

Budget Engagement Results of Survey - August 2019





Let's discuss 'Our Future'

Have your say on the Council Budget and the services that matter to you

As part of the overall engagement exercise to further develop community relationships across South Ayrshire regarding the Council's budget for 2019-2020, a Budget Engagement survey for 2019-2020 was created and went live on Wednesday 30 January 2019. One day after the survey went live the Scottish Government gave Councils additional powers to raise council tax charges up to a maximum of 4.79%. Due to this change in policy, a supplementary survey with a question on raising council tax by the new maximum amount was added to the engagement exercise.

The main survey was in four sections:

Section 1 - Three questions about the respondent to find out about them and their interest in the budget.

Section 2 - Three questions about council services to better understand the relative importance of services and how they are delivered to the respondent.

Section 3 - 19 questions about the Council's vision and strategic objectives to better understand what's important to the respondent.

Section 4 - Two questions for comments on ideas to save money and generate more revenue and development of the budget.

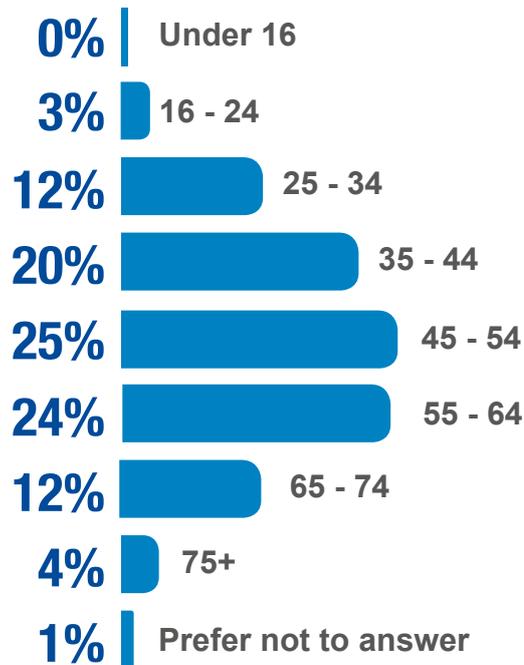
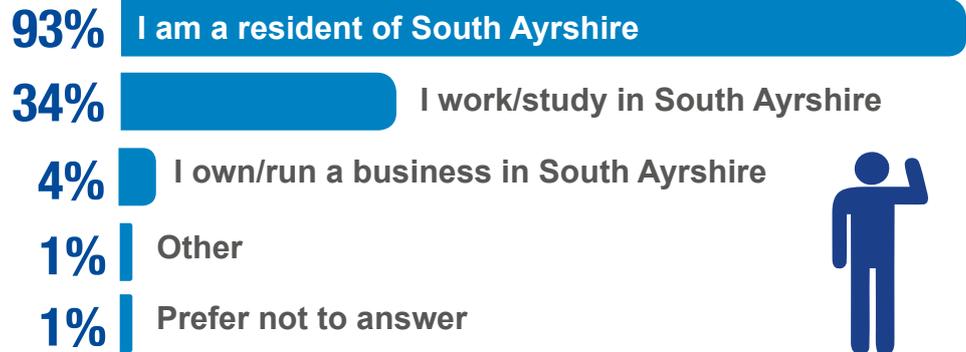
The surveys were accessible on line through the Council's public website and via hardcopy which were available at libraries and customer service centres and also posted to those who requested a hardcopy survey.

Fifteen budget engagement events were conducted from Wednesday 6 February to Friday 15 February on seven different days at 15 different venues. Councillors and senior management attended to answer questions and inform residents about budget issues. The public were able to fill in surveys and hand in comments and completed surveys at these events.

A snapshot of responses was taken on Sunday 17 February and an interim analysis report on the responses thus far was written to inform Councillors for budget deliberations. The main survey remained open until Sunday 19 May when it was closed. A total of 2,232 responses were received for the main survey and 860 were received for the supplementary.

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About you



About You



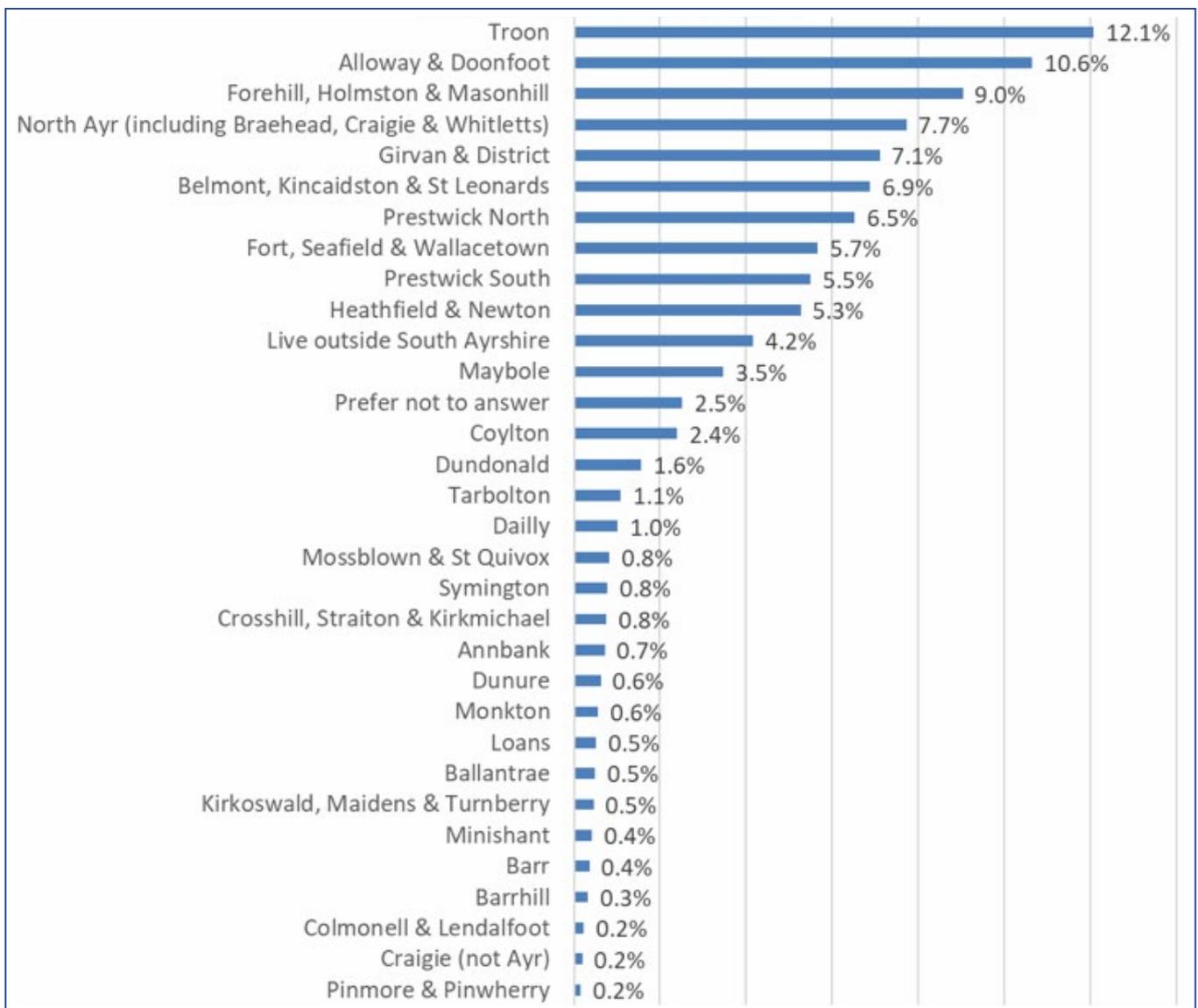
93% I live in South Ayrshire

4% I live outside South Ayrshire

3% I prefer not to answer

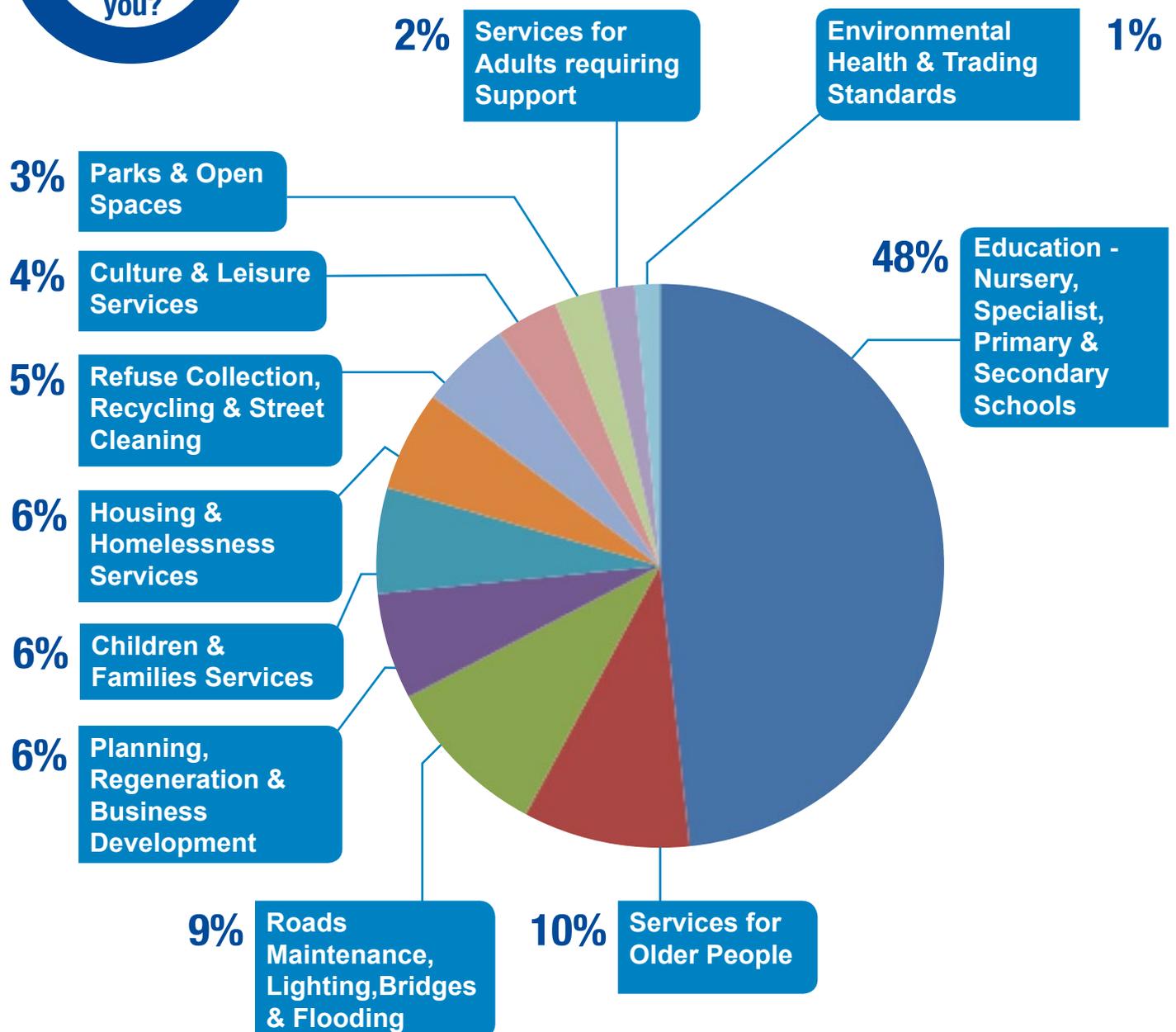


Local breakdown of areas



How important are Council services to you?

4 What is the most important service to you?



How important are Council services to you?

SERVICE (Based on weighted average score for all choices)

Education - Nursery, Specialist, Primary and Secondary Schools

Services for Older People

Children and Families Services

Roads Maintenance, Lighting, Bridges and Flooding

Refuse Collection, Recycling and Street Cleaning

Housing and Homelessness Services

Services for Adults requiring Support

Culture and Leisure Services

Parks and Open Spaces

Planning, Regeneration and Business Development

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

SERVICE

OF MOST IMPORTANCE



OF LESSER IMPORTANCE



How important are Council services to you?



Should the Council review how it charges for services, including the possibility of introducing or increasing some charges to allow services to be sustainable or to continue?



Should the Council review its level of service delivery, including reducing the level of service or increasing delivery times in order to continue the service?



How important are Council services to you?



Should the Council reduce or even stop delivering some services in order to protect other services?



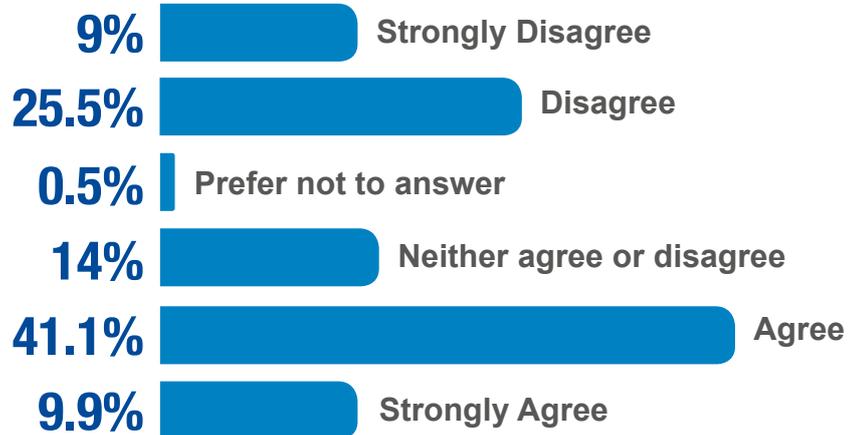
Should the Council reduce subsidies to voluntary organisations and community groups?



How important are Council services to you?



Should the Council change or reduce opening hours for some public services and facilities to reduce running costs?



Should the Council reduce the number of buildings that it operates from, in order to reduce maintenance and ongoing costs?



How important are Council services to you?



Should the Council increase charges for the use of some facilities to ensure they can sustain the level of service provided?



Which of the Council's actions are most important to you?

Q7-Q25. Which of the Council's actions are most important to you?

ACTION (Based on average score)
Improve roads and other infrastructure.
Improve places by tackling the appearance of public areas, redundant buildings, signage and litter.
Involve local communities in setting priorities and plans for improvement.
Work with local businesses to maximise training opportunities and apprenticeships for young people.
Support local businesses to take advantage of Council and government contracts and economic growth opportunities.
Work with communities to address isolation of older people and increase their activity and social opportunities.
Streamline of processes through innovative redesign or improved efficiency of methods of service delivery.
Provide better support for carers and young carers.
Focus learning and care systems around community hubs including schools.
Rationalise Council owned facilities through investment, disposal or community asset transfer.
Work with partners to improve and promote tourism opportunities and a co-ordinated programme of events and activities.
Make greater use of online technology wherever possible.
Target children and those most in need by focussing on issues such as obesity, substance abuse and promoting positive mental health.
Improve health and care services to rural communities.
Develop a young workforce as a key element to sustaining our communities.
Continue recycling enhancements to protect the environment for future generations.
Work with partners to build more social housing.
Develop branding and marketing of the area's history, culture, landscape and attractions to promote South Ayrshire.
Expand provision of early year's services for children and young people.
ACTION

OF MOST IMPORTANCE



OF LESSER IMPORTANCE

Comments

Q26. Broad themes on ideas to help the Council save money or generate additional revenue.

Do you have any ideas that could help the Council save money or generate additional revenue?	
Comment Broad Themes	Examples of Comments
Efficiency Measures	Staffing – Use of external contractors garnered a mixed response with some clearly in favour.
	of more outsourcing and others who identified problems with this strategy.
	“Smarter Working” – Investigate staff working practices or introduce new work practices.
Assets/Facilities	Close or transfer facilities to communities – Some Council facilities including non-profit making golf courses, libraries or leisure centres which are not well utilised could be closed or reduce
	The number of days open.
	Shared Usage. Make the most of Council assets by making them multi-purpose. Share or rent
Charging Policy	Introduce or Increase Charges – Ensure residents are abiding by new recycling system and fine serial abusers. Charge for brown bins. Charge for on street car parking in over populated residential areas. Introduce a tourist tax to go towards town improvements. Increase charges for non-essential services. Health & Social Care Partnership to charge for day care in line with self-direct support. Charge for transport.
	Review charging policy – Check if special uplift charges have been a success considering cost of cleaning up fly tipping. Introduce a number of free special uplifts a year.
Statutory vs Non- Statutory Services	Redefine the role of the Council – Focus on statutory or essential services.
	Make more use of partner organisations to deliver non-core areas of work.
	Consider a social enterprise for leisure and culture.

Comments

Q27. Comments to inform the development of the Council's budget.

Do you have any other comments to inform the development of the Council's budget?	
Comment Broad Themes	Examples of Comments
Social Cohesion and Community Engagement	Services such as libraries, swimming pools, green spaces and cultural events were viewed as critical to communities and social cohesion.
	These services prevent social isolation for families, children and young people as well as older people, and in so doing promote positive mental health.
Leisure, Art and Culture, Tourism & Health	Utilise the attractiveness of South Ayrshire and its high visitor numbers by protecting the environment, leisure activities, historic sites and greenspace to promote health and wellbeing and tourism.
South Ayrshire Council Service Management	Value staff and utilise skills effectively.
	Ensure that initiatives and projects are properly evidenced and evaluated.
	Review staff levels, most commonly at management level, though there were also points about some services relying on the good will of staff, and allowing time for structures to settle in.
	Suggestions for improved council management style including use of innovation, improved technology, vision and values, staff contribution to decision making.
	Service budgets should be linked and more flexible to prevent protection over budgets to the detriment of improved outcomes, increased working with HSCP.
	Planning should include long term plans, with a fairer allocation of resource across services.
	Contractors for buildings and maintenance should be monitored more carefully.

Comments

Finance	Better use should be made of buildings, such as selling when they are still in a good state, asset transfer, good rates on council properties.
	Education comments focused on no charges and no cuts to teachers, and invest more on education and school buildings.
	Fines for littering, dog waste, not paying council tax or rent.
	No charging for parking or toilets.
	Charge business a 'night opening charge' to help clean up the streets.
	Merge the three Ayrshires.
	Council tax increase had mixed reviews.
Area Regeneration	Town and village regeneration was a key issue. Respondents to the survey had various suggestions about how to improve business opportunities, enhance facilities and attractions, and targeting resource at the infrastructure.
	Business improvement included incentives for business, private partner initiatives, opening school car parks at weekends in some areas.
	Improving the appearance and environment (reduced litter, better lighting, targeting crime and drugs trade).
	Features on the low green and for outdoor activities, promote one or two night breaks.
	Infrastructure included addressing problems on Ayr High Street, improving roads and pavements.
South Ayrshire Council Communications	Call for further information from the Council but also a need to address misinformation.
	Image management.
	Survey design too vague and simplistic, and consultation should start in the autumn leaving plenty of time before budget decision making deadlines.
Bins, Recycling & Cleanliness	Concerns about the newly introduced refuse/recycling system e.g. too many bins, difficulties for those living in flats and bins more likely to blow over in wind.
Other Areas of Concern for the Council	General comments with little detail made to highlight services or areas of most importance.

Supplementary Survey



How strongly do you agree/disagree that South Ayrshire Council raises council tax by 4.79?

