

**Northampton Borough Council
Priorities and Budget Consultation 2011/12**

Difficult Choices

Shaping the future of council services in Northampton

Consultation Results

Phase ended 30 November 2010

Author Silvina Katz 2 December 2010

Version 3

Corporate priorities and service spending consultation

Introduction

In order to develop the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes to be achieved during 2011/12, the Council sought the views of local residents, stakeholders (including the community and voluntary sector and the business community) and staff. This year's round was named Difficult Choices and was designed to help us identify priority areas for savings and identify where reductions could be accepted. The campaign also sought views on whether services could be provided with or by others and for ideas on where savings could be made or charges increased.

The feedback obtained during the Difficult Choices programme, the first phase of our budget consultation, is currently being reviewed and will help inform the priorities (including themes, outcomes and objectives) and direct spending/savings options that need to be reflected in our future Corporate Plan and budget.

The first phase of this consultation ended 30 November 2010.

People were asked to tell us if they thought that we should look at protecting or reducing the service we offer and to make comments.

Headline results

Protect (100-55%)	Reduce (45-0%)	Neutral response (55-45%)
Street cleaning and sweeping	Events-Cultural and sporting events across the Borough	Museums
Grounds maintenance	Car parks management	Play and Sport activities
Graffiti and fly tip removal	Market Square management	CCTV
Maintaining open spaces	Events in the Town Centre	Licensing
Collection and disposal of domestic refuse and recycling		Environmental warden service
Manage materials reclamation and waste transfer facilities		Regeneration
Leisure Centres		
Community Safety		
Antisocial Behaviour Unit		
Environmental protection, food health and safety		
Planning		

The feedback received in relation to the services we offer which could be provided by or with others and ideas for saving money and increasing charges, rents or tariffs will be reported separately. The full commentary is attached as Appendix 2.

The results of this consultation will be used by the Council as part of the process of setting a balanced budget and priorities for the next financial year and to review its Corporate Plan.

Methodology

A consultation programme was produced using the principles set out in the Council's Consultation Toolkit. This included a mixture of online and paper surveys, face-to-face engagement from elected members at ward and community forum meetings, press releases, associated media activity and a range of social networks. A dedicated email address and contact were made available throughout.

People were consulted and engaged by the following methods:

- Public meetings across a range of venues in the town
- Engagement with our Disabled People's, Pensioners. LGBT and Diverse Community Forums at forum meetings and via links on all the community forums' social media
- On-line survey
- Questionnaires made available from our One Stop Shop and at public meetings
- Communication with our key stakeholders and partners (including the business community), the Voluntary and Community Sector and representatives of the tenants Sounding Board
- Media briefings

Response

Total responses received 217.

Equality Monitoring

The profile of respondents by gender, age and ethnicity, available at Appendix 1, matches the profile of our wider community and this can be seen an indicator of a fair survey.

Please note that the results of additional activity related to the budget and the council's priorities was undertaken independently and separately and the findings and views expressed are not included in this report.

Consultation Results-Analysis

Street cleaning and sweeping

77.1% (162) want to see these services protected
22.9% (48) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Clean streets and environments are seen as fundamental for the town, including improved morale
- Enforcement (including work with offenders), education and working with community and volunteers to play a bigger role
- Quality services to provide better value, consider outsourcing

Grounds maintenance

58.8% (120) want to see these services protected
41.2% (84) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Essential to maintain clean and safe spaces at the right level
- Let nature and/or reduce cutting take control of grass verges
- Increase community participation and work with volunteers and other groups
- Consider outsourcing

Graffiti and fly tip removal

76.2% (160) want to see these services protected,
23.8% (50) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Need to maintain minimum standards
- Increase community clean ups
- Enforcement (including work with offenders), education and working with community and volunteers to play a bigger role
- Removal critical for morale
- Consider outsourcing

Maintaining open spaces

78.9% (165) want to see these services protected
21.1% (44) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Beautiful parks and open spaces contribute to wellbeing and morale
- Create/support biodiversity friendly schemes
- Review pricing
- Increase community/voluntary groups role
- Consider outsourcing or sharing services

Collection and disposal of domestic refuse and recycling

84.6% (176) want to see these services protected

15.4% (32) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Collection and disposal are essential to reduce landfill taxes
- Improve local recycle/collection points
- Improve information and education
- Revise seasonal patterns
- Consider outsourcing



Manage materials reclamation and waste transfer facilities

65.7% (130) want to see these services protected

34.3% (68) would accept a reduction in services.

Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Use as income generation
- Improve information/education
- Consider outsourcing

Museums

51.2% 106() want to see these services protected

48.8 % (101) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Consider charging and sponsoring by businesses etc
- Town's heritage and identity, contribution to education and tourism
- Review opening times

Events

34% (69) want to see these services protected



66% (134) would accept a reduction in services.

Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Should be self-funding/financing
- Review charges
- Communities and groups to support and deliver

Leisure Centres

60.2% (124) want to see these services protected
39.8% (82) would accept a reduction in services.

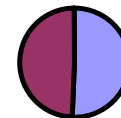


Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Consider outsourcing/trust status
- Review pricing strategy and make them profitable-Self-funding

Play and Sport activities

50.5% (103) want to see these services protected
49.5 % (101) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- NHS/Education role
- Communities, volunteers and groups to support and deliver
- Undertake cost/benefits analysis including charge review

Community Safety

80% (168) want to see these services protected
20% (42) would accept a reduction in services.

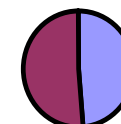


Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Seen as police responsibility
- Focus on key areas

CCTV

48.5% (98) want to see these services protected
51.5 % (104) would accept a reduction in services.



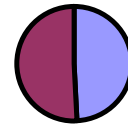
Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Contribution to feeling safe where people live and work
- Should be police activity

- Perception that they are too intrusive and need to focus on high crime areas only

Licensing

49.2% (98) want to see these services protected
50.8% (101) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Consider sharing services with other authorities
- Multi-agency approach
- Impact of alcohol on young people, ASB and health

Anti Social Behaviour Unit

77.2% (156) want to see these services protected
22.8% (46) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Work with partners to address and share costs
- Strategies to work with children and improve education
- People want to feel safe

Environmental Protection, food health and safety

72.2% (148) want to see these services protected
27.8% (57) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Consider outsourcing/sharing services
- Responsibility of businesses

Environmental warden service

48.5% (97) want to see these services protected
51.5% (103) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Work with community and partners (especially the police) to deliver initiatives

- Lack of clarity between roles with wardens and the police
- Visibility, in particular in hot spot areas

Car parks management

23.6% (47) want to see these services protected
76.4% (152) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Review charging strategy and profitability
- Review and automate processes
- Consider outsourcing

Market Square management

30.5% (61) want to see these services protected
69.5% (139) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Very divided views on this
- Scope for partnership working
- Consider funding commercially
- Let market traders run it

Events in the town centre

30.8% (61) want to see these services protected
69.2% (137) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Run as a partnership or on a commercial basis
- Community groups to be responsible or major contributor for delivery

Planning

59.4% (117) want to see these services protected
40.6% (80) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Focus on prestigious projects and building control

- Important role for the economic success of Northampton
- Current system is complex

Regeneration

54.5% (110) want to see these services protected

45.5% (92) would accept a reduction in services.



Some of the key issues raised by people include the following:

- Necessary for further investment and increased job opportunities, resulting in an improved local economy
- A number of people would like to see less expansion and more regeneration
- Preserve our heritage
- Improvement required-Make efficiencies

Appendix 1

Difficult Choices-Monitoring

Are you:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	51.7%	91
Female	48.3%	85
<i>answered question</i>		176
<i>skipped question</i>		41
How old are you?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 16	0.0%	0
16-24	2.7%	5
25-34	13.0%	24
35-44	18.5%	34
45-54	25.0%	46
55-64	28.8%	53
65-74	10.3%	19
75 or above	1.6%	3
<i>answered question</i>		184
<i>skipped question</i>		33
How would you describe yourself?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
White	85.5%	153
Asian/Asian British	2.2%	4
Mixed	1.1%	2
Black/Black British	3.4%	6
Other	2.2%	4
Prefer not to say	5.6%	10
<i>answered question</i>		179
<i>skipped question</i>		38