

Appendix E Budget Consultation results summary

Introduction

The Council ran a budget consultation for 4 weeks from the 11th December 2023 to 8th January 2024 on the Lets Talk Dacorum website.

The consultation was advertised on social media and the weekly Dacorum e-bulletins. This was the first time the Council has consulted on its budget in this manner. Questions were tailored to make it as clear as possible to respondents what services are provided by Dacorum Borough Council rather than other authorities such as Hertfordshire County Council.

There were 175 responses. Respondents did not have to respond to all questions. Six questions were put to respondents, plus a free text box for any further comments.

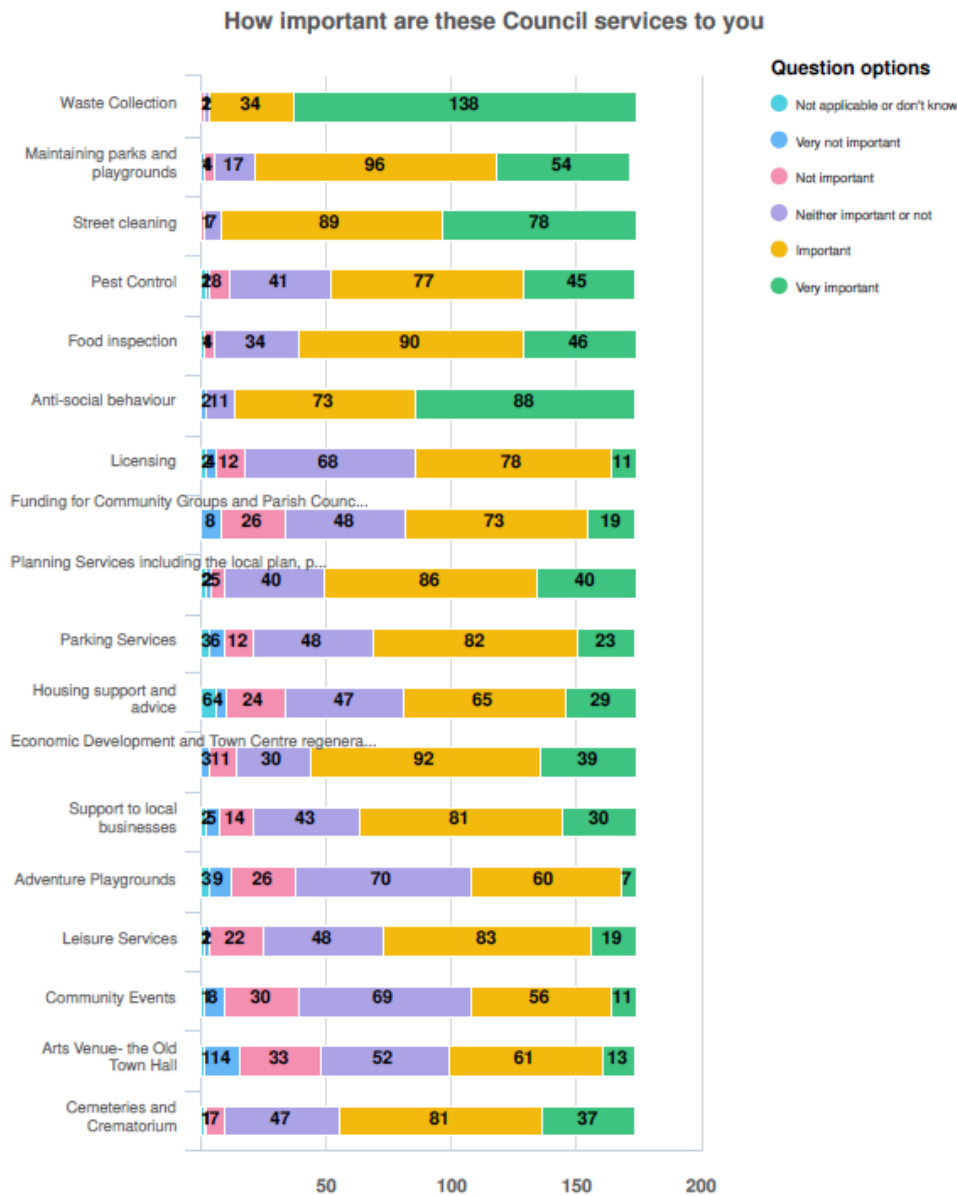
Whilst it is positive that there was engagement in the consultation, the number of respondents is relatively low given the population size of the borough. It is expected that this consultation will be carried out on an annual basis and the Council will aim to increase the number of respondents.

Key findings from consultation:

- The level of financial resource allocated to services under 2024-25 budget proposals reflects respondent priorities. Waste collection, our largest General Fund service in terms of expenditure budget, is identified amongst the majority of respondents as being 'very important' and the service that the Council should prioritise for Council funding.
- Services identified most frequently by respondents as not being a priority for Council funding include community events, arts venues and adventure playgrounds.
- Respondents are most in favour of the Council charging more for planning services and garage rentals.
- Respondents are least in favour of the Council charging more for the collection of green waste and parking.
- The majority of respondents are Hemel Hempstead residents.

Consultation Findings

Question 1: How important are these services to you?



Optional question (175 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Likert Question

The top 5 very important services were:

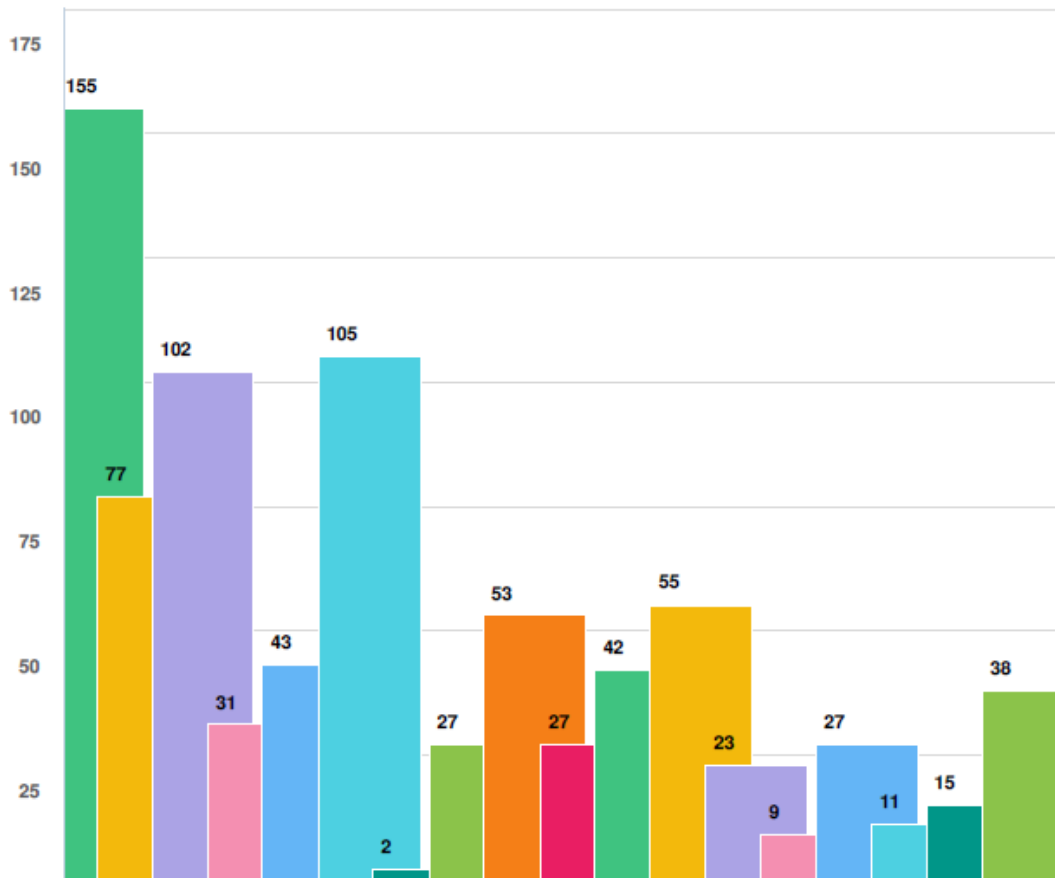
Waste Collection	79%
Anti-social Behaviour	50%
Street Cleaning	45%
Maintaining Parks & Playgrounds	31%
Food Inspection	26%

The top 5 very important and important services were:

Waste Collection	98%
Street Cleaning	95%
Anti-social Behaviour	92%
Maintaining Parks & Playgrounds	86%
Food Inspection	78%

2) Which services would you prioritise for Council funding?- Please select a maximum of 5 services which are most important to you.

Which services would you prioritise for Council funding?- Please select a maximum of 5 services which are most important to...



Question options

- Cemeteries and Crematorium
- Arts Venue- the Old Town Hall
- Community Events
- Leisure Services
- Adventure Playgrounds
- Support to local businesses
- Economic Development and town centre regeneration
- Housing support and advice
- Parking Services
- Planning Services including the local plan, planning permission and enforcement.
- Funding for Community Groups and Parish Councils
- Licensing
- Anti-social behaviour
- Food Inspection
- Pest control
- Street cleaning
- Maintaining parks and playgrounds
- Waste Collection

Optional question (175 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

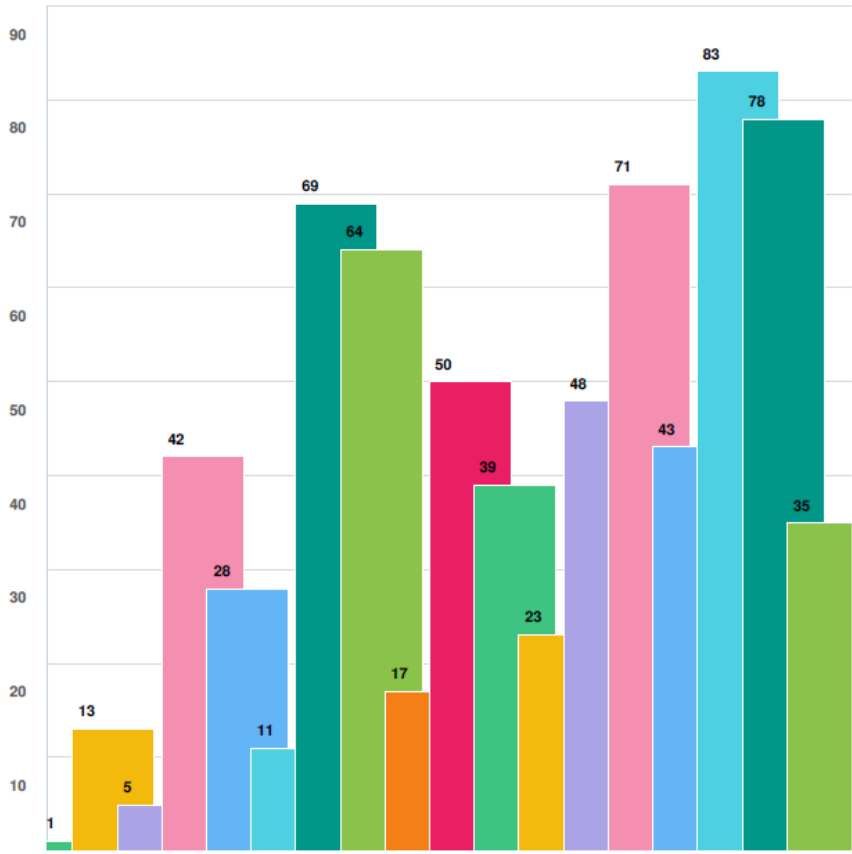
The top 5 services that respondents would prioritise for Council funding were:

Waste Collection	89%
Food Inspection	60%
Street Cleaning	58%
Maintaining Parks and Playgrounds	44%
Economic Development and Town Centre regeneration	31%

3) Which services would you NOT prioritise for Council funding?- Please select a maximum of 5 services which are least important to you.

5 respondents skipped this question

Which services would you NOT prioritise for Council funding?- Please select a maximum of 5 services which are least import...



Question options

- Cemeteries and Crematorium Arts Venue- the Old Town Hall Community Events Leisure Services
- Adventure Playgrounds Support to local businesses Economic Development and town centre regeneration
- Housing support and advice Parking Services
- Planning Services including the local plan, planning permission and enforcement.
- Funding for Community Groups and Parish Councils Licensing Anti-social behaviour Food Inspection
- Pest control Street cleaning Maintaining parks and playgrounds Waste Collection

Optional question (170 response(s), 5 skipped)

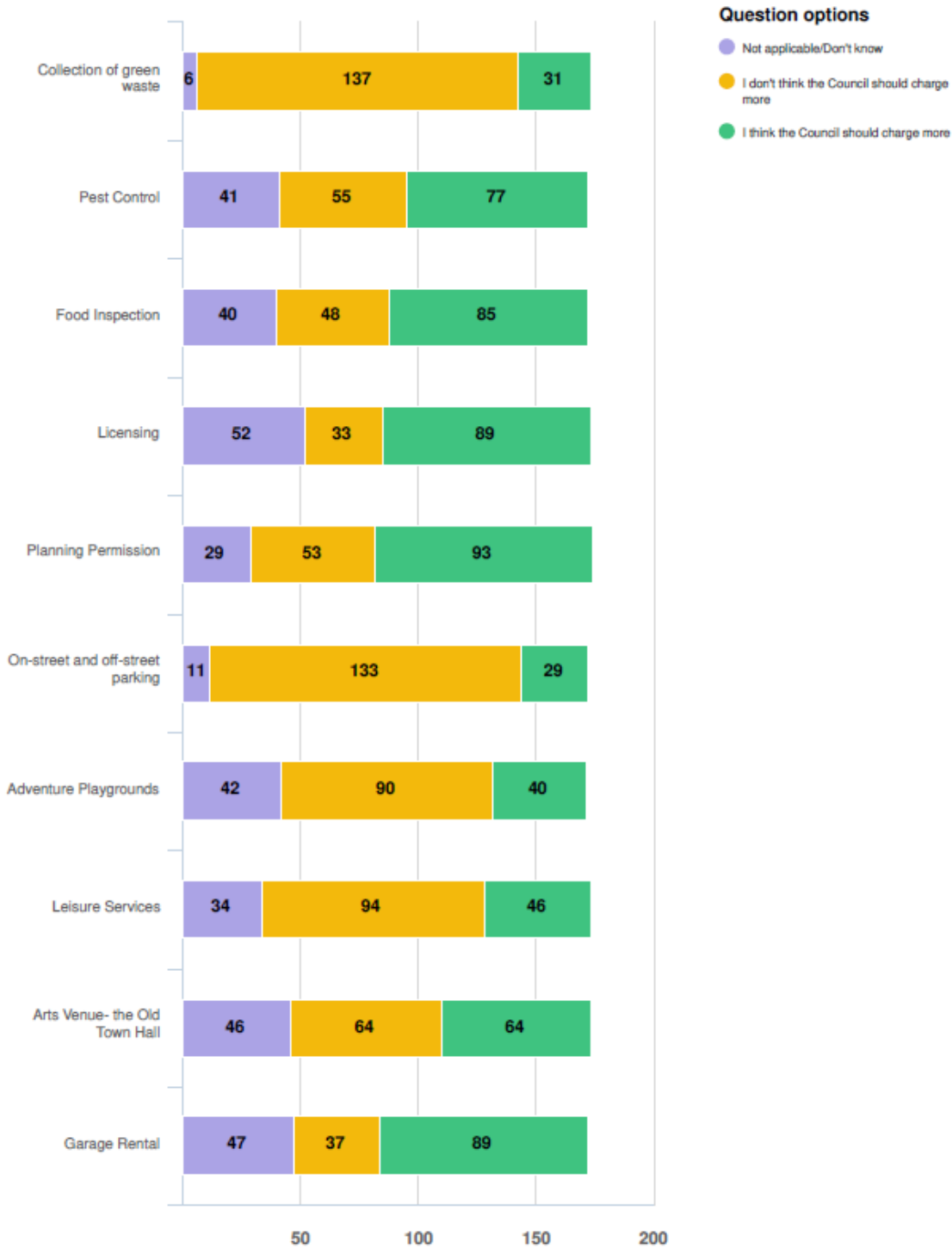
Question type: Checkbox Question

The top 5 services that respondents would NOT prioritise for Council funding were:

Community Events	49%
Arts Venue- the Old Town Hall	46%
Adventure Playgrounds	42%
Licensing	41%
Funding for Community Groups and Parish Councils	38%

4) The Council can charge for some of its services and this income helps the Council balance its budget. Which of the following services do you think the Council should charge more for?

The Council can charge for some of its services and this income helps the Council balance its budget. Which of the followin...



Optional question (175 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Likert Question

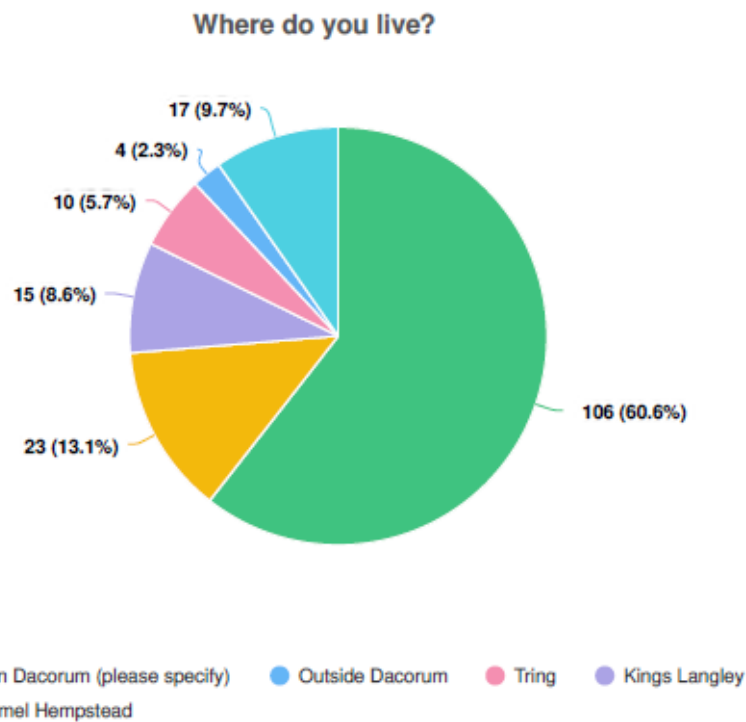
The services where respondents were most in favour of charging more were:

Planning Permission	53%
Garage rental	51%
Licensing	51%
Food Inspection	49%
Pest control	44%

The services where respondents were least in favour of charging more were:

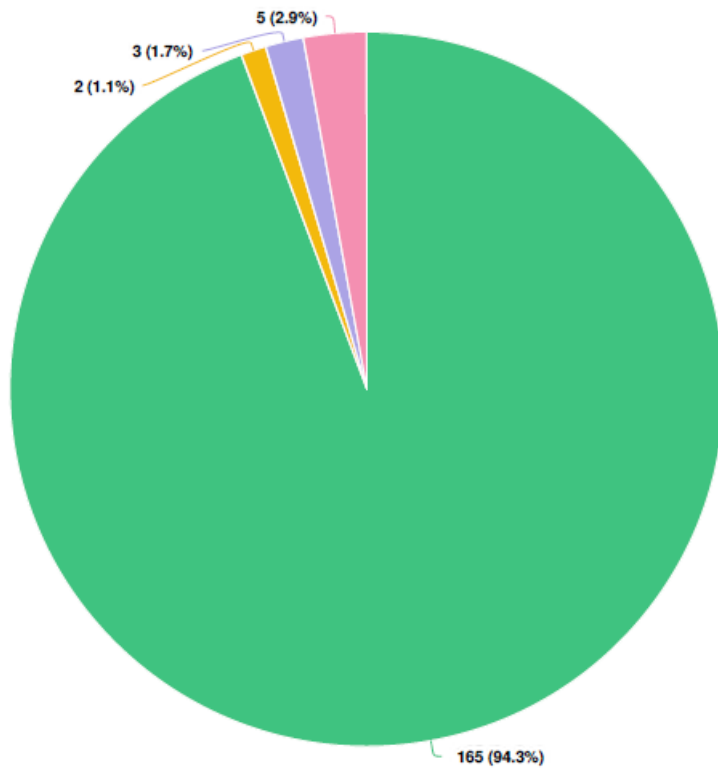
Collection of Green Waste	78%
On-street and off-street parking	76%
Leisure Services	54%
Adventure Playgrounds	51%
Art Venue- the Old Town Hall	37%

5) Where do you live?



Hemel Hempstead	60.6%
Berkhamsted	13.1%
Kings Langley	8.6%
Tring	5.7%
Outside Dacorum	2.3%
Another village/town in Dacorum	9.7%

6) Are you responding as:



Question options

● Other (please specify)
 ● Not local, but interested
 ● A business
 ● A resident

Resident	94.30%
Business	1.10%
Not local, but interested	1.70%
Other	2.90%

Respondents given the opportunity to provide free text responses. 56 respondents chose to do so. These responses covered the following main themes:

- The financial position of the Council
- Charging for Council services
- Hemel Hempstead and Hemel Town Centre
- Council communications
- Waste
- Leisure and Community facilities
- Parking
- Other, including services not delivered by the Council