

Our North Tyneside Plan and Budget Engagement

Approach

The Authority's approach to the Council Plan and Budget engagement this year was somewhat restricted as it had to be conducted in line with Government COVID-19 secure guidelines. In person face to face engagement was therefore not able to take place and the majority of the Authority's public facing buildings were closed at all times.

Engagement with residents and other key stakeholders took place between 2 December 2020 and 20 January 2021.

This was done via:

- online sessions with the Residents Panel and other key stakeholder groups; and
- online questionnaire published on the North Tyneside Council website from 18 December 2020

In the online sessions, participants were shown a short film and presentation about the Authority's Budget and Cabinet's initial Council Plan and Budget proposals as agreed on 30 November 2020. Participants were able to have their questions answered and were asked to give their views on the Our North Tyneside Plan and the Budget proposals.

The online questionnaire was also accompanied by the short film outlining the Budget proposals as well as links to the relevant Cabinet papers, a copy of the current Our North Tyneside Plan and information concerning the Authority's Digital Strategy.

Engagement opportunities were publicised in the Our North Tyneside magazine and on all of the Authority's social media platforms to explain how people could get involved. Posters were also displayed in the five leisure centres which were open in December 2020 and also circulated to all of the Authority's North Tyneside Living Accommodation and Voluntary and Community Sector contacts. This information signposted people to the online engagement and provided contact information for those who required different formats.

Outcomes from the Engagement Activity

361 people took part in the engagement process.

The majority of the feedback for both the Our North Tyneside Plan and initial Budget proposals was positive. There was very strong support that the Our North Tyneside Plan included the right priorities for North Tyneside and the four elements within the Efficiency Programme in relation to: Commissioning; Digital Strategy; Asset Management; and Workforce.

In relation to the considerations regarding an increase in Council Tax and Social care precept, the majority of people who took part in the engagement were

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supportive although it was recognised that times are financially difficult for everyone and therefore any support available for people on the lowest incomes was welcomed.

The Authority reached more than 46,000 people on its two main social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. In response to information regarding the Council Plan and Budget proposals which were promoted via these platforms, on Facebook there were 200 likes, comments and shares and 3,099 link clicks (including clicks to play the video and to go to the website to view the online questionnaire. With Twitter the Authority had 161 likes, comments and shares and 77 links.