your opportunity to comment on the Council's draft budget options before they are submitted to the Cabinet for their consideration. Full Council will in turn consider the Cabinet's recommendation for approval on 24 February 2014.

Your comments on our options

## **Key proposed budget options:**

- Extended free parking including every Saturday and 2 hours free during the week
- Business incentive scheme
- Capital budget projects and investment
- Providing an additional neighbourhood warden, two park rangers and a new vehicle
- Increase opening hours of Northampton Borough Council's museums
- Maintaining the investment of small community grants
- Senior management savings and review
- Staff terms and conditions

Please tell us which option you wish to comment on and include any concerns you may have about how our specific proposals may impact on yourself or any sector of the community and if appropriate, tell us how we can minimise any such impact.

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## Alternative proposals

Is there anything else that you think we could do to achieve savings and/or any other comments you would like to make in respect of the budget options for 2014/15?

## Your details

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Address (including postcode):

Telephone number:

Email address:

## Monitoring Information (optional)

About you

Yes No

I live in Northampton

I work in Northampton

I study in Northampton

I have a business in Northampton

I am employed by Northampton Borough Council

I am responding on behalf of an organisation/group (insert name below)

Name of the Organisation I am responding from:

Are you:

Male

Female

How old are you?

Under

16-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75 or  
above

How would you describe yourself?

White

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

Other ethnic group

Asian/Asian British

Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking part!