

Summary consultation plan

A clean, green and inclusive city for all

Our medium-term financial planning for 2022-23 to
2024-25

Introduction

This plan summarises how we are going to communicate, engage and consult on our medium-term financial planning for 2022-2023 to 2024-25 and our detailed proposals for 2022-23.

It sets out:

- How we are incorporating the findings and recommendations from the recent Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on our approach to consultation on the budget.
- The ways we will communicate with people about what is happening and engage with them to encourage them to have their say on our draft proposals.
- The different groups of people we will try to engage.
- How we will listen to people's views about what we intend to do.
- The timeline for communication and consultation.

Findings and recommendations from Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

In developing our approach to consultation this year, we have considered the findings of the recent Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report and recommendations on the council's approach to consultation on the budget.

This set out three long-term goals we should build to and five short-term facilitating actions to start the process of transition to a new way of consulting on the budget:

- Long-term goals:
 - Design for the disinterested
 - Return to neighbourhood conversations
 - Create a multi-stage process
- Short-term facilitating actions:
 - Diversify engagement channels
 - Promote inclusive information sharing
 - Publish objectives for the consultation process publicly and in advance
 - Use language that promotes engagement
 - Highlight the impact of the consultation process in any final documentation

You can view the report from the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on our website at: [Scrutiny TF report - appendix.pdf \(newcastle.gov.uk\)](#)

Our approach also reflects Cabinet's initial written response to the recommendations which you can also view on our website at: [Appendix 1 - Cabinet response to scrutiny TF on budget consultation.pdf \(newcastle.gov.uk\)](#)

How we will communicate

These are the different ways we will provide information to people about what we propose to do, and how they can give us their views:

- The **full set of medium-term financial planning papers**, including the overall report, our overall planning for 2022-23 to 2024-25 and our proposed budget and service savings for 2022-23. Our goal through this channel is to make sure that we meet our requirements to tell people and organisations in Newcastle about our financial and service plans in a way that they can understand, including information about how this might affect them and how they can have their say.
- We will use **our website** to make sure people can access information about our proposals and how to give us their views. We will make sure that people can access information in different formats to meet their needs – for example, animated ‘explainer’ videos, and information in other languages.
- We will engage with **local journalists and media through press releases** and briefings to help communicate and raise awareness about our financial challenges, our draft proposals and how people can have their say on them.
- We will **brief our staff** in advance of publication so they are fully aware of our draft proposals and how it might affect them, and how they can also support people to take part in the consultation.
- We will use our **social media channels** (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tik Tok) to communicate, raise awareness and improve people’s understanding of our financial challenges, our draft proposals and how they can have their say. We will ensure that through these channels, people can access information in different formats to meet their needs, for example, animated ‘explainer’ videos, and information in other languages and have more of a two-way dialogue.
- We will engage with **regional and local professional associations**, ensuring we effectively engage and consult our statutory partners and business rates payers.
- We will also work with our **partners in the voluntary and community sector** to use their communication channels, such as websites, social media, emails and bulletins, to help reach different groups of people across the city and encourage engagement on our consultation.
- We will also engage our network of **Community Champions** to help raise awareness and encourage people to have their say.
- We will include high level, accessible information in our **CityLife magazine** to all householders to raise awareness and improve people’s understanding of our financial challenges, our priorities and draft proposals, and how they can have their say.
- Use our **community infrastructure**, such as notice boards and public buildings, to raise awareness of our proposals and encourage people to have their say.
- We will also provide information and support to our **ward councillors** so they can also publicise our proposals, let people know how they can have their say and encourage them to do so.

Groups we want to talk to

There are many different groups of people within Newcastle, for example, people living in a particular area, disabled people, older people, and people who cannot easily go online.

We have reviewed our list of stakeholders and tried to think about groups and organisations we want to talk to, including key partners and those that, or represent others with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

They include, but are not limited to:

- Adults with learning disabilities, autism or both
- Black and minority ethnic people
- Businesses
- Care leavers
- Carers
- Children and young people, including those in our care, young carers, and those with special educational needs
- Deaf and hearing-impaired people
- Developers
- Disabled people
- Faith communities
- Health services users
- Homeless people
- LGBT people
- Local businesses
- Older people
- Parents and carers
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Roma community
- Tenants and social housing landlords
- Visually impaired people
- Voluntary and community sector
- Women

How we will engage with people

These are our proposed engagement channels – how we will listen to the views of local residents and organisations and have conversations with them.

- We have launched our online **People's Budget** simulator asking participants how they would balance the council's budget. We will use this to increase awareness of the challenges we face and to understand more about what residents' and organisations' broad priorities for the city are. Where possible, we will support people who cannot easily take part online to also use the tool – we will work with partners and trusted organisations to do this.
- We will use our **Let's Talk Newcastle online** consultation portal to gather feedback. People will also be able to download copies of the survey if they choose not to complete them online or need support in doing so. There will be online surveys to gather feedback on:
 - Proposals that affect how we will deliver services in 2022-23
 - Our overall financial proposals for 2022-23, and their cumulative impact
 - Our proposed approach for developing such proposals for 2023-24 and 2024-25
- We will use the **expertise and knowledge of our services and staff** who engage with clients and service users on a daily basis, using that contact to inform people and encourage them to have their say. Services will also raise awareness of and gather feedback on proposals, particularly those that will result in a change to that service, or its policies. This will include targeted engagement with groups such as people with learning disabilities, sensory impairments, and other communities who have particular communication needs.
- We'll engage as widely as possible with the **community and voluntary sector** and, use the knowledge and expertise of our **communities team** to reach a wider range of groups representing people in different areas and people with different issues - to ensure we hear from as wide a range of views as possible.
- We will use our network of **Community Champions** to help us to engage with a wider range of people and include people who are not necessarily part of organized groups.
- Due to the current number of COVID-19 cases, we will remain cautious in our approach and minimize face-to-face contact. We will therefore again use a **FREEPOST** address to enable people to provide their feedback in writing at no extra cost to them, this will also support those who are not able to enable via digital means to have their say.

Timetable of activity

1. **Council Plan:** Publish a Council Plan which sets out our strategic priorities and the basis for our medium-term financial planning – Complete
2. **Integrated Impact Assessments:** Review the Integrated Impact Assessment template and guidance provided to officers to ensure they are explicit about how their proposals have been developed, what evidence has been used and who they have consulted in developing them and plan to consult, including any targeted consultation with stakeholders directly affected by the proposals – Complete
3. **Consultation Questions:** Review the questions to be used throughout the consultation, including within the Let's Talk Newcastle online surveys – Complete
4. **Stakeholder Mapping** – Review and update stakeholder list, in consultation with the voluntary sector to identify and fill any gaps – Complete but will keep under review throughout the consultation period
5. **People's Budget:** Launch the People's Budget – Complete
6. **Internal briefings:** Brief trade unions, representations of the Opposition Group and staff prior to publication – Complete
7. **Publish suite of draft medium-term financial planning documents:** Publication of the suite of papers and consultation channels open – 12 November 2021
8. **Cabinet approval:** Cabinet approve draft proposals for consultation – 22 November 2021
9. **Carry out engagement and consultation using the methods outlined above:** Use the expertise within our Communities Team and that of partners, such as Connected Voice and the Voluntary Sector Liaison Group, to inform stakeholders and encourage them to participate, provide tools participants can use to give their feedback, use existing neighbourhood infrastructure, social media and encourage more for two-way dialogue. Provide information and tools to ward councillors, services and partners to help inform residents and encourage them to have their say. Engage service users on proposals that may impact upon the services they access and carry out targeted engagement with some groups such as black and ethnic minority communities, children and young people and people with learning disabilities, autism or both – 12 November to 2 January 2022
10. **CityLife:** Provide accessible information about our Council Plan and draft budget proposals to all households, and how they can have their say – November 2021
11. **Media Channels:** Use media channels to publicise the draft budget proposals and consultation. Use a broader range of media channels to reach different communities – 12 November 2021 to 2 January 2022
12. **Feedback on changes:** Set out clearly within the post-consultation documentation what has changed since the draft proposals were published, as a result both of consultation responses and announcements (for example, from central government) that impact upon our financial position. Provide appropriate and proportionate feedback on responses received, how they were considered, and explain the decisions made – February to March 2022
13. **Publicise post-consultation plan:** Promote the publication of the post-consultation documents to using all communication and engagement channels used throughout the consultation period – March 2022 (following City Council)