

Budget consultation survey

Introduction

Cornwall Council plays a huge part in many people's lives – ensuring children and young people have the best start in life, protecting vulnerable people, maintaining a safe road system and helping to create a thriving economy.

Every year, we spend over a billion pounds providing public services that you, your family and friends use every day.

However, Cornwall faces some big challenges. Our population is growing, people are generally living longer and the type of services that people need is changing. The cost of living is going up and as things become more expensive we also have higher costs.

Over the last ten years, as Government funding to the Council reduced sharply, we have changed the way we work to make nearly £380 million of savings. We've been able to keep council tax rates in Cornwall below the national average and amongst the lowest in the South West of England. We've done this while protecting and investing in the services that people have told us are most important – such as providing care for the elderly, more homes and jobs for local people, and keeping Cornwall's roads in good repair. We've only been able to do this by working with you - our residents and local communities.

We are proud of our record of devolving and preserving services. Other local authorities have cut services such as libraries - we have kept most libraries open despite budgets being more than halved, by working tirelessly with local community groups, town and parish councils.

The financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Cornwall and Cornwall Council has been huge. The economic recovery from the pandemic is expected to take years with the impact of Brexit adding further uncertainty to the economic picture in the UK. The Government has postponed its fairer funding review of local government finance and our financial settlement for the next four years remains uncertain. Pressures on council budgets are still growing. More older people and children than ever before are needing the social care we provide.

So the challenge is significant - our plans already include measures to make a further £30 million in savings over the next four year period. There is still a significant budget gap, rising to £28 million by 2024/25. This will require further savings to be made. So overall we need to reduce our spending by £58 million to ensure our budget remains balanced, and fundamental changes to the way we work will be

required if we are to meet residents' needs.

Our draft budget prioritises critical frontline services and investment in Cornwall's recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic. We will redesign services and our organisation to ensure maximum efficiency while protecting the most vulnerable, supporting our businesses and growing our local economy through a time of unprecedented financial challenge.

We propose the following as part of our draft budget and business plan for 2021/22:

- Continuing to develop and **implement plans for savings and generating income** that were identified in previous years and consult on these as required.
- **Increasing council tax** to help cover the costs of increasing demand and reduce the need to make service reductions. We are proposing to increase council tax by the maximum increase we are allowed by Government without having to hold a referendum (currently 1.99%).
- **Redesigning and reducing the size of our organisation**, including by reducing the layers of management, vacancy management and making more use of automation, to create a leaner and more efficient organisation
- **Redesigning our services** to be high performing and lower cost, with a customer centric approach delivering better outcomes for residents.
- **Driving down the costs of our contracts** with external providers
- Changing the way we work, including through formalised flexible working arrangements (ie working from home) to **reduce the number of offices and buildings** we need to maintain.
- Continuing to **lobby central Government** for the funding, powers and flexibility to secure Cornwall's future.

We would like to hear your views on our draft budget and get an understanding of your priorities, needs and aspirations for our services and your community.

Please return your completed survey by 14 December 2020 to:

Budget consultation, Room 4S, County Hall, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY

An online version of this survey is available at:

<https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/budget>

Completing this survey online will save us costs.

Who is responding?

In which role(s) are you responding to this survey - please tick all that apply.

- I am a Cornwall resident
- I represent / own a local business
- I represent a voluntary and community services (VCS) organisation
- I represent another stakeholder e.g. parish council, health, police etc.
- I am an employee of Cornwall Council
- Other (please specify):

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide further details below. If you are responding as an individual, please leave blank.

Name:

Organisation:

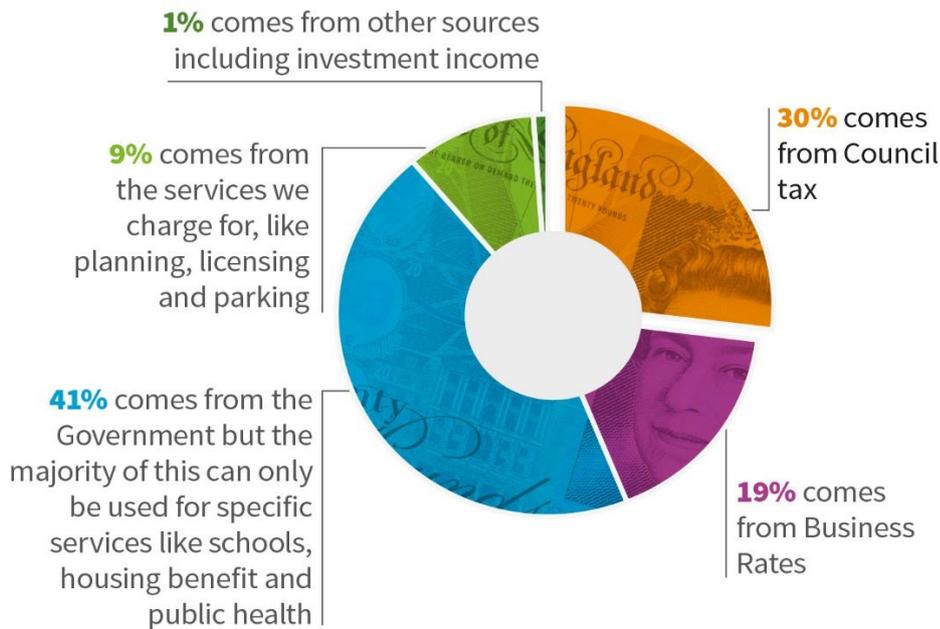
Is your response the formal response of your organisation?

- Yes
- No

Where the Council budget comes from

As one of the largest unitary councils in the country, Cornwall Council has a budget of around £1 billion a year. We use the budget to provide services to more than half a million residents and over five million visitors a year.

We don't get all the money from council tax



How we spend money across the Council

We're working hard to make Cornwall a great place to live, work and do business, and to deliver value for money for our residents.

For every £100 we receive to fund services, we spend:



To what extent do you agree the Council delivers value for money for the services you use?

(Please use the scale 1 – 10 below, if 1 is low and 10 is high)

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

One of the ways in which we can achieve savings is by delivering our services in more effective ways, for example by making better use of technology. Do you have any suggestions about ways in which the Council can deliver all or some services more effectively?

We will be redirecting resources to the services and activities that residents consider most important. Where should we focus our resources? What's most important for you?

Council Tax and Draft Budget 2021/2022

We are working hard to maintain essential local services while keeping council tax down. We have already made nearly £380 million of savings since 2010 and our budget proposals include plans to make a further £30 million of savings over the next four years, but there is still a significant budget gap, rising to £28 million by 2024/25 which will require further savings to be made. So, overall, we need to reduce our spending by £58 million to ensure our budget remains balanced.

We are proposing to increase council tax to help cover the costs of increasing demand and reduce the need to make service reductions in other areas. We are proposing to increase council tax by the maximum increase we are allowed by Government without having to hold a referendum (currently 1.99%).

It is not clear yet if the Government's 2% special levy for adult social care will be available again this year. This levy allows local authorities to raise additional council tax to be used exclusively for the funding of services for vulnerable adults.

Overall, for a band D property an increase of 1.99% would mean an increase of 61p per week / £31.60 a year. Most properties in Cornwall are in band B. For a band B property, our proposals would mean an increase of 47p per week / £24.58 a year.

These proposals would mean that levels of council tax in Cornwall remain below the national average and amongst the lowest in the South West. However, we know that paying these bills can be a challenge for some households and we propose to maintain Council Tax Support for people who have no income or a low income.

To what extent do you agree with our proposal to increase council tax by the maximum we are allowed by Government without having to hold a referendum (currently 1.99% unless increased by a future Government)?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

What council tax increase would you be prepared to pay to fund Council services (in addition to the 2% special levy for adult social care)?

(Increases below are for a band B property)

- None
- 1% - an additional £0.24 per week / £12.35 a year
- 1.99% - an additional £0.47 per week / £24.50 a year (currently proposed)
- 3% - an additional £0.71 per week / £35.05 a year
- 4% - an additional £0.95 per week / £49.41 a year
- More than 4%

If you have answered 'None' or '1%' in the question above, please let us know for which service(s) you think we should reduce the funding?

Do you have any comments about our draft budget proposals?

About You

You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you do.

Cornwall Council is committed to ensuring that our services, policies and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice and that they meet the needs of all the community. For us to check we are providing fair and effective services, we would be grateful if you would answer the questions below.

Please enter your postcode

How do you describe your sex/gender?

- Female
- Male
- Intersex
- Gender fluid
- Non-binary
- Other

Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

- Yes
- No

Which age group are you?

- 10 – 19
- 20 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50 – 59
- 60 – 69
- 70 – 79
- 80 – 89
- 90+

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No

If you have answered 'yes', please select the definition/s from the list below that best describes your impairment:

- Learning disability / difficulty
- Long standing illness or health
- Mental health condition
- Physical or mobility impairment
- Sensory Impairment
- Other condition (cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy)

Do you give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of a long-term physical or mental health or disability, or problems related to old age (do not count anything you do as part of paid employment).

- Yes
- No

Do you consider your sexual orientation to be:

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Heterosexual / Straight
- Lesbian / Gay woman
- Pansexual

How do you describe your religion or belief (if any)?

- Buddhist
- Christian (includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Hindu
- Humanist
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Pagan
- Sikh
- None

How do you describe your ethnic origin?

Please read carefully before selecting the group that you feel most closely reflects your background.

- Asian or Asian Cornish / British
- Black or Black Cornish / British
- Cornish
- Mixed (e.g. White and Asian)
- Other Ethnic Group
- White (e.g. British, Scottish)

Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- Employed full time (more than 30 hours a week)
- Employed part time (less than 30 hours a week)
- Employed zero hours
- Seasonal worker
- Self-employed or Company Director
- Unemployed & looking for work
- Retired
- Student
- Not working / other

Which of the following best describes your housing status?

- I own my home (outright or with a mortgage)
- I rent from a private landlord
- I rent from a social landlord or housing association
- I live in supported accommodation
- Other, namely: _____

Thank you for taking part in our survey, you may be interested in receiving more information about Cornwall Council

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter, please tick the box below and give us your email address

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey.

We will use what you and other people tell us to help inform and shape our draft budget that Cabinet and Full Council consider in February 2021.

You can find out more about Cornwall Council and the budget consultation at www.cornwall.gov.uk/budget2020 or at <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/budget>

You can follow us on Facebook @forCornwall and on Twitter @CornwallCouncil

Please return your completed survey by 14 December 2020 to:
Budget consultation, Room 4S, County Hall, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact us at 0300 1234 100 or by email: enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk

www.cornwall.gov.uk