
**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Finance Scrutiny Committee – 25 February 2016
Council – 4 March 2016

Subject: Response to Budget Proposals

Report of: City Solicitor, Deputy City Treasurer and Head of Strategic Communications

Summary

This report presents the responses to the consultation on the budget proposals that was communicated to residents and businesses from 25 January 2015.

Recommendations

That the Committee / Council considers and takes into account the responses to the consultation on the budget proposals as summarised in this report.

Contact Officers:

Name: Liz Treacy
Position: City Solicitor
Telephone: 0161 234 3339
E-mail: l.treacy@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Carol Culley
Position: Deputy City Treasurer
Telephone: 0161 234 3406
E-mail: c.culley@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Jennifer Green
Position: Head of Strategic Communications
Telephone: 0161 234 4420
E-mail: j.green1@manchester.gov.uk

Background Documents

Public Consultation Open Text Responses:
A file including open text responses to questions in the budget consultation will be available for inspection in the meeting.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. Directorate Budget and Business Plan reports and a summary of the overall financial position were published on 20 January 2016 and were considered by the six Scrutiny Committees. The Executive met and proposed the budget on 17 February 2016.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory duty to consult “persons or bodies appearing to it to be representative of persons subject to non-domestic rates” (national non-domestic rates are also known as business rates) about budget proposals for the coming financial year. As well as ensuring this statutory duty is fulfilled, this is an opportunity to ask residents, staff, businesses and other stakeholders for their views on the Council’s budget priorities and implications for Council Tax to address the budget gap.
- 1.3 The general budget consultation opened on 25 January 2016 and ran for four weeks until 19 February 2016.
- 1.4 The general budget consultation focused on the following questions:
 - Have you heard about the Council having to make savings?
 - Do you generally agree or disagree with our budget options for the next year?
 - Do you generally agree or disagree with our priorities of growth, reform and place?
 - Do you agree that we should protect adult social care services by increasing Council Tax by 2%?
 - Do you agree that we should improve services such as road and pavement repairs, street cleaning and tackling fly tipping, even if this would require a further 1.99% increase in Council Tax?
 - Do you have further suggestions or comments about our budget options or how we could save or make the most of our resources?
- 1.5 There is a further consultation exercise for free travel passes. This consultation also started on 25 January, running for five weeks, until 26 February 2016.
- 1.6 Responses to the free travel passes consultation will be analysed once the consultation closes and submitted to Young People and Children’s Scrutiny Committee on May 24 and to Executive on 1 June, to be taken into account in decision making.
- 1.7 This report outlines the communication activity delivered to support the consultation process, the number of responses received and analysis of the responses to the general budget consultation.

2.0 Communication and engagement

- 2.1 Communication and engagement for the budget options was split into two phases:

- Phase 1 – Engagement, context and budget options from 20 January until 25 January 2016
- Phase 2 – Formal consultation from 25 January until 19 February 2016.

2.2 The budget consultation process for 2015/6 generated 673 responses, more than previous budget consultations with a similar approach. It also resulted in substantially increased levels of engagement, over and above formal responses, such as views of the website content and films, live streaming of committee meetings, social media discussions and Twitter Q&As. The lessons learnt from last year's consultation formed the approach for this year's activity, building on the digital channels which have proved successful, encouraging conversations in social media to increase participation in the consultation, alongside a more considered offline conversation.

Phase 1: 20 January - 25 January 2016

- 2.3 As budget options were announced and the scrutiny process commenced, engagement took place to encourage residents and stakeholders to submit their views. Communication activity included a comprehensive press release, a 'talking head' film, social media, sharing infographics and budget consultation content and live streaming of the scrutiny committees.
- 2.4 All the budget option information was available on the Council website at www.manchester.gov.uk/budget. This included a plain English narrative of the budget and consultation process and summaries of all the directorate papers including links to the full committee reports. The summaries were produced to provide an outline of the budget options that is easier to read and digest. The budget option pages were visited over 7,898 times in this phase.
- 2.5 Stakeholders were encouraged to submit their questions, comments and suggestions for alternative options and were also able to sign up for an alert to notify them when the formal consultations started. Over 40 comments were received, and could be loosely categorised into the following themes:
- Council tax
 - Concerns about services for vulnerable people
 - Impact of any decisions taken on the voluntary and community sector
 - Numbers of councillors and salaries of senior officers
 - Specific comments about free school travel.
- 2.6 All comments received were logged, acknowledged and dealt with centrally on a case by case basis. All comments received were noted and form part of the consultation process.
- 2.7 A 'talking head' film explaining the budget cuts and options for consultation was produced. At the time of publishing this report the film had been watched 422 times (10 hours viewing time).
- 2.8 There was significant social media activity, pushing the key messages, listening to and engaging stakeholders in a conversation about the budget

options, using the #McrBudget. The 'talking head' film was key to encourage engagement. In this phase there were over 110 conversations on social media about the budget and over 15,500 organic impressions (this is the number of times the content has appeared in people's social media feeds). The themes on social media are broadly similar to the comments received from the website.

- 2.9 All Scrutiny meetings and Executive were live streamed. There has been a total of 390 views of these meetings during this phase. The Press Office also tweeted during those meetings discussing the budget to encourage people to watch the live stream and provide an explanation about what was being discussed. The tweets were not a 'commentary', rather a further opportunity to encourage engagement for the budget options, reporting what was discussed.
- 2.10 Local media were engaged fully, with a comprehensive news release which provided the full budget context and explanation of the headline options and priorities.
- 2.11 Staff were also comprehensively engaged with during this time. A detailed staff presentation was developed for use by all directorates. Over 1,700 staff attended these directorate sessions with additional cascade briefings by line managers to many more staff. A broadcast and Manager's Brief were also developed explaining the budget context and the processes for consultation and budget setting.

Phase 2: 25 January until 19 February 2016

- 2.12 The formal budget consultation and the consultation on free school travel passes went live on 25 January. As the formal consultations began messages were focused on promotion of the consultations to encourage participation.
- 2.13 Again, all the information relating to the consultations are available at www.manchester.gov.uk/budget. The website presented all the information on the overarching budget consultation and specific directorate consultations. Each consultation contains a summary of the proposals, and links to supporting documents including the committee reports, before leading into a series of questions for residents to complete about the options. As of 22 February 2016 these pages had been visited 59,881 times since 25 January. This is an increase of over 7,000 views compared to the last consultation.
- 2.14 Hard copies of each consultation have also been made available, and specialist formats are available on request (alternative languages, Braille, 'easy to read' and large print). Copies are available from all Council libraries, the Customer Service Centre, in leisure centres, appropriate neighbourhood venues and available at consultation events. Over 1,600 were printed.
- 2.15 The consultation has been publicised through a variety of digital and community channels. It has its own icon on the Council's webpage, over 90 posters have been distributed to over 40 locations across the city including Council libraries and customer service centre. Social media channels have

been heavily used; resulting in a further 59,012 impressions, press releases have covered the consultations and the digital screens in the city centre and Town Hall Extension have been used.

- 2.16 Two 'consultation special' e-bulletins were sent. The first e-bulletin sent on 21 January to a mailing list of over 92,000 people had an open rate of 19.1%. It also resulted in an additional 472 visits to the website. The second version, sent on 17 February, went to over 100,000 recipients, with 27,439 opens, with an additional 847 clickthroughs to the budget landing pages and a further 451 clickthroughs directly to consultation form.
- 2.17 A further film was produced to explain the budget challenge facing the Council. The animation, produced in house, explains with simple graphics what people could do to help and encourages people to participate in the consultations. The animation has been viewed 1,131 times - totalling 36 hours. Both films were captioned and transcripts made available on the site.
- 2.18 Given the success of digital activity last year, the level of response received on the recent Manchester Strategy consultation, combined with the more limited time available for consultation this year, the organic (unpaid) digital activity was supplemented with paid for activity to boost response. This included advertising on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram targeting Manchester residents and businesses. This activity resulted in a total of 395,275 impressions and 13,306 click throughs.
- 2.19 A range of other channels were used to consult directly with businesses. These include: Employer Engagement Board Members, The Enterprise Services Network, Chamber newsletter, Pro Manchester weekly newsletter, Business in the community newsletter, Business Solutions newsletter, Midas Mailing list Growth Hub, Environmental business pledge members, CityCo members and distribution lists, Council Regeneration teams and ward co-ordinators. All businesses rates payers were written to directly. In addition to these off line channels, businesses were targeted using Facebook and LinkedIn. 29 responses have been received from businesses to the budget consultation, which is significantly higher than the response rate in previous years (14 responses were received in the 2015 consultation and none were received in 2014).
- 2.20 Emails specifically about the free school travel proposal went out directly to schools and all families directly impacted have also been written to. Easy-read version of questionnaire produced and shared via the Learning Disabilities provider forum.
- 2.21 Corporate staff engagement sessions were also held during this period. Five sessions were held in late January/early February to provide an opportunity to update staff on the budget setting and consultation process, as well as share progress on the development of the People Strategy and raise awareness about new ways of working. Over 140 staff attended these sessions. When asked if they got what they were looking for from the session 97% said 'yes'.

When asked what attendees valued most from the session the two most common responses were:

- Networking with staff and the opportunity to understand different services' opportunities and pressures
- The opportunity to understand the budget context and process

Responses Received

- 2.22 1,318 online responses were received and 16 printed consultation forms (of which 8 were easy read versions) have been recorded, giving a total of 1,334. This is considerably more than previous years; for 2013/14 a total of 634 responses were received, for 2015/16 there was a total of 673. 560 responses were received in the final week alone following a significant push using our social media channels and an additional e-bulletin to let subscribers know that the consultation was due to close. As of 22 February, 340 responses to the Free Travel Passes consultation had been received.
- 2.23 Responses to the budget consultations were monitored to ensure that the respondents are reflective of the population of the city as a whole. For example, where there have been low numbers of respondents in a particular area of the city or amongst a particular community, targeted activity has been delivered to encourage higher response rates. This was done with specifically targeted social media posts aimed at young people, pensioners, the LGBT community and by ethnic language. These posts alone drove a further 5,543 click throughs from social media to the budget consultation pages.

Complaints, Petitions and other Correspondence

- 2.24 In addition to formal responses to the budget consultation, petitions, complaints and other correspondence relating to the budget options have been monitored. This year there have been no complaints recorded relating to budget options and no petitions have been received. Two letters, one from the LGBT (lesbian, gay and bisexual and trans) foundation and one from the Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups, relating to the budget options were received and are being responded to.
- 2.25 The three Clinical Commissioning Groups have provided a response to the budget proposals which potentially could impact on health outcomes. The CCGs acknowledge the Council's challenging financial position but have requested that in the light of the development of the Joint Locality Plan, integrated health and social care and the planned pooling of budgets that they are engaged earlier in the planning process. With regard to individual proposals the CCGs have asked for further clarification in a number of areas and to this effect officers from the Council have been working with colleagues in the CCG to ensure clarity and a panel has been set up to take these discussions forward.
- 2.26 The CCGs have raised some concerns about the proposals as they have been presented which are being discussed with senior officers.

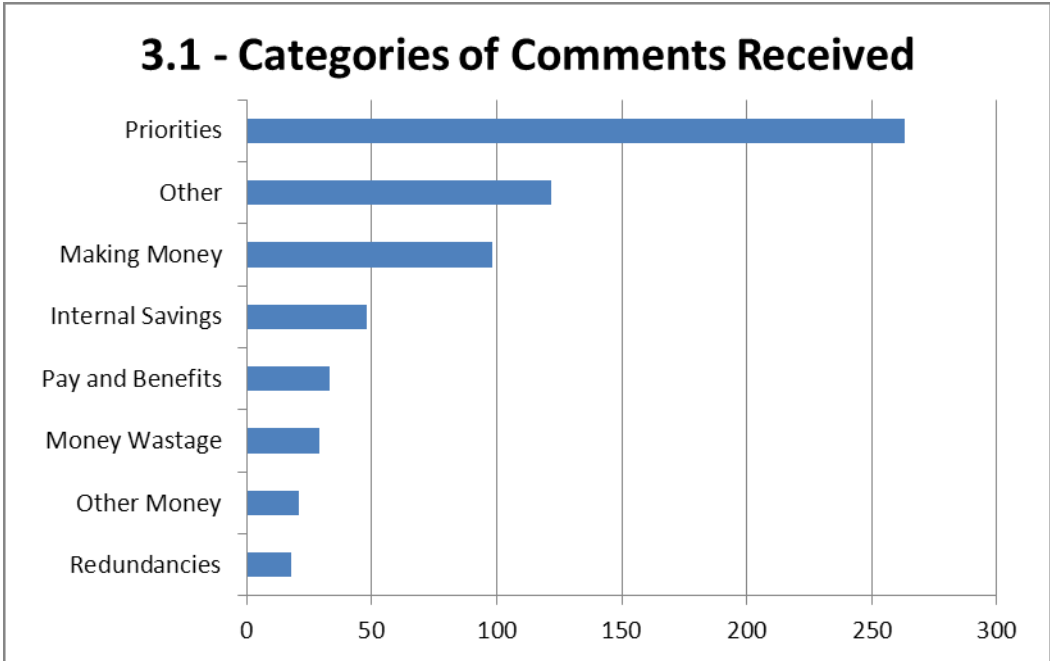
3.0 Response to the General Budget Consultation

3.1 1,334 people responded to the general budget consultation. Of these 90% were members of the public, 2% were from partner organisations, 3% from voluntary and community sector organisations, 2% from businesses and 4% from other groups. The responses to the consultation show 92% of respondents had heard the Council had to make savings. 49% of respondents generally agreed with the Council's priorities, whilst 20% disagreed. The responses to the consultation show 36% of respondents generally agreed with the Council's budget options, whilst 30% disagreed. The table below includes full details of how the public responded to the first three questions in the General Budget Consultation.

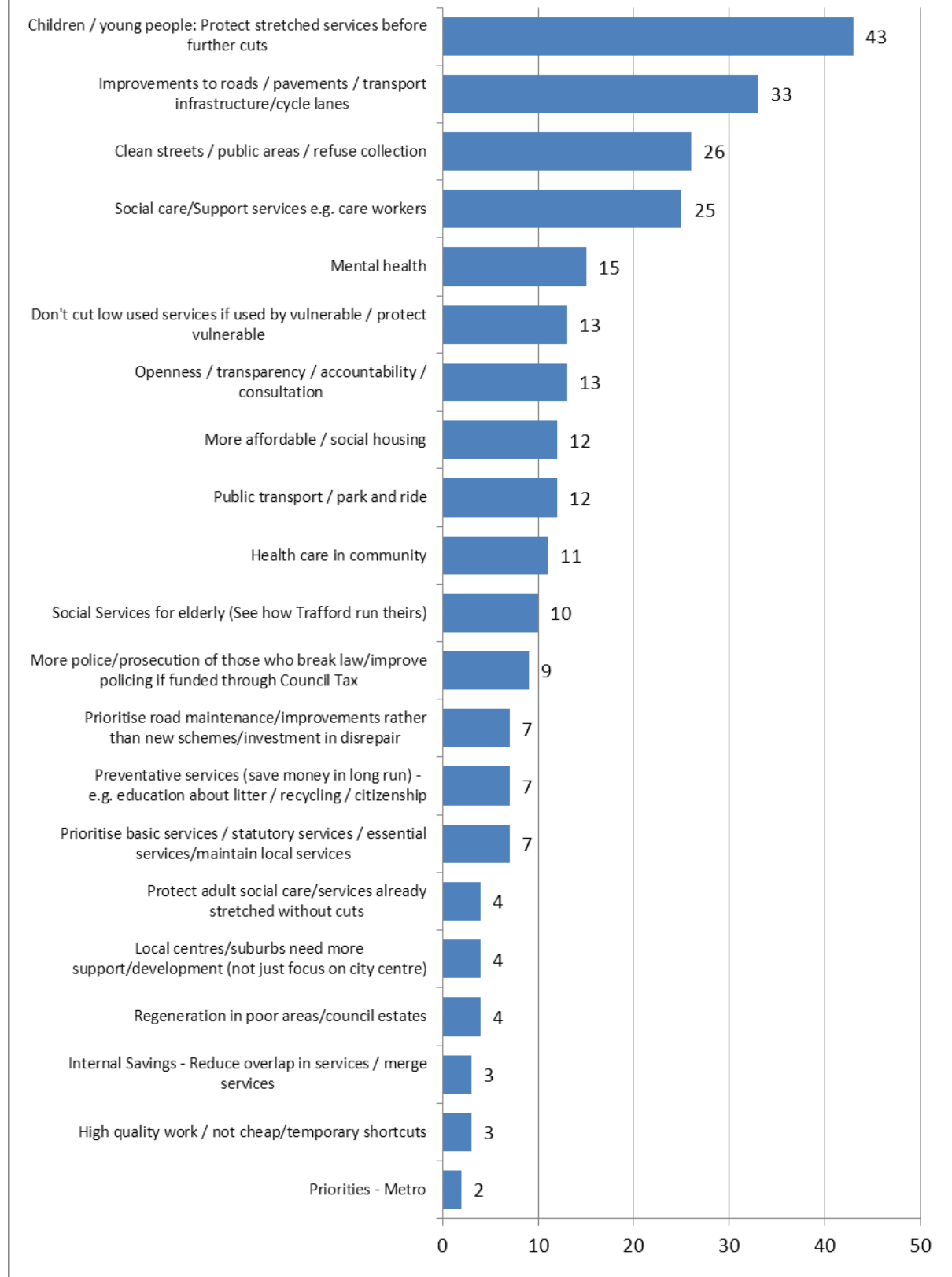
	1. Have you heard that we have to make budget savings?	2. Do you generally agree or disagree with our priorities of growth, reform and place?	3. Do you generally agree or disagree with our budget options for the year?
	Number of Responses	Number of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes / Agree	1231 (92%)	660 (49%)	475 (36%)
No / Disagree	92 (7%)	270 (20%)	399 (30%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	N/A	304 (23%)	316 (24%)
Don't Know	N/A	83 (6%)	115 (9%)
No Response	11 (1%)	17 (1%)	29 (2%)
Total	1,334	1,334	1,334

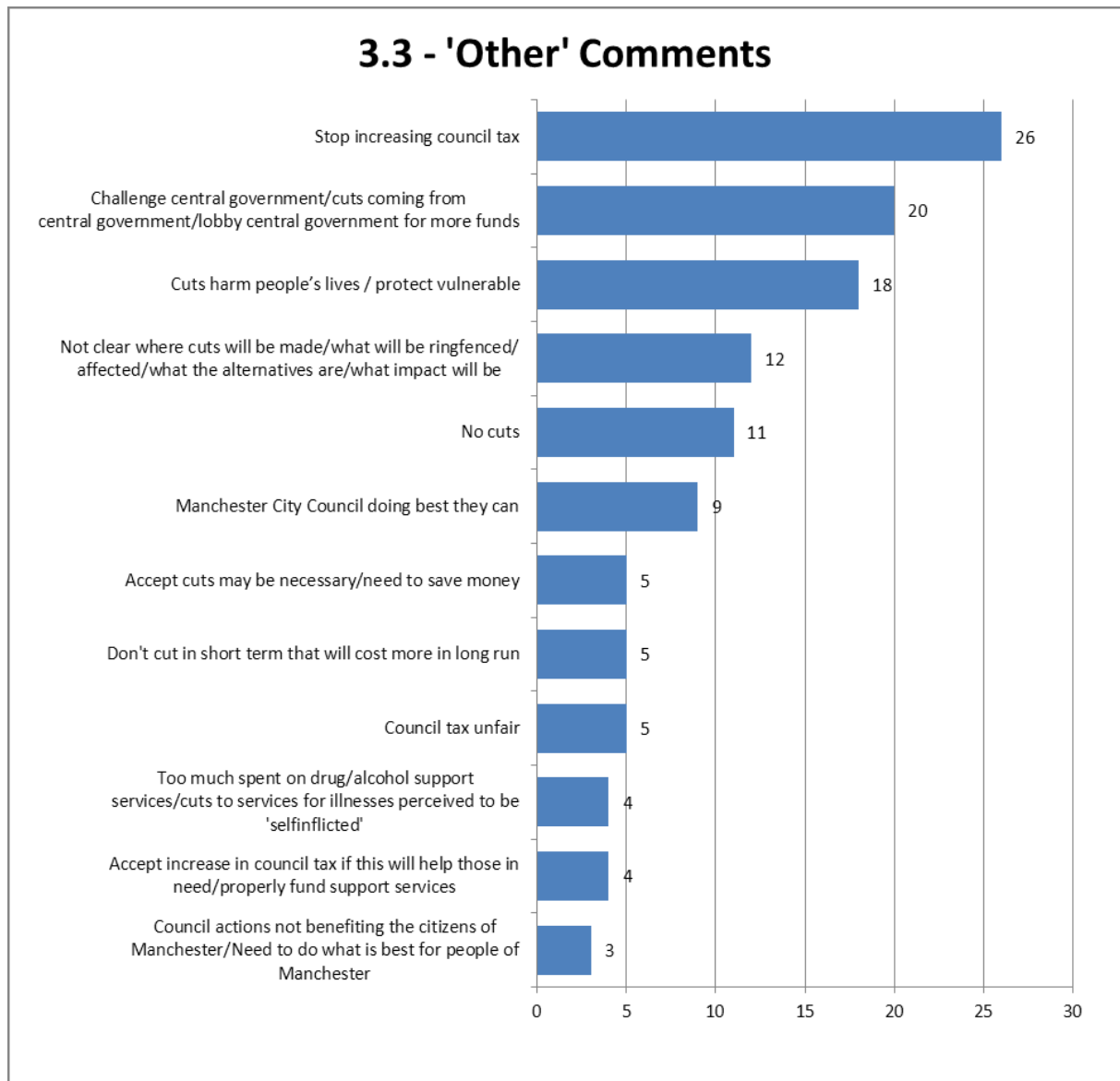
Please note percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number and therefore some columns may not total 100%.

3.2 Respondents were also given the opportunity to add their comments or give alternatives to the budget options (question 3). A total of 539 respondents provided a response to this question, representing over two fifths (41%) of all survey participants. The graphs below show the types of comments made and the most frequently made comments.

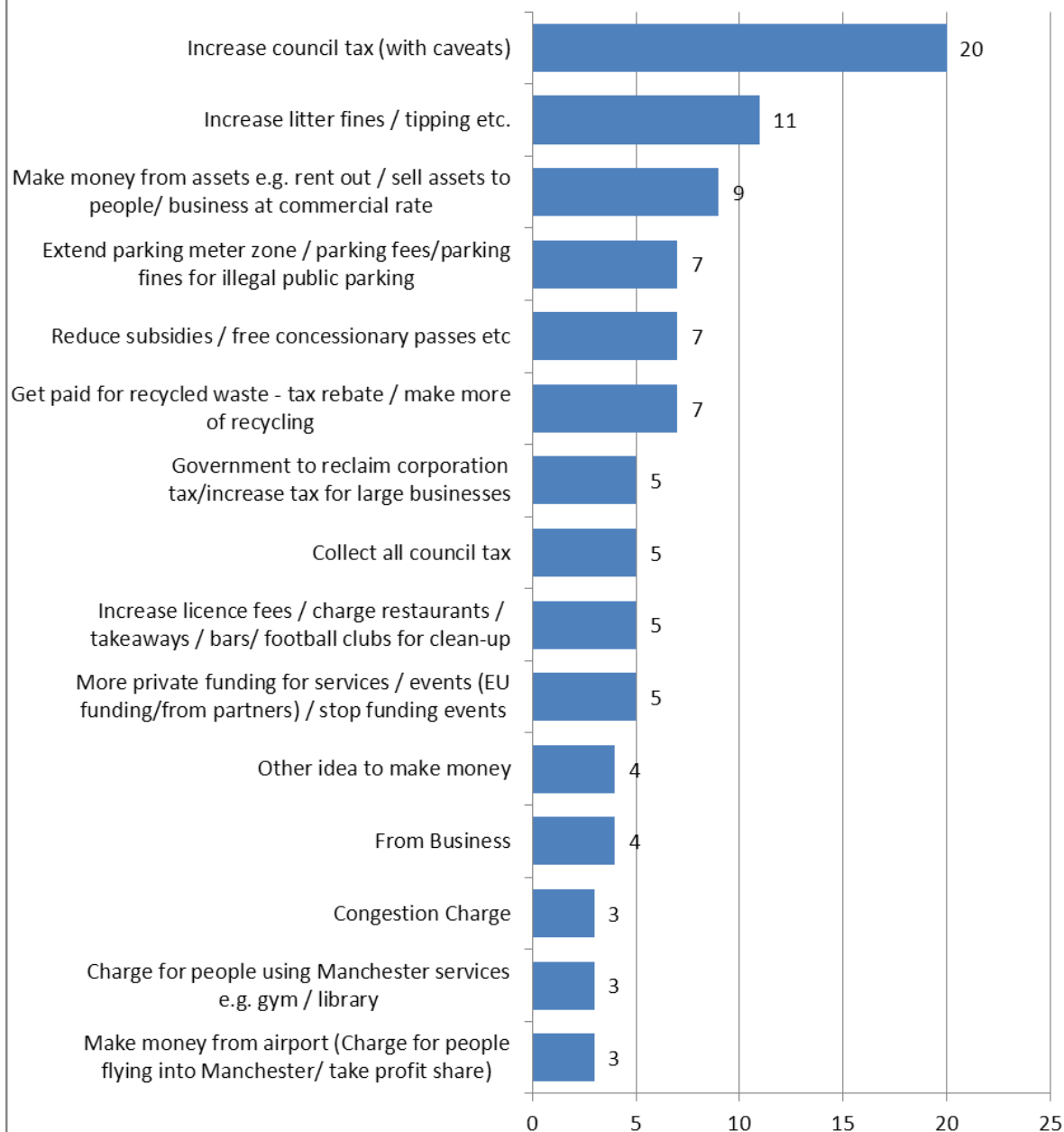


3.2 - Comments Relating to 'Priorities'





3.4 - Comments Relating to 'Making Money'



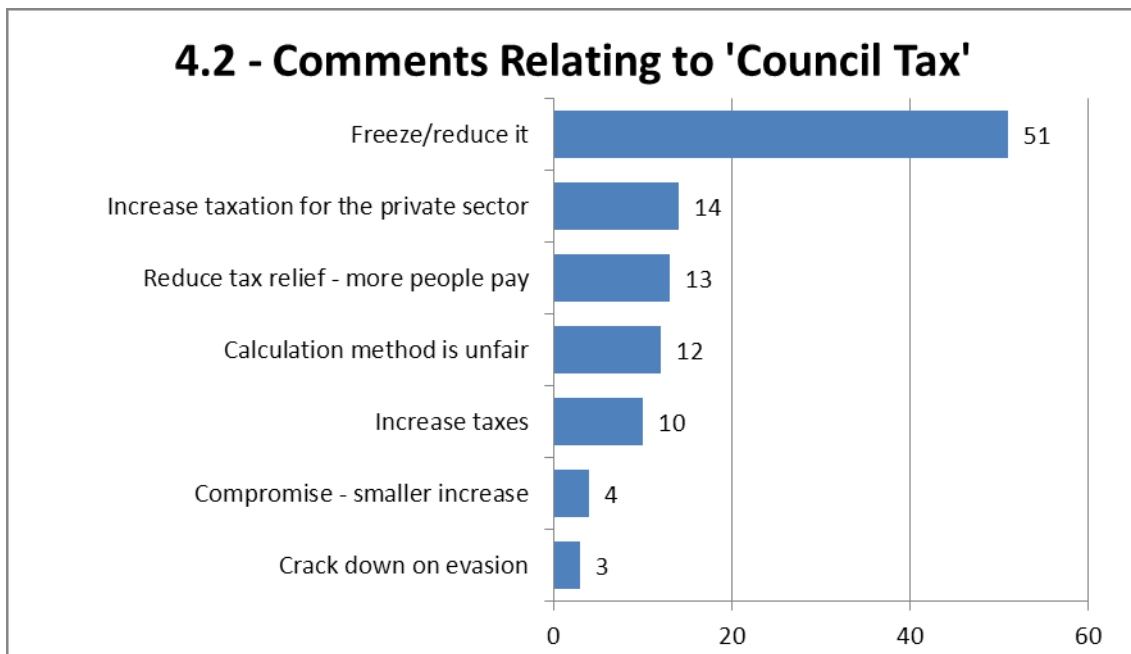
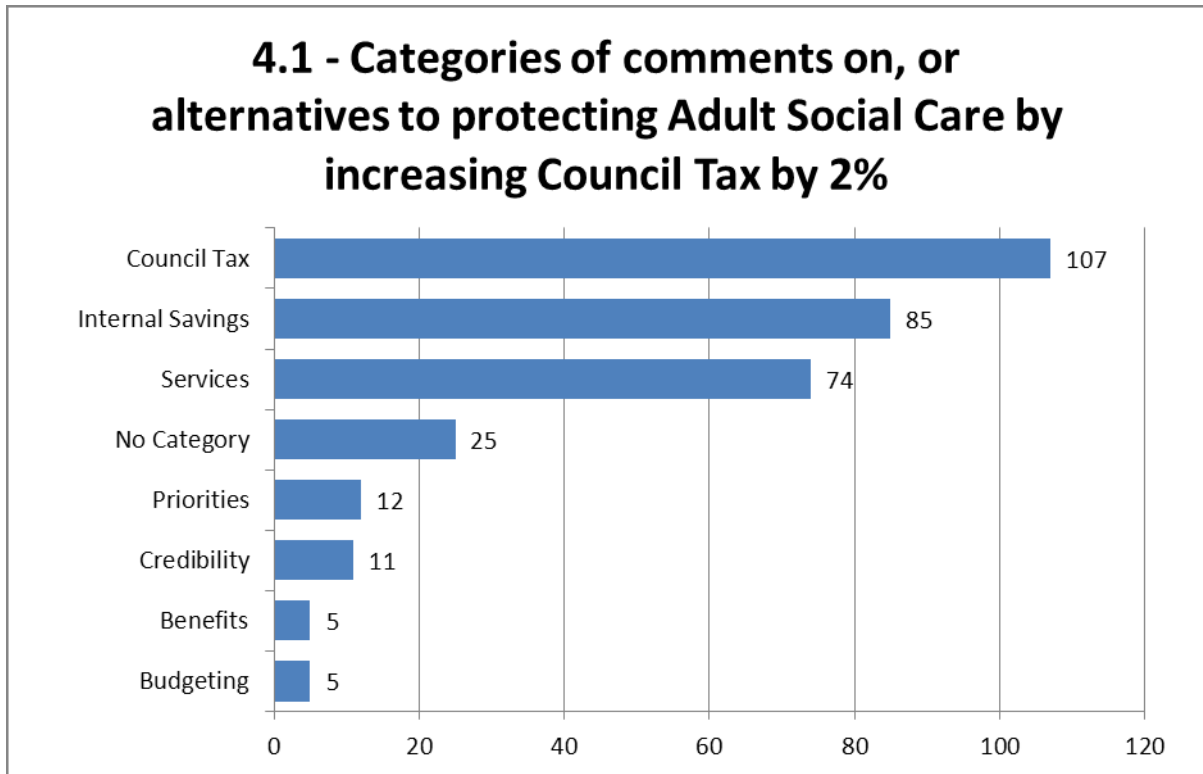
3.3 Respondents were then asked the two questions in the table below.

	4. Do you agree that we should protect adult social care services by increasing Council Tax by 2%?	5. Do you agree that we should improve services such as road and pavement repairs, street cleaning and tackling fly-tipping, even if this would require a further 1.99% increase in Council Tax?
	Number of Responses	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree / Agree	799 (60%)	822 (62%)
Disagree / Strongly Disagree	373 (28%)	351 (26%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	131 (10%)	138 (10%)
Don't Know	20 (2%)	13 (1%)
No Response	11 (1%)	10 (1%)
Total	1,334	1,334

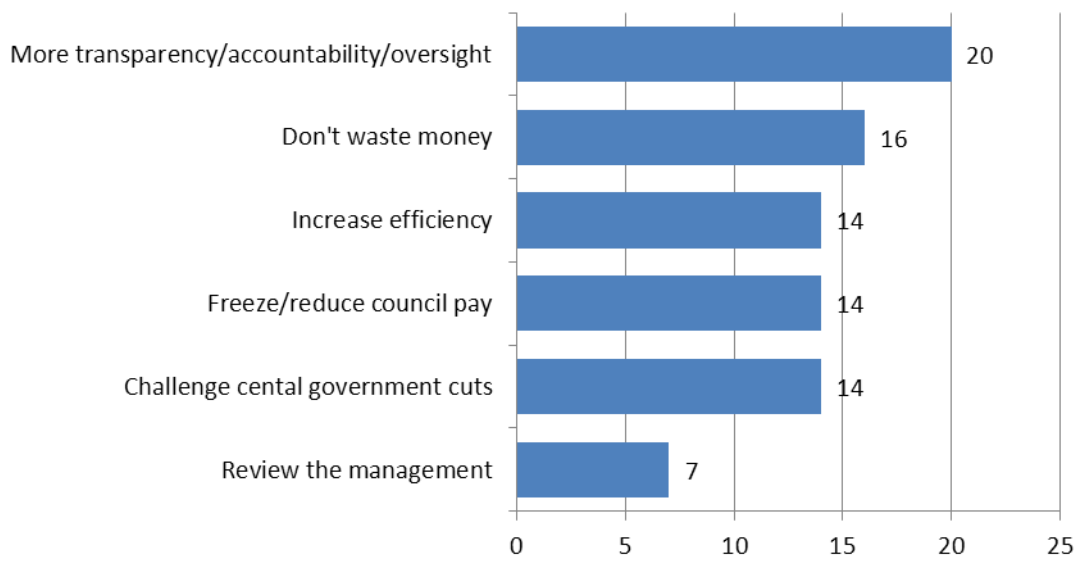
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3.4 There results show that there is broad support from respondents both for protecting adult social care (60%) and improving service such as road and pavement repairs, street cleaning and tackling fly-tipping (62%) through increases to Council Tax.

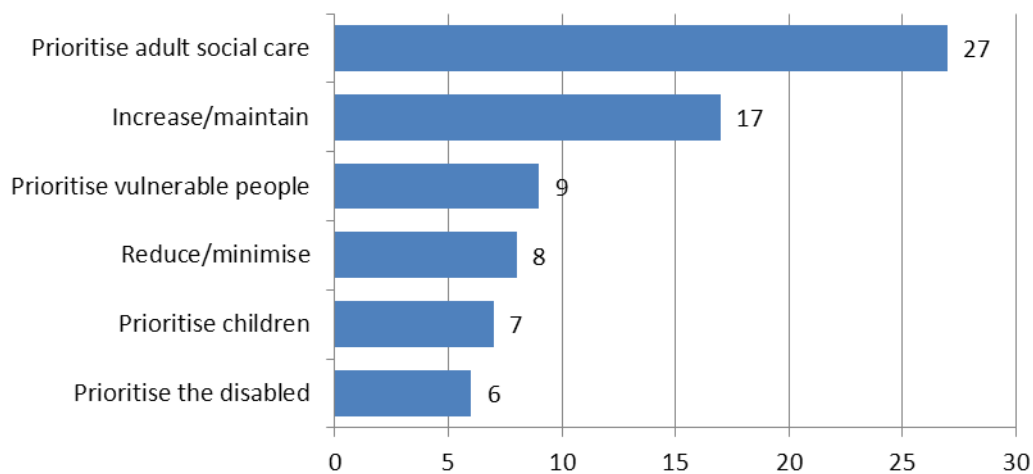
3.5 Respondents were also asked for any comments or alternatives the Council should consider for both of these questions. For question four, relating to adult social care, 376 respondents provided answers to the question which represented over a quarter, 28% of all survey participants. For question five, relating to services such as road and pavement repairs, street cleaning and tackling fly-tipping, 540 respondents provided answers to this question which represented over two fifths (41%) of all survey participants. The graphs below show the types of comments made and the most frequently made comments.



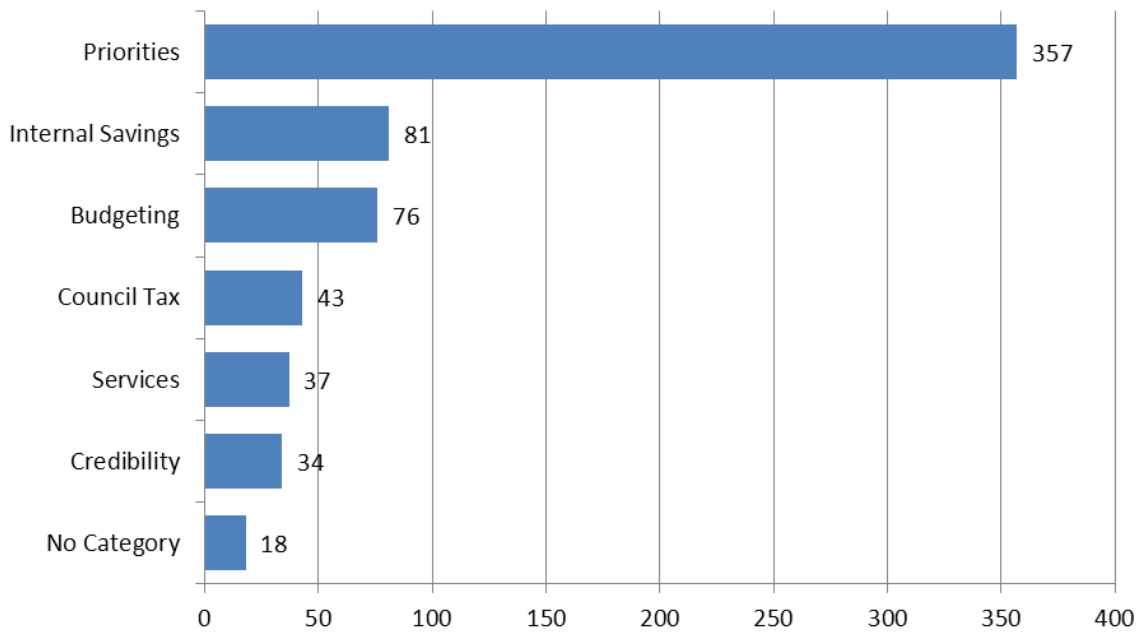
4.3 - Comments Relating to 'Internal Savings'



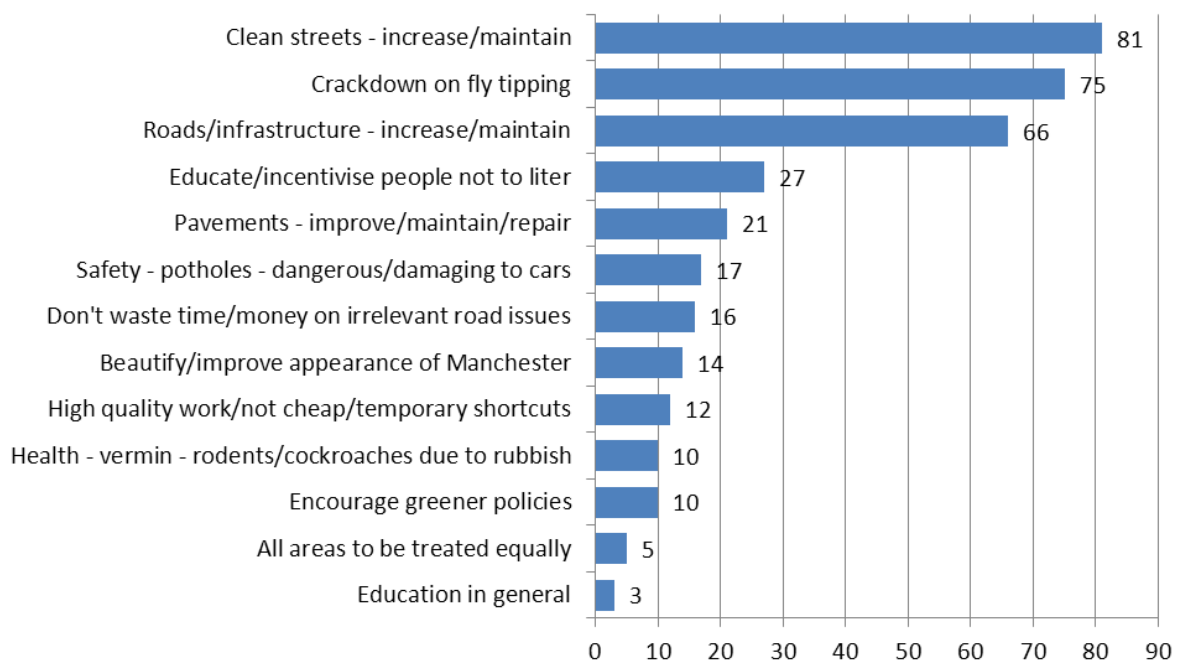
4.4 - Comments Relating to 'Services'

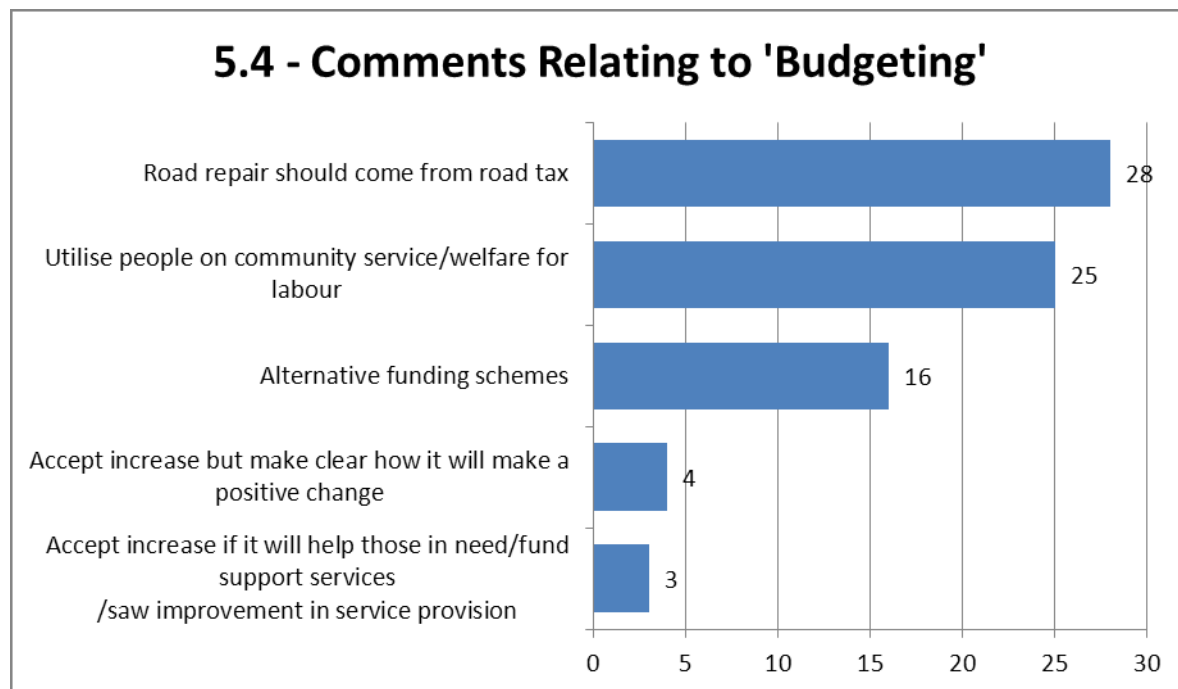
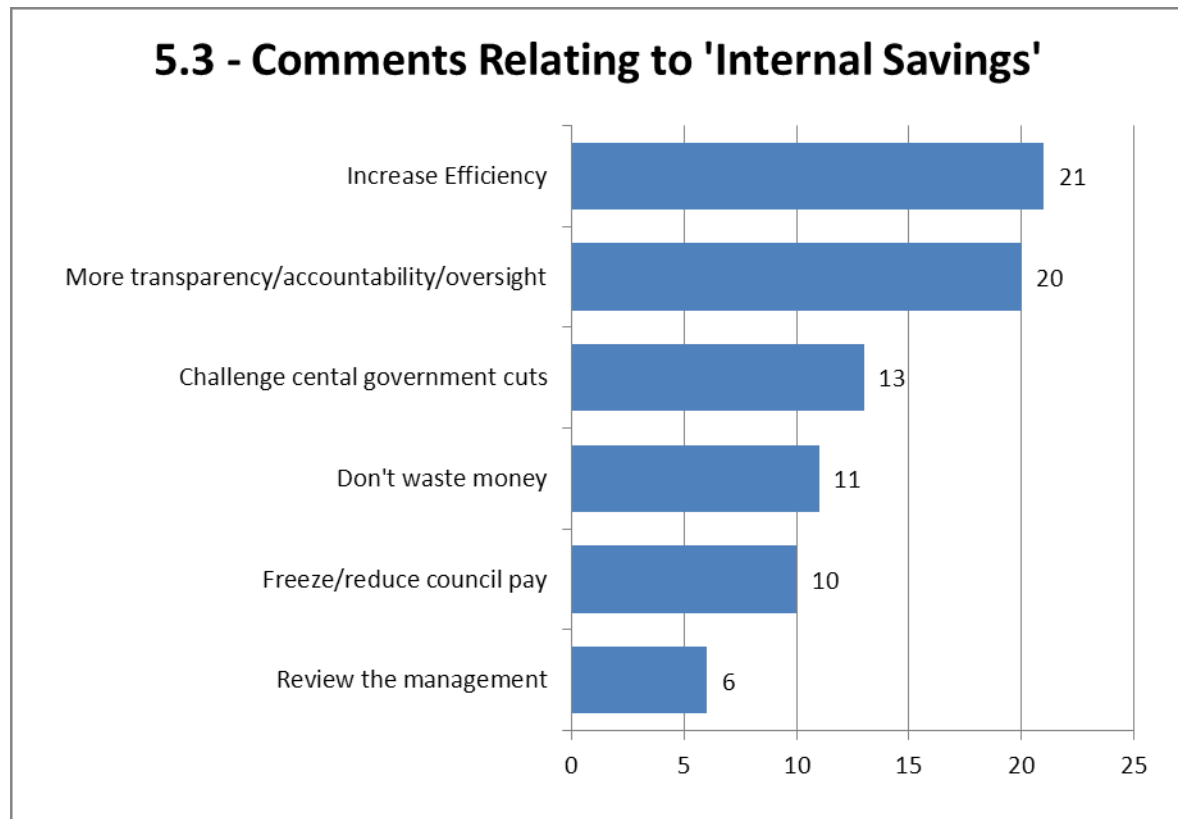


5.1 - Categories of comments on, or alternatives to improve services such as road and pavement repairs, street cleaning and tackling fly-tipping by increasing Council Tax by 1.99%



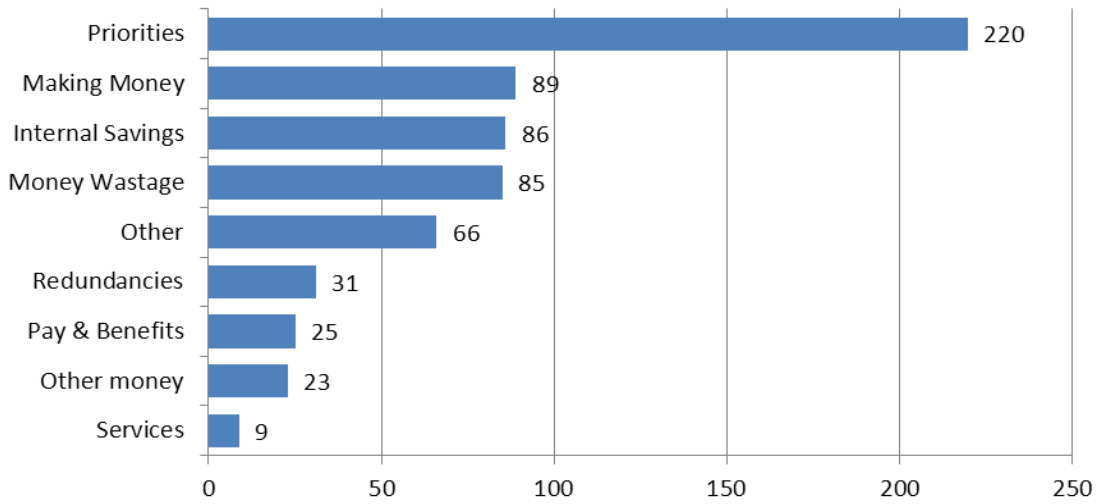
5.2 - Comments Relating to 'Priorities'



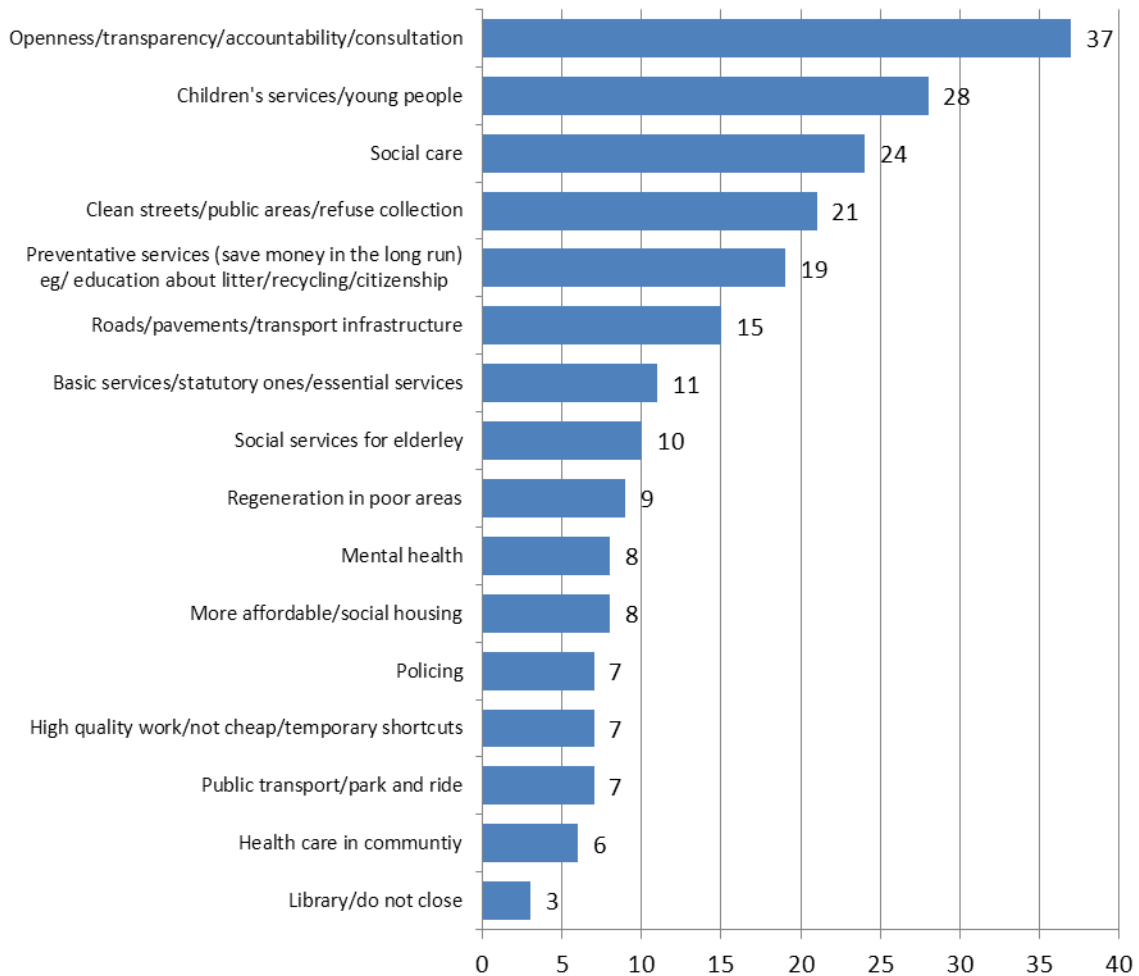


3.6 Finally, respondents were asked for any further suggestions or comments about the Council's budget options, or how the Council could save or make most use of its resources (Question 6). The graphs below show the types of comments made and the most frequently made comments.

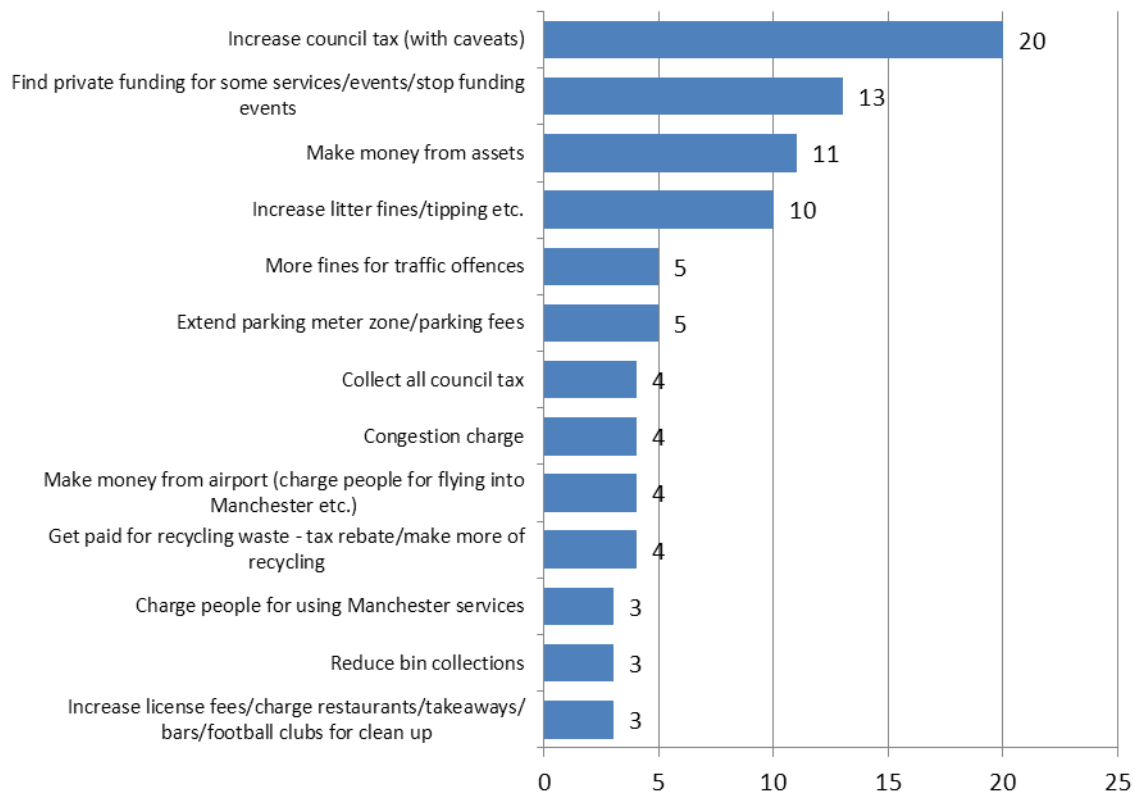
6.1 - Categories of Comments on budget options and making the most of resources



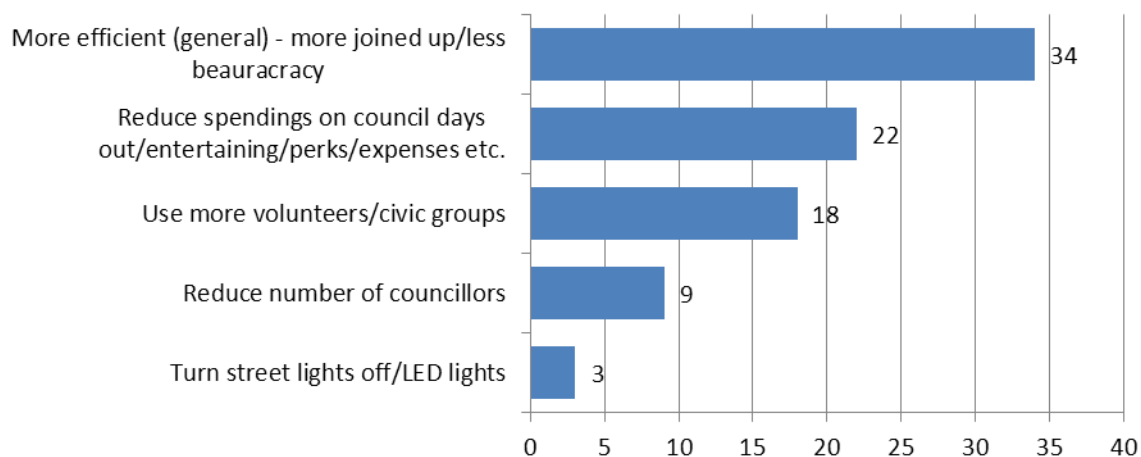
6.2 - Comments Relating to 'Priorities'

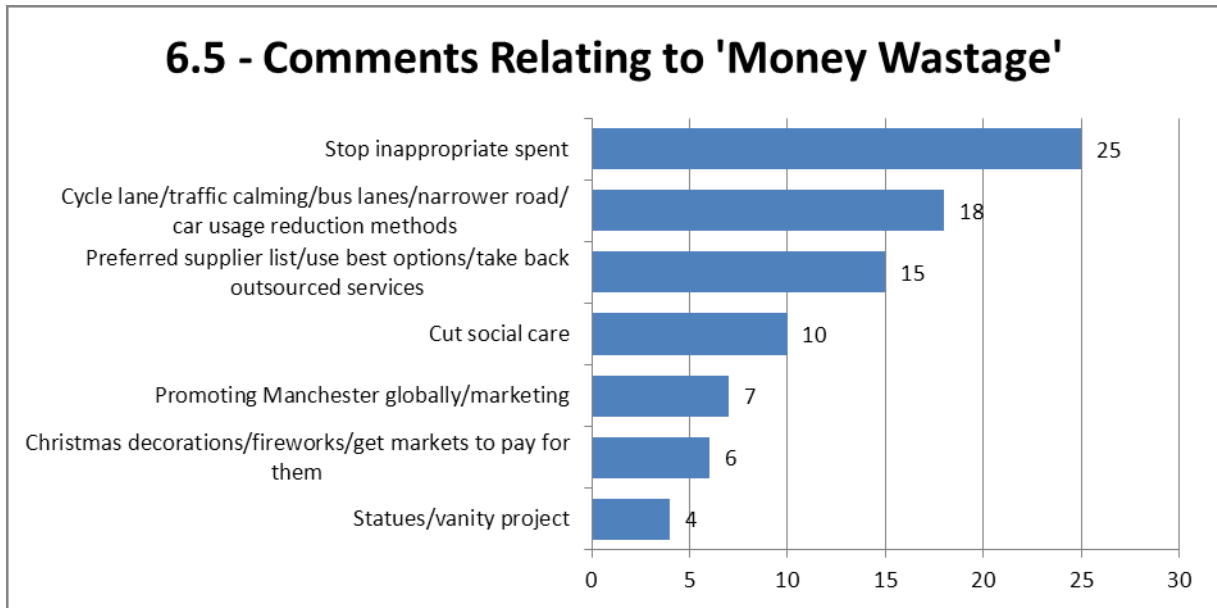


6.3 - Comments Relating to 'Making Money'



6.4 - Comments Relating to 'Internal Savings'





3.7 Included in the appendix to this report is a breakdown of the location and equality characteristics of respondents to the consultation, compared to the percentage of people across the city living in the location or having the particular equality characteristics. This information serves to demonstrate how representative the sample of respondents is of the city as a whole. It should be noted that many individuals declined to provide this information and so this comparison can only be made on a limited basis.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers and takes into account the responses to the consultation on the budget proposals as summarised in this report.

Appendix: Demographic and Equality Data

Please note percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number and therefore some columns will not total 100%.

Demographic Data

Q1. What is your post code?	Manchester	Respondents who provided a Manchester postcode
North Manchester	19%	14%
East Manchester	20%	17%
City Centre	8%	6%
Central Manchester	14%	13%
South Manchester	24%	39%
Wythenshawe	15%	12%

(20% of respondents did not provide a postcode within Manchester.)

(Source: Addresspoint 'Feb 15)

Equality Data

Q2. What is your gender?	Manchester	Respondents who identified gender
Female	49%	48%
Male	51%	52%

(7% of respondents did not identify their gender.)

(Source: Mid Year Population Estimates 2014)

Q3. Do you identify with the gender you were assigned to at birth?	All respondents
Yes	89%
No	1%
Prefer not to say	6%
No response	4%

Q4. What is your age?	Manchester	Respondents who provided their age
Under 16	20%	0%
16-25 years	21%	6%
26-39 years	25%	35%
40-64 years	24%	48%
65-74 years	5%	8%
75+ years	5%	2%

(7% of respondents did not provide their age)

(Source: Mid Year Population Estimates 2014)

Q5. I would describe my ethnic origin as ...	Manchester	Respondents who described their ethnic origin
Black Caribbean	2%	0%
Black African	5%	1%
Black British	0%	1%
Bangladeshi	1%	0%
Chinese	3%	0%
East African Asian	0%	0%
Indian	2%	2%
White - Irish	3%	1%
White - Gypsy / Irish traveller	0%	0%
Roma / Romani traveller	0%	0%
Kashmiri	0%	0%
Middle Eastern	0%	1%
Pakistani	9%	2%
Vietnamese	0%	0%
White and Black Caribbean	1%	1%
White and Black African	1%	0%
White and Asian	1%	1%
White British	0%	1%
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	62%	79%
Other ethnic group (please specify)	1%	0%
Other mixed group (please specify)	1%	1%
Other African (please specify)	2%	0%
Other Asian (please specify)	0%	1%
Other black (please specify)	1%	0%
Other white (please specify)	5%	5%
Other Any	0%	1%

(13% of respondents did not identify their ethnic origin)
(Source: Census 2011)

Q6. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	All respondents
Yes	10%
No	79%
Prefer not to say	7%
No response	3%

Q7. I would describe my sexuality as ...	All respondents
Heterosexual / straight	67%
Lesbian	1%
Gay	9%
Bisexual	3%
Other (please specify)	1%
Prefer not to say	14%
No response	4%

Q8. Do you identify with any religion or belief?	All Respondents
Yes	38%
No	46%
Prefer not to say	12%
No response	4%

Q9. If you have said yes to question 8, please specify.	Manchester	All respondents
Christian*	49%	30%
Muslim	16%	3%
Sikh	1%	1%
Buddhist	1%	1%
Jewish	1%	1%
Hindu	0%	1%
Prefer not to say (Census) / Did not say yes to Q8 (Consultation)	32%	62%
Other (please specify)	0%	2%
No response	0%	0%

(Source: Census 2011)

(*including Church of England, Roman Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

Q10. What is your relationship status?	
Single	30%
Married	36%
Life partner	13%
Civil partnership	1%
Prefer not to say	11%
Other (please specify)	4%
No response	4%

Q11. Do you have caring responsibilities?	
None	55%
Primary carer of child / children (under 18)	19%
Primary carer of disabled child / children	2%

Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over)	3%
Primary carer of older person(s) (65 and over)	3%
Secondary carer (carer but not the primary carer)	6%
Prefer not to say	9%
No response	6%