

Harrogate Borough Council Budget 2007/8

Public Consultation

October 2006

AUGUST 2006 CONSULTATION REGARDING HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 2007/8

1.0 METHODOLOGY

1.1 In September 2006 Harrogate Borough Council consulted residents of the District to seek views on the Harrogate Borough Council's budget for 2007/8 and proposals regarding Council tax. A copy of the questionnaire can be found at Appendix A.

1.2 The following questionnaires were sent:

- ❑ 1500 questionnaires regarding the Budget were sent to **District Panel** Members, 982 were returned. This represents a 65.5% response rate.
- ❑ 158 questionnaires were sent to the **Voluntary Sector**, 33 questionnaires were returned. This represents a 20.8% response rate.
- ❑ 249 questionnaires were sent to **Local businesses**, 30 questionnaires were returned. This represents a 12% response rate.
- ❑ 87 questionnaires were sent to **Parish Councillors**, 32 questionnaires were returned. This represents a 36.8% response rate.
- ❑ 54 questionnaires were sent to **Councillors**, 16 were returned. This represents a 29.6% response rate.
- ❑ The questionnaire was also placed on the **Harrogate Borough Council website**. 18 responses were received.
- ❑ The questionnaire was also placed on the Harrogate Borough Council **staff** intranet and sent directly to staff within an email. 126 responses were received.
- ❑ The questionnaire was also given to the Harrogate College Business Studies class, (**Young People**) 23 responses were received.

1.3 In total 1237 responses to the Budget Survey were received.

Table 1. Analysis of responses		
Total questionnaires analysed = 1237		
	Questionnaires returned	Response Rate
District Panel	982	65%
Voluntary Sector	33	21%
Business Sector	30	12%
Parish Councillors	32	37%
Councillors	16	29%
Internet	18	
Staff	126	
Young people	23	

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Budget 2007/2008

- ❑ 100% of Councillors and over 70% of Parish Councillors and Staff were aware of the destination of Council Tax billed; whereas for the other category groups the majority of respondents were unaware (and only 4.5% of young people were aware).
- ❑ Of those respondents that were aware of the destination of Council Tax billed, the vast majority became aware as a result of council tax/business rates leaflets.
- ❑ Four out of eight category groups predominantly favoured a 4.4% Council Tax rise; the Business Sector predominantly favoured a less than 4.4% rise and respondents from the Voluntary Sector, Staff and Internet predominantly favoured a 4.4% - 4.9% rise.
- ❑ The highest percentage in all category groups except Young People agreed that additional expenditure should be spent on recycling and waste collection. Within Young People the highest level of agreement was for Customer Services and IT.
- ❑ When Respondents were asked if they thought that additional expenditure should be spent on any other area, the single most popular response was on Policing/Crime Prevention.
- ❑ All category groups except the Voluntary Sector placed recycling and waste collection as the highest priority for any additional expenditure; the Voluntary Sector placed measures to reduce the level and cost of homelessness as the highest priority.
- ❑ Four out of eight category groups agreed that in order to achieve the lowest Council Tax rise the Council should firstly not undertake additional expenditure; the Voluntary Sector and Staff agreed that firstly existing fees and charges should be increased by more than 3.9%; Councillors agreed that firstly new charges should be introduced whilst Young People agreed that firstly existing services should be reduced.
- ❑ When respondents were asked to specify which services they would reduce a wide variety of comments were received and are summarised below.
- ❑ The highest percentage in all category groups except Young People agreed that fees should be increased for Hire/Letting of Council Premises (although an equal percentage of Councillors also agreed that Car Parking fees should be increased. Within Young People the highest level of agreement was to increase fees for Sports centres/swimming pools/outdoor recreation.
- ❑ When Respondents were invited to provide comments or suggestions on the budget questions a wide variety of responses were received and are summarised below.

3.0 RESULTS - HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2006/7

3.1 The following background information was given to respondents.

In July 2006 the Cabinet agreed the following proposals relating to the Council's budget:-

- Increase the overall budget by 4.95% to £23.122m
- Increase fees and charges by 3.9% (calculated rate of inflation)
- Make efficiency savings of 2% of which 0.75% must be cash based
- Plan to receive a 5.6% grant increase from Central Government

If this is achieved then without any new spending the Council Tax will increase by 4.4%. However, there are considerable pressures for new spending to meet a number of areas of work. These are:-

- **Waste Recycling and Waste Collection** – the Council is required to meet Government targets on recycling and compost or face financial penalties.
- **Customer Services and IT Investment** – there is a requirement to meet Government targets regarding providing local people easy access to Council services electronically.
- **Health and Safety** – there is a need to invest in the Council's facilities and buildings, particularly cemetery walls and memorial safety to make them safe to the public.
- **Homelessness** – the Council is focussing on reducing the level of homelessness and the cost of temporary accommodation.

The Council must decide if it wishes to invest further in these areas and is seeking views on the priorities for investment. As a guide, a 1% increase in Council Tax produces an additional £90,000 to spend. However, if the Council increases its Council Tax above 5% it will face financial penalties from the Government.

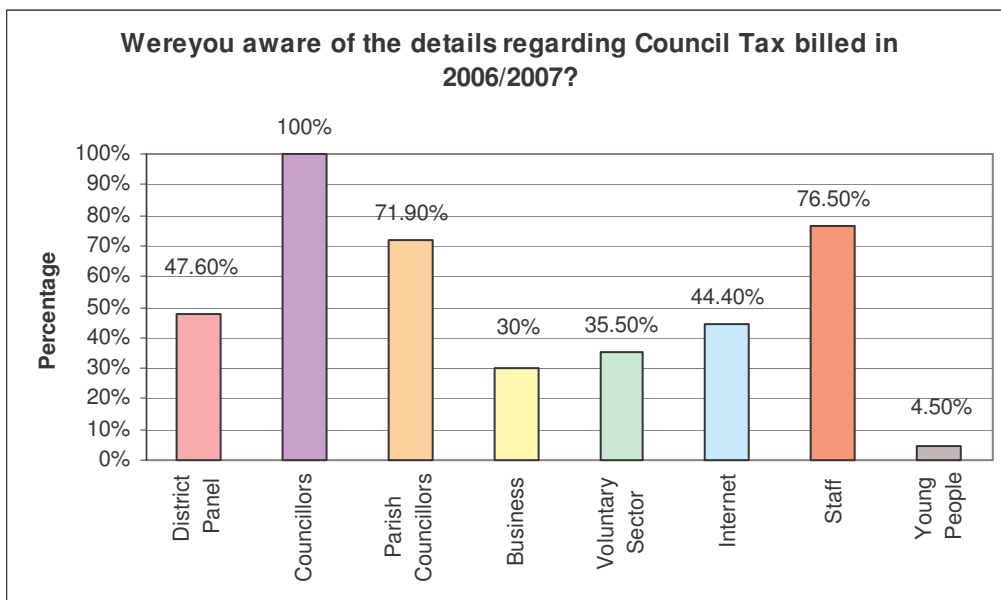
3.2. In question 1 respondents were asked about their awareness regarding the destination for Council Tax billed in 2006/7. They were told that:

- 14.6% was for Harrogate Borough Council
- 67.7% was for North Yorkshire County Council.
- 13.6% was for North Yorkshire Police Authority.
- 4.1% was for North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The following table sets out their responses.

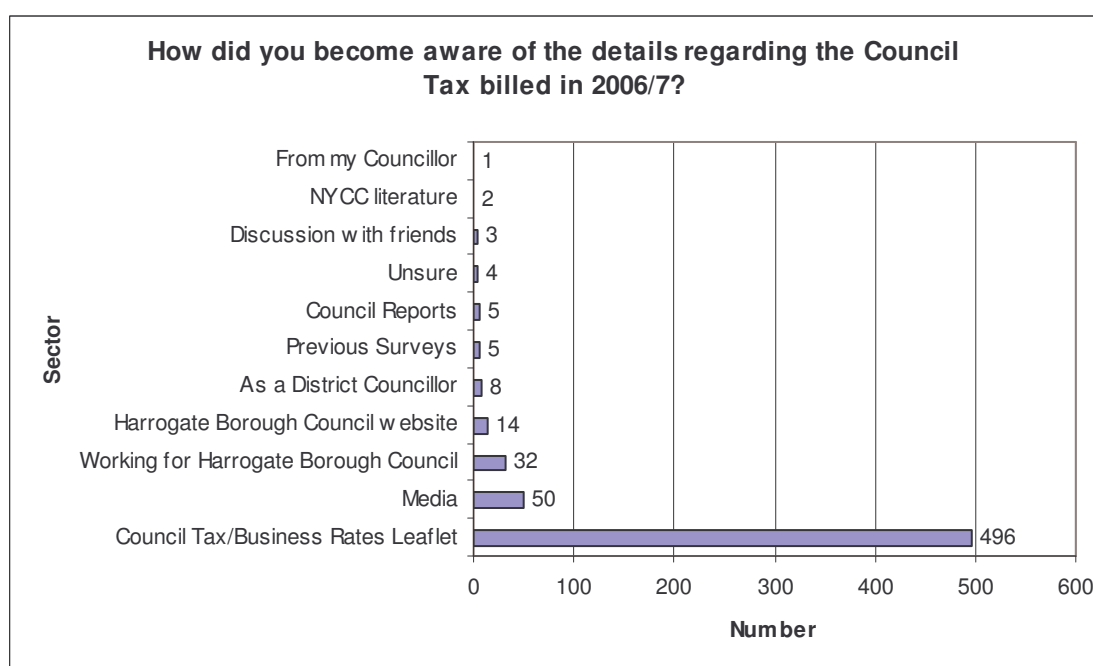
Table 2. Awareness regarding Council Tax billed in 2006/7								
	District Panel	Councillors	Parish Councillors	Business Sector	Voluntary Sector	Internet	Staff	Young People
Aware	47.6%	100%	71.9%	30%	35.5%	44.4%	76.5%	4.5%
Not Aware	52.4%	0%	28.1%	70%	64.5%	55.6%	23.5%	95.5%

Overall, the level of awareness was 50.2%.



3.3 In question 2 respondents were asked how they became aware of the Council Tax billed in 2006/7. Responses received can be categorised as follows:

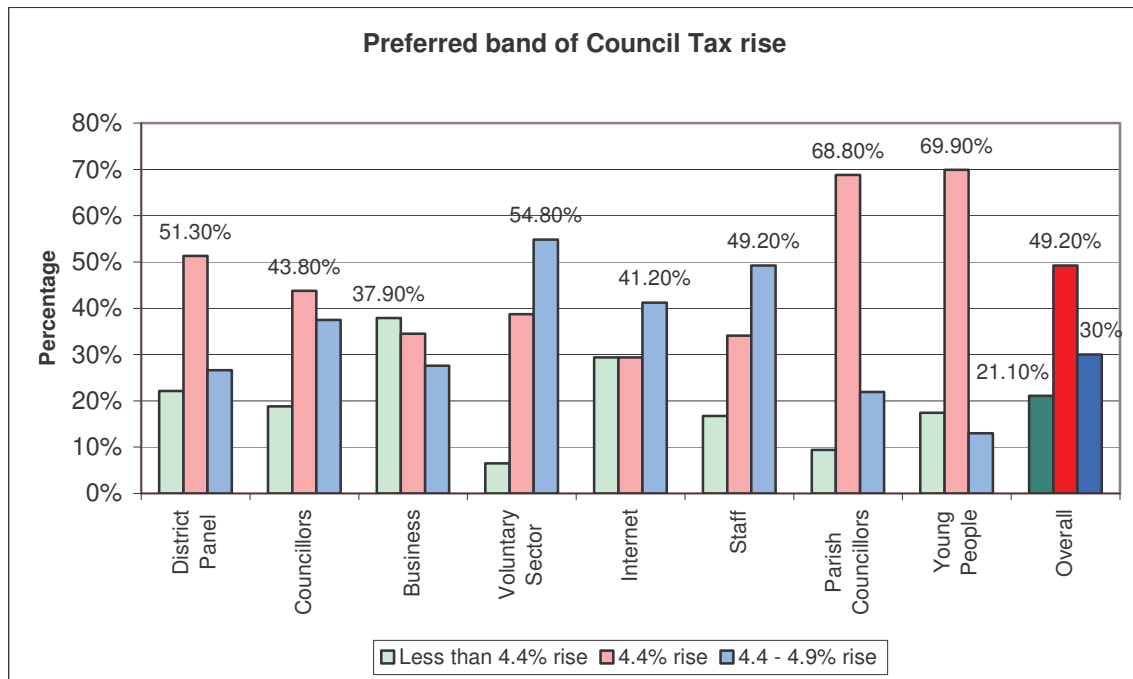
Table 3. How did you become aware of the details regarding the Council tax billed in 2006/7	
Council Tax/Business Rates Leaflet	496
Media	50
Through working for Harrogate Borough Council	32
Harrogate Borough Council website	14
As a District Councillor	8
Previous Surveys	5
Council Reports	5
Unsure	4
Discussion with friends	3
NYCC literature	2
From my Councillor	1



3.4 In question 3 respondents were asked their preferred Council Tax rise. Bearing in mind that:

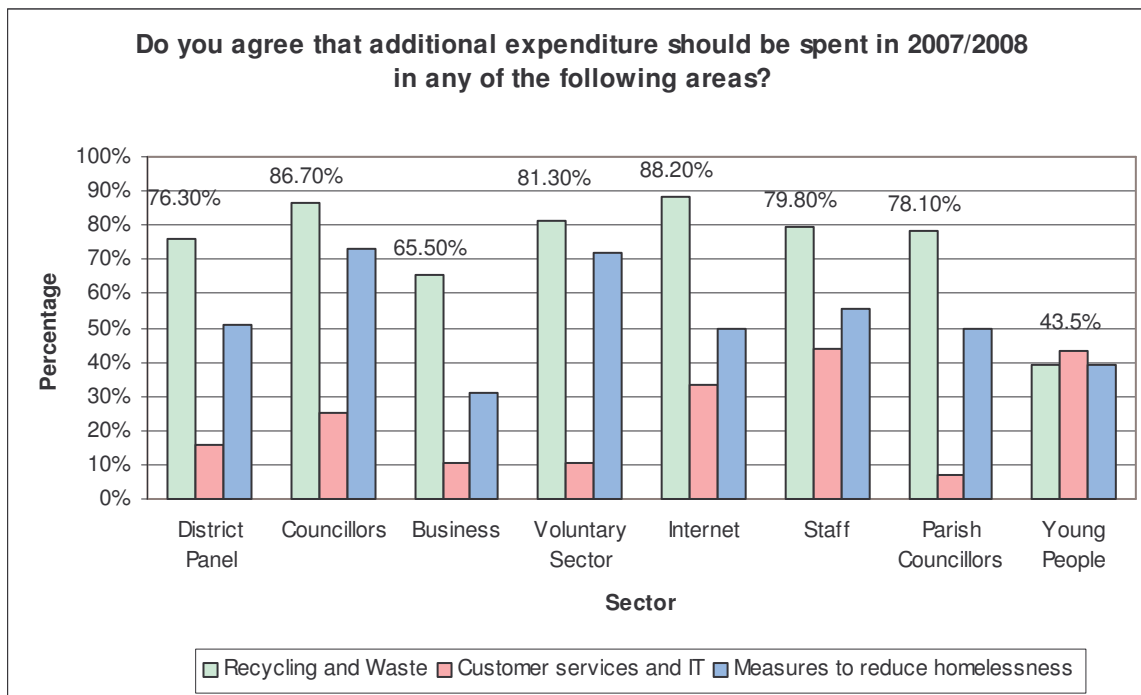
- Less than 4.4% would lead to either cuts in existing services and/or a further increase in fees and charges.
- At a rise of 4.4% services would remain the same.
- A rise of 4.4 - 4.9% would enable some of the additional expenditure detailed above in paragraph 2.1.

	Overall	District Panel	Councillors	Business Sector	Voluntary Sector	Internet	Staff	Parish Councillors	Young People
Less than 4.4% rise	21.1%	22.1%	18.8%	37.9%	6.5%	29.4%	16.7%	9.4%	17.4%
4.4% rise	49.2%	51.3%	43.8%	34.5%	38.7%	29.4%	34.1%	68.8%	69.9%
4.4 - 4.9% rise	30%	26.6%	37.5%	27.6%	54.8%	41.2%	49.2%	21.9%	13%



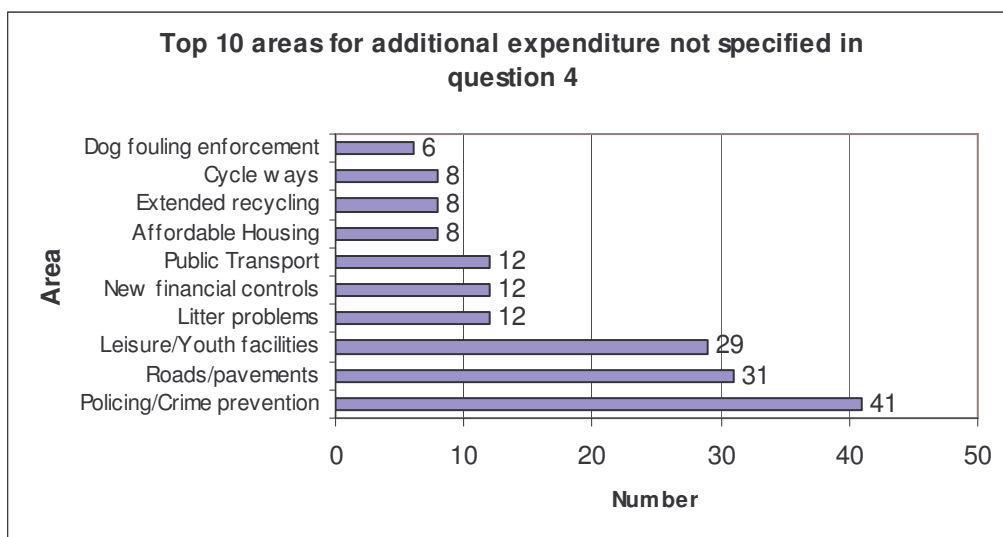
3.5(i) In question 4 respondents were asked how additional expenditure should be spent in 2007/2008. Respondents were asked to tick all areas they agreed with.

	District Panel	Councillors	Business Sector	Voluntary Sector	Internet	Staff	Parish Councillors	Young People
Recycling and Waste	76.3%	86.7%	65.5%	81.3%	88.2%	79.8%	78.1%	39.1%
Customer services and IT	15.6%	25%	10.7%	10.3%	33.3%	43.7%	7.1%	43.5%
Measures to reduce homelessness	51.1%	73.3%	31%	71.9%	50%	55.4%	50%	39.1%



3.5(ii) Respondents were also asked if they thought additional expenditure should be spent in an area not specified. The following responses were received:

Policing/Crime prevention	41
Leisure/Youth facilities	31
Roads/pavements	29
Litter problems	12
New financial controls	12
Public Transport	12
Affordable Housing	8
Extended recycling facilities	8
Cycle ways	8
Dog fouling enforcement	6
Cultural facilities	5
Rural investment	5
Voluntary sector	4
Park and Ride	4
Car Parking	3
Disability provision	3
Energy Efficiency	2
Partnership working	2



3.6 Respondents were asked if they had answered yes to more than one of the additional expenditure areas in question 5 to put them in order of priority.

Table 7. If you answered Yes to more than one of the additional expenditure areas in the previous question, please prioritise.

	District Panel	Councillors	Parish Councillors	Business Sector	Voluntary Sector	Internet	Staff	Young People
Recycling & Waste Collection	1st	1st	1st	1st	2nd	1st	1st	1st
Customer Services & IT Investment	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	2nd
Measures to reduce the level and cost of homelessness	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	1st	2nd	2nd	3rd

3.7 In question 6 in order to achieve the lowest Council Tax rise, respondents were asked to prioritise the following:

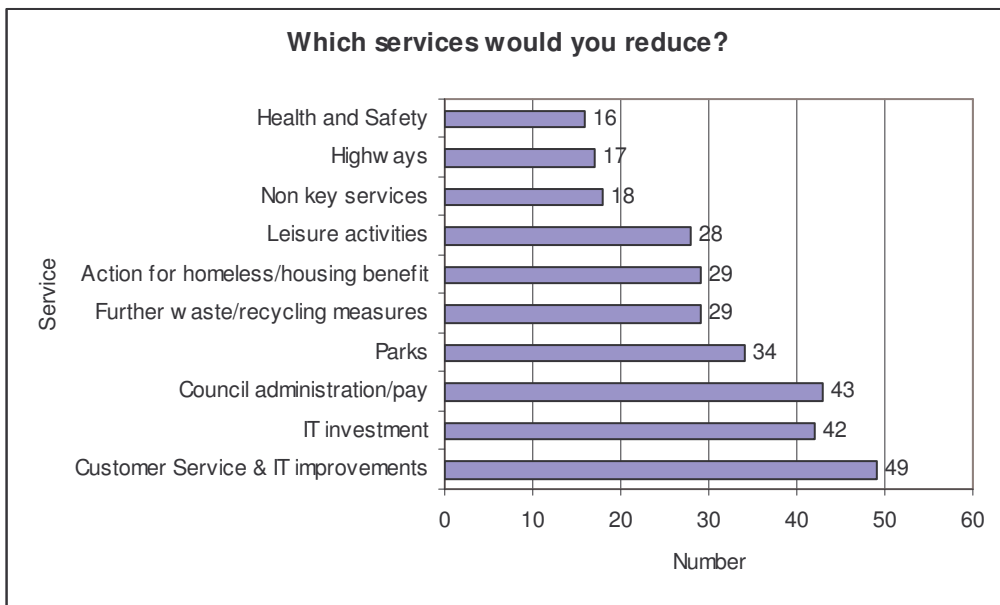
- Reduce existing services.
- Not undertake the additional expenditure
- Increase fees and charges for services by more than 3.9%
- Introduce new charges for services

Table 8. In order to achieve the lowest Council Tax Rise, in what order would you do the following?.

	District Panel	Councillors	Parish Councillors	Business Sector	Voluntary Sector	Internet	Staff	Young People
Reduce existing services	4th	4th	4th	4th	2nd	4th	4th	1st
Not undertake the additional expenditure	1st	3rd	1st	1st	4th	1st	3rd	2nd
Increase fees & charges for services by more than 3.9%	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	3rd
Introduce new charges for services	3rd	1st	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	2nd	4th

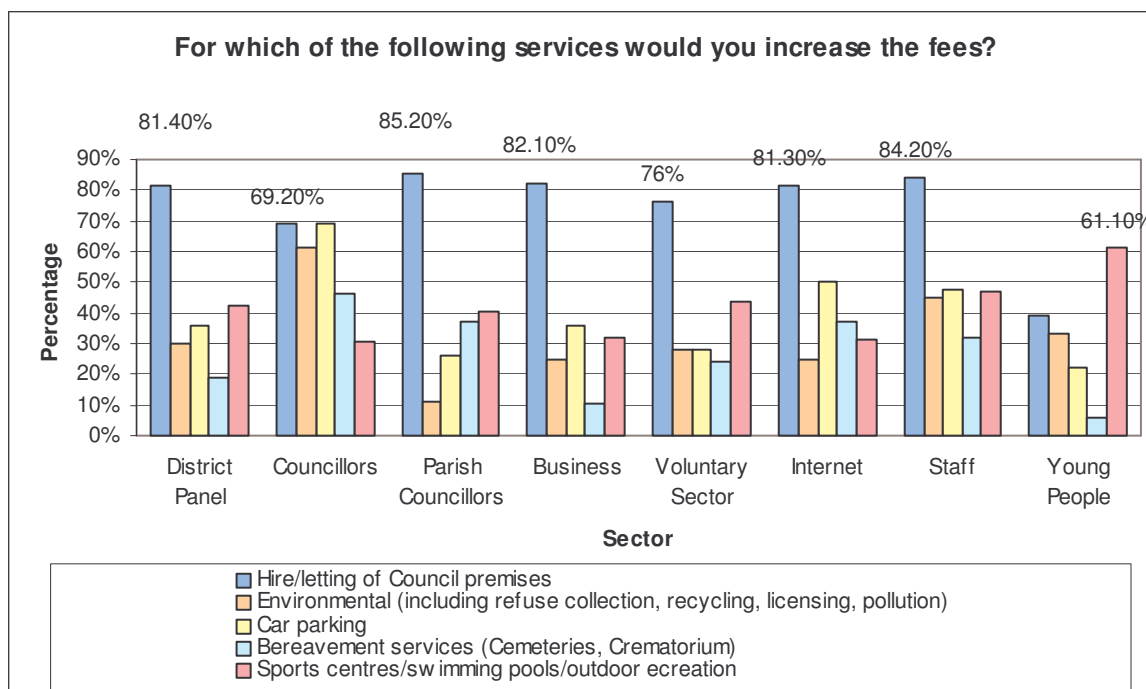
3.8 In question 7 respondents were asked to specify which services they would reduce. A wide variety of comments were received. The following responses are the top ten most popular. A full list and examples of comments can be found at Appendix B. Please note that 36 respondents stated they needed more information and 33 respondents reiterated that they would not reduce services.

Table 9. :Which services would you reduce? – Top 10 areas	
Customer Service & IT improvements	49
IT investment	42
Council administration/pay	43
Parks	34
Further waste/recycling measures	29
Action for homeless/housing benefit	29
Leisure activities	28
Non key services	18
Highways	17
Health and Safety	16



3.9 In question 8 respondents were given a list of services and asked for which services they would increase the fees. Respondents were also informed that some fees are statutory or set by regulatory bodies and so were not included. Respondents were invited to tick all areas for added expenditure that they agreed with.

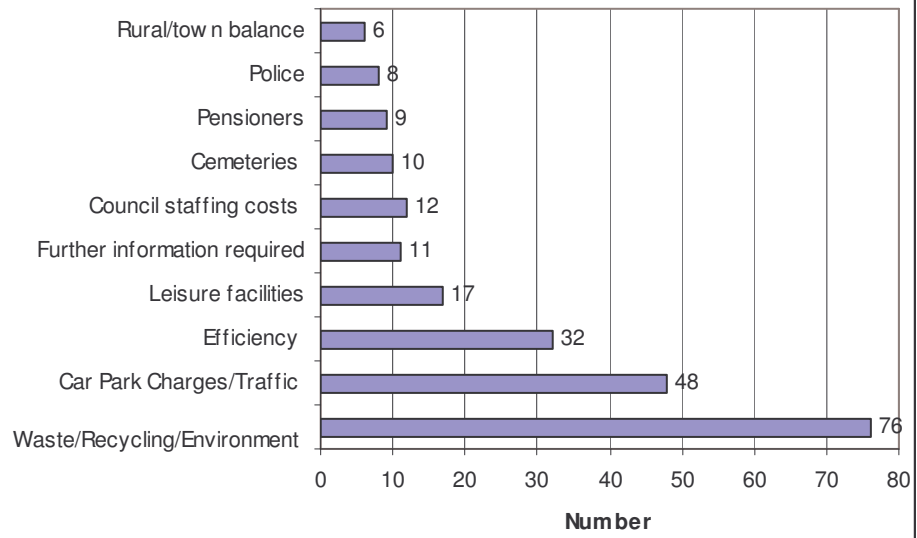
Table 10. For which of the following services would you increase the fees?								
	District Panel	Councillors	Parish Councillors	Business Sector	Voluntary Sector	Internet	Staff	Young People
Hire/letting of Council premises	81.4%	69.2%	85.2%	82.1%	76%	81.3%	84.2%	38.9%
Environmental (including refuse collection, recycling, licensing, pollution)	29.8%	61.5%	11.1%	25%	28%	25%	45%	33.3%
Car parking	36.1%	69.2%	25.9%	35.7%	28%	50%	47.5%	22.2%
Bereavement services (Cemeteries, Crematorium)	19.2%	46.2%	37%	10.7%	24%	37.5%	31.7%	5.6%
Sports centres/swimming pools/outdoor recreation	42.3%	30.8%	40.7%	32.1%	44%	31.3%	46.7%	61.1%



3.10 Finally in question 9 respondents were given a free space area to write any comments or suggestions they had regarding the budget questionnaire. The top ten areas for comment are detailed below. A full list of comments received can be found at Appendix C.

Table 11. :Any comments or suggestions regarding the budget questionnaire – Top 10 areas	
Waste/Recycling/Environment	76
Car Park Charges/Traffic issues	48
Efficiency	32
Leisure facilities	17
Further information required	11
Council staffing costs	12
Cemeteries	10
Pensioners	9
Police	8
Rural/town balance	6

**Any comments or suggestions regarding the budget
questionnaire – Top 10 areas**



Harrogate Borough Council's Budget 2007/2008

These questions are seeking your views on Harrogate Borough Council's Budget for 2007/8 and proposed Council Tax rise. We understand that you may wish to make further comment and a space for this purpose is provided at Question 9.

In July 2006 the Cabinet agreed the following proposals relating to the Council's budget:-

- ▶ Increase the overall budget by 4.95% to £23.122m
- ▶ Increase fees and charges by 3.9% (Calculated rate of inflation)
- ▶ Make efficiency savings of 2% of which 0.75% must be cash based
- ▶ Plan to receive a 5.6% grant increase from Central Government

If this is achieved without any new spending the Council Tax will increase by 4.4%. However, there are considerable pressures for new spending to meet a number of areas of work. These are:-

Waste Recycling and Waste Collection - the Council is required to meet Government targets on recycling and compost or face financial penalties.

Customer Services and IT Investment - there is a requirement to meet Government targets regarding providing local people easy access to Council services electronically.

Health and Safety - there is a need to invest in the Council's facilities and buildings, particularly cemetery walls and memorial safety to make them safe to the public.

Homelessness - the Council is focussing on reducing the level of homelessness and the cost of temporary accommodation.

The Council must decide if it wishes to invest further in these areas and is seeking views on the priorities for investment. As a guide, a 1% increase in Council Tax produces an additional £90,000 to spend. However, if the Council increases its Council Tax above 5% it will face financial penalties from the Government.

Q1 Were you aware that of the Council Tax billed in 2006/7:

- ▶ 14.6% is for Harrogate Borough Council.
- ▶ 67.7% is for North Yorkshire County Council.
- ▶ 13.6% is for North Yorkshire Police Authority.
- ▶ 4.1% is for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Please tick one box

Aware **Go to question 2.....** Go to Q2
 Not aware **Go to question 3.....** Go to Q3

Q2 **If Aware, how did you know?**
(please specify)

Q3 **What is your preferred Council Tax rise?**

Please tick one box

- Less than 4.4%** (this will lead to cuts in existing services and/or a further increase in fees and charges).....
- 4.4%** (services will remain as they are).....
- 4.4 - 4.9%** (this will enable some of the additional expenditure detailed above) .

Q4 **Do you agree that additional expenditure should be spent in 2007/8 in any of the following areas?**

Please tick one box for each statement.

	Yes	No
Recycling and Waste Collection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Services and IT investment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Measures to reduce the level and cost of homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other

If you think additional expenditure should be spent in an area not specified above please specify

Q5 **If you answered Yes to more than one of the additional expenditure areas in question 20, please prioritise.**

Please tick one box for each statement

	<i>First Priority</i>	<i>Second priority</i>	<i>Third priority</i>
Recycling and Waste Collection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Services and IT investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Measures to reduce the level and cost of homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6 **In order to achieve the lowest Council Tax rise, in what order would you do the following?**

Please tick one box for each statement

	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>
Reduce existing Services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not undertake the additional expenditure (explained above).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase existing fees and charges for services by more than 3.9%.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduce new charges for services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7 Which services would you reduce?
(please specify)

Q8 For which of the following services would you increase the fees? (Please note some fees are statutory or set by regulatory bodies and so are not included here)

Please tick all that apply

Hire/letting of Council premises.....

Environmental (including refuse collection, recycling, licensing, pollution)

Car parking

Bereavement services (Cemeteries, Crematorium)

Sports Centres / Swimming Pools / Outdoor Recreation

Q9 Please use this space to write any comments or suggestions you have regarding questions 1-8 above.

Appendix B

Question 7

Which services would you reduce?

Customer Service and IT improvements

Customer service and IT investment x 49

IT investment x 42

Comments include:

- **Customer service and IT non existent to the average rate payer. What does it mean?**
- IT investment - people want good health services, maintaining highways and footpaths rather than being able to contact the council electronically
- The method to increase cash available has to come from government. Wastage on useless computer systems. If these had been done properly plus every other computer system, millions would be available for other services
- IT investment - it is rarely cost effective
- Customer service and IT. To much emphasise is spent on continual upgrades on IT where it is not required
- Customer service and IT. We managed before the advent of IT
- IT investment - not every household has new technology - what % uses these services?
- Customer service and IT investment - why do we need electronic access to the council?
- IT investment, a large proportion of people do not understand or can have access to it
- The councils IT system appears fine
- Customer service and IT - but with techno advances in IT this must be difficult because of keeping up to date
- Customer service and IT investment - no matter what this governments policy is - in 12 months we will be subject to new rules and regulations - it's a dream to think that an age the population will all be computer literature
- Customer services, IT investment unless it results in staffing cost reduction
- Customer service and ICT - the town halls have always been adequate to pay bills and to find out information face to face contact is often best
- IT investment is a useless expense. A booklet with phone numbers is all that is needed to contact the appropriate council service. Apart from a few alcoholic vagrants where is the homeless problem?
- IT investment - in my experience outsourcing IT investment is very expensive. Could more thought/ effort be put into the managing of such projects so they are cost effective?

Council administration/Departments x 41

Comments include:

- Staffing levels should be trimmed theoretically this should be achieved by good IT/ computer control. Less paper trails
- Reduce pen pushers in council offices. Abolish perks in council offices. Treat all staff as if they were self-employed. No work no pay
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- More efficient use of public funds - staff levels (rates department - planning - leisure)
- Make cuts else where - internal costs not services providing to the public
- Reduce over manning in council offices
- Run council more efficiently in order to save money

- None - reduce number of public sector employees
- Reduce questionnaires which are poorly worded and do not make questions sufficiently specific
- Cut down on money wasted within the Council
- High wage increase for managers and directors
- **Administration**
- Community services - reduce staff at council offices
- Council employees, thus reducing salary burdens. More accountability from employees and council workmen
- Administration - reduce waste in paper and form filling
- I would reduce, even stop. The many books of information sent to all
- corporate meetings/expenditure on structural meetings/having systems which are inefficient/introducing new technology without adequate consultation with relevant departments/direct communication with all employees/reduction of ineffective management/ability to plan rather than react/having policies which are implemented by all employees and not ignored by management
- Services do not need to be reduced, it is the overall council costs which need to be reduced ie excessive expenditure on administration, unnecessary training courses, reports, surveys etc etc.
- Corporate image building

Not able to decide/Need more information x 35

Comments include:

- I don't know but in general I am happy to pay directly for most of the services as I use them
- Cannot comment because am not aware of all the services provided
- What option do you have?
- Am not sure of this question
Not sure of all the facts so although have answered questions above would like to see more information before I would comment on services reduction.
- Did not understand Q22
- AS I do not know the present charges for which services, I cannot specify
- Difficult to answer without more detail
- This question is too simplistic. However increases in rates have run ahead of inflation for some time now and this should not be the case
- Don't know - there are many requirements set by national government
- Do not understand this question fully. Most services have to be maintained and tax most inevitable. Better to ask should we increase spending in areas where we will show a return in the investment?

Parks/Leisure x 61

1. Parks and gardens **x33**
2. Leisure services **x28**

Comments include:

- Parks and gardens budget needs reviewing
- Horticultural features in non key areas
- Sports centre, swimming pools, parks
- Art gallery - never use it or seen anyone using it, waste of money.
- Leisure services. We have 3 swimming pools in Harrogate area.
- Britain in bloom - parks and gardens

- Although flower beds look very good, the cost of bedding plants is extremely high and massive savings could be made by changing to shrubs and perennial plants
- Expenditure of flora - which is excessive for the sized town we have
- Leisure and amenities.
- Parks and gardens
- Cancel the Yorkshire show which is a drain on resources
- Remove all the money spent on flowers/ gardens
- Reduce hours of library opening times

I would not reduce x 33

Comments include:

- I wouldn't. A small rise is ok to meet essential needs. We do need to prevent homelessness and improve recycling.
- I would not reduce services unless they could be contracted out cheaply
- Do not increase council tax pay for what you get
- 3.9% is new charges because you ask for money we don't use or subscribe to. It should be if you use it pay for it, if you don't you don't pay for it eg I can't swim so why pay swimming baths upkeep only one example
- I don't think services should be reduced unless absolutely necessary but perhaps they could be re-organised and re-prioritised
- We in surrounding towns and villages don't have that many services to reduce unlike the people in Harrogate

Further Waste/Recycling measures x 32

Comments include:

- Refuse collection to fortnightly. Reduce. Tighten up refuse tip control to prevent use by traders
- Recycling fortnightly - changed to monthly. (glass and paper)
- Recycling. The money locked on black bags, blue bags, black bins, green bins etc is ridiculous. The new rules on the regulation of disposal of certain waste will lead to a huge increase in fly tipping
- Recycling unless you can make it pay for its self - the black bins issued to homes most people I know don't use them for recycling, especially as they had no lids - total waste of money
- Refuse collection to once in 2 weeks
- The recycling system in Ripon seems very labour intensive and slow - provide wheelie bins and reward their use in some way - eg provide garden fertiliser - provide flowers/ seeds/ plants etc to people recycling - tips on water use - energy use etc
- Recycling and waste should cover its own cost
- Recycling because most people don't separate their waste products, they just put them in the dustbins
- Weekly non-recyclable waste collection
- Collecting garden waste
- Less waste collection - once every 2 weeks in winter - but more recycling especially plastic Waste collection every 2 weeks or 10 days
- Would like to see households charged for the amount of rubbish they produce as I would be happy to recycle more and go to the tip to reduce charges
- Recycling as it creates more collection
- Do not supply bin bags with refuse collection
- Street sweeping - do we need 2 or 3 sweepers in Starbeck?
- Cease back-door collection for refuse and stop providing refuse sacks to residents.

Actions for Homeless/Housing benefit x 29

Comments include:

- Providing homes automatically on single parents
- Measures to reduce homelessness except where desperate
- Less on homelessness - let families take responsibility
- Measures to reduce level of homelessness - stop taking in asylum seekers give the housing to local people instead
- Housing - for immigrants and homeless.
- Homelessness without throwing more money at the situation
- Homeless people and wasters. Drug takers. Anyone else who does not contribute to society
- Homelessness - especially single mothers
- Measures to reduce level and cost of homelessness - specifically the scheme to give gym passes to homeless people in the district
- Are the levels of homelessness very great in this area? Do we need to spend more?
- Housing benefit. Too many people claiming
- Homelessness is a problem I am not aware of, so a reduction in that area would be acceptable
- Homelessness support groups
- Homelessness. Individuals should take on more responsibility for themselves
- Council tax subsidies for immigrants and those on benefits who seem to have more luxuries than those paying in full.

Non Key Services x 18

Comments include

- Non essential fringe interest related
- **Non jobs ie things like outreach, social inclusion**
- Any non-core activities beyond police/fire, schooling and refuse collection

Transport/roads x 17

Comments include:

- Subsidies to local transport services
- All of them, but most particularly I would stop unnecessary road improvement, such as putting kerbstones onto country roads
- Car parking - encourage use of public transport - introduce park and ride. Support new railway halts at Claro Road and Knaresborough to reduce traffic congestion, reduction of car parking, as York has done, forces people to seek alternatives
- Traffic wardens
- Road signs - too many already
- Some bus services eg 36 Leeds to Ripon run far too frequently and are hardly full especially for a double decker bus - waste of resources
- Traffic calming measures, cycle lanes that don't go anywhere
- Budget for traffic calming measures (spend it on something useful). Traffic wardens
- Road traffic calming measures - high expenditure - no return especially in non-accident areas such as Knox
- Public transport, you very rarely see a bus in Ripon with more than 5 people on it
- Speed bumps and unnecessary road works. Vehicles for traffic wardens - can use busses.
- Stop putting up unnecessary signs everywhere especially useless road signs. Has the car share scheme had any significant effect?

- I would remove the agency agreement with N. Yorkshire re highways and allow them to manage our roads and maintenance more efficiently. The saving made could be spent in other areas of the council without increasing council tax

Health and Safety x 16

Comments include:

- Health and safety as it often bodes common sense eg paddling pool in Valley Gardens.
- Unnecessary spending on health and safety administration
- Health and safety because not enough common sense is applied to regulations which become ridiculous
- Health and safety - feel council has overreacted to flattening of memorials in graveyards
- Reduce unnecessary and excessive political correct health and safety measure ie laying down headstones in cemeteries

Decrease contributions to Police x 16

Comments include:

- Police expenditure
- Feel that a reduction in spending on police by at least 50% would help in recycling and waste. The police do not need all this money as they already have it
- I would reduce the % paid to the police authority and also to the county council
- Community support officers
- Police especially because we don't get what we pay for now
- I don't believe that the NY police authority necessarily give good value for money as they have no major inner city problems to deal with
- North Yorkshire police as they are financially sound at the moment
- PCSO's - as I haven't noticed them anyway
- Decrease the NY police presence at RAF Menwith Hill. There is already large compliment of MOD police at this base

Efficiency x10

Comments include:

- With proper management it should be possible to continue existing services by increasing efficiency while decreasing bureaucracy
- No reduction in services, but improve efficiency and spend money better
- Complete a management of all council activity, focusing particularly on management and administration overhead costs
- There seems to be a massive waste in all areas of the public sector. Some is wasted on politically correct nonsense that is of no benefit to anybody
- We should not reduce the services but the cost of producing the service i.e. 1 By investing in IT you will reduce the cost of running your services. 2 By investing in safe cycling routes you will reduce the cost of accidents, cost on improved health, less congestion will save you time and money and you will not have to provide as many parking spaces.
- Improve productivity of existing personnel

Use of Consultants x 8

- Use of expensive consultants and council officers who have made no positive impact should be closely looked at as there appears to be some waste.

- Look at all management/consultant fees involved

Other x 45

Include:

- Benefits x7
- Cemetery repairs x7
- Cultural x6
- Councillor expenses x5
- Multi Reductions. Reduce expenditure in all areas apart from basic services, health, emergency, education and crime x 5
- Decrease contribution to NYCC x4
- Council leaflets and publications x4
- Grants x3
- Reduce planning regulations and rules. X3
- Role of Mayor x2
- Money spent on Harrogate x2
- Housing provision x2
- Outsource do not reduce
- CCTV
- Meaningless diversity initiatives

Comments include:

- Reduce waste in present system to free up funds ie waste bill
- As a single occupancy I feel I already pay too much as 25% reduction is not really a lot compared to some household which contain many people
- A significant part of recent rate rises has been for pension provision which most rate payers cannot themselves receive and cannot afford. employee pension funding should be cut
- If central government requirements/ targets are to be met funds should be provided by central government and not secured by additional local taxations
- These questions are worded to obtain the answers you want. It is possible to improve efficiency without extra expense for example the new improved tip on Wetherby Road is absolutely disgraceful
- I think it is difficult to reduce council services due to their importance in the community. This is because we have to bear in mind the political consequences of such reductions especially during election time. In fact the general level of council expenditure could continue to rise in future years
- To prioritise - needs to be properly carefully exercised. Some services have essentiality some do not have any essentiality. Again controlled exercises due to the ever spiralling costs
- Developments should be allowed to build more affordable housing on brown field sites for homeless with housing association assistance
- I feel strongly that people could do much more to assist the council
- Why are the above the only options? Where are the options to increase efficiency, reduce staffing, more concentration etc?
- I am not comfortable with this general approach. I doubt if anyone will vote reduced services so the cynical will conclude that this is a PR exercise so that you can say we consulted and the majority did not oppose an above inflation increase
- Christmas tree lights on the stray and surrounding streets. Not restore the Royal Hall. Tourist promotion unless paid for by Harrogate businesses
- All current services require reviewing from time to time to ensure compliance and compatibility with consumer/ residents demands and needs. Reduction is not always required
- None if possible. The excellent provision of services provided by the council makes it one of the reasons I live here

Appendix C

Question 9

Please use this space to write any comments or suggestions you have regarding the budget questions.

Waste/Recycling/Environment x 76

1. Living in the rural part of Harrogate it would help if we could have a garden waste bin in our village, would save dozens of weekly trips to tip in Harrogate, lessening some of the congestion on Wetherby Road. We all have gardens and hedges
2. We should not increase the cost of recycling, we should be encouraging it
3. Finance is not one of my gifts or problems. Working from the other end of problems such as waste seems more practical and fair to me.
4. Weekend litter wardens in the town centre / stray.
5. Environmental charges should increase more if there is a detrimental effect on environment eg pollution penalties should increase rather than any charges for recycling. People complain about car parking charges but we need to reduce car use and congestion and this is one way to discourage car use in the town centre
6. I think some environmental charges could be raised, especially with regards to pollution. Motorists should pay to be able to park in the town centre, but transport should be improved.
7. People who pollute etc should be made to pay - greater penalties to those who do
8. Improve waste collection to segregate green waste from household / plastics
9. I object to the assumption that the council has the right to increase the tax year on year regardless of inflation
10. I can't understand why the council can't budget better. Our recycling service is disgraceful. I personally take paper, cardboard and plastic bottle to the tip to recycle. I shouldn't have to do this
11. Make recycling easier - improve skip sites - make skip sites like railway stations with drive on platforms as high as skips
12. Extra charge the people who can recycle themselves. Educate the young to do more recycling.
13. Why are green bags provided for garden waste collected in the general waste wagon? Seems a little pointless to me, or a bit of a rip off
14. Why give houses with small gardens large green recycle bins?
15. Better recycling need not cost more. Recycling increases are offset by waste decreases so cost rises are not inevitable. Think about it and work smarter, don't throw money at it
16. Fines for excess rubbish collection - penalise households who do not recycle
17. People should be encouraged to recycle more. If plastics were collected it would reduce the amounts to land fill sites. Perhaps there is a simple system whereby people could be rewarded by discounts for less rubbish
18. People given garden recycling bins should be charged for the bins this could also apply to the box and bags but they could then be emptied free
19. Encourage recycling by introducing a charge when exceeding 2 bags of rubbish
20. Better notification regarding what recycling facilities are available or local recycling centres eg whether facilities for plastic bottles
21. Increasing recycling means more jobs for people which has a physical element to it therefore adults fitter less strain on health service. More items need to be recycled eg cardboard and plastic
22. The council has been aware of the contingency problem of waste disposal for many years, and have done nothing. Landfill is rapidly being used up, and is not sustainable. Recycling and incineration should be considered
23. In outlying villages we get no recycling options.

24. Dog fouling is being replaced with plastic bag fouling, with bags often left hanging on bushes or fences. This is worse than fouling because the plastic lasts much longer
25. I would strongly object to paying more for refuse collection etc
26. Definitely would not increase fees for recycling, but would look to follow German lead of charging people who do not recycle
27. Need to spend more money on encouraging people to recycle more - we need much more kerbside collecting facilities. Increase the services people have to choice to use
28. Need to make it easier to recycle and not necessarily charge for it, otherwise fly tipping may occur.
29. Feel there are more possibilities for kerb side recycling collections eg plastic, cardboard for those unable to access amenity tip a lot of recyclable material must end up as household rubbish
30. More of the budget should be put to environmental issues
31. Environmental not to include collection of private household waste. Hire/ letting is non-essential for people. They will do it if they can afford it
32. Recycling/ waste disposal. Any chance of a changeable service to collect and dispose of (in a environmentally friendly way) disposable nappies? Reduce landfill. I would pay happily
33. Environmental, licensing pollution - polluter pays the admin. No refuse collecting, recycling as lead to cost elsewhere from illegal activities (fly tipping)
34. Increase kerbside recycling to include plastic and cardboard
35. The council never enforce dog fouling policy and I would like to see measure taken to impose maximum fine where ever possible. Plus some sort of anonymous information service to help catch offenders
36. It would be interesting to see what level of income is generated by all the recycling projects being carried out at he council tip.
37. I would hope that the council will commence garden refuse collection to avoid car journeys to amenity sites
38. The council should add an environment element to the council tax to reflect the increased awareness we all have it our duty to preserve our environment and recycle our waste
39. Refuse collection should be charged on amount of waste put out per household, ie the more bags put out the more that house pays.
40. A wheelie bin system, one for general waste and one for recycling. Recycling waste at kerbside collection is still poor, limited to glass, tin and newspaper.
41. I would like more recycling bins ie for newspaper, cardboard not just for garden stuff and general rubbish
42. Recycling - could some sort of policy be introduced for the kerbside recycling scheme eg reducing council tax bill if recycling do, or increase council tax for households that don't recycle
43. I notice the infrequency of the recycling service - fortnightly makes it difficult to remember for many and paper/ bottles/ cans soon overflow the box/ bag provided
44. The government is the one pushing refuse collection and recycling they should foot the bill
45. If recycling services are broadened the income from the recycling will generate more income egg collection of cardboard.
46. In recycling - would it be possible soon to have collection fortnightly of cardboard, plastic bottles and paper shredding
47. With regards to refuse collection I would like more help in recycling. Elderly people cannot always manage to handle waste paper etc and transport it to recycling centres
48. I live at the edge of the Borough. The only service I get is waste removal. NO household recycling within 6 miles
49. Recycling should be compulsory
50. Harrogate council should seek to increase the amount of recycling services available to home owners

51. Recycling is important. If fees are charged/ increased this will not encourage widespread use of the service and therefore will cost the environment more.
52. Increasing fees for recycling, refuse collection would be counter productive and encourage fly tipping and reduction in recycling
53. Must meet or exceed targets on recycling. Increase range of materials recycled by kerbside collections
54. More should be done with recycling - very poor in this district. What about plastic bottles and packaging? I care about the environment and recycling. I separate my plastic bottles and take them to Sainsbury's. Why can't you provide a receptacle for them at the tip and other plastic packaging - there they could be rid of with other rubbish going to the tip
55. I feel that care of the environment is of utmost importance - refuse collection, recycling. No extra charges should be made for this. It will deter people from using the service
56. Council should start collecting garden refuse from homes for recycling
57. Require more access to recycling facilities
58. A charge could be levied for anyone who does not recycle their rubbish. Charge for number of black bags left out for dustmen
59. I would like to see the collection of plastic eg milk cartons. The waste disposal facilities provided at local tip and supermarkets are always full and untidy with cartons on the floor, bags left etc
60. I think we should introduce wheelie bins for general rubbish and other bins to encourage recycling.
61. Increase in fees related to environmental will contradict my priority response concerning increased recycling and lead to greater resource needed due to increased pollution / fly tipping etc However enforcement can be helped in this area through fixed penalty notices and recovery of costs from offenders.
62. I'm not in favour of waste charging as it will make people dump rubbish and be counterproductive.
63. Introduce higher fees for people who do not recycle.
64. The council should start using the Clean Neighbourhoods and environment act, which would increase income from on the spot fines. That would also give the council a better image as at the moment we are seen as too soft on fly tipping etc
65. Improvement to the Environment. I would also consider charges for the use of the Councils own premises car parks by those on who need not use their vehicles and reward those who car share/walk/use bikes etc.(easier said than done)
66. Monies should be spent on environmental issues and raised by increasing those aspects which effect the environment adversely.
67. Environmental increase fees on polluters not those recycling etc service
68. Environmental charges should be aimed at those who pollute most or do not re-cycle where facilities are offered for re-cycling. Opportunities for re-cycling eg plastic should be improved
69. If people were more responsible the environment that much less money would have to be spend sorting out problems ... ie recycle instead of waste tips, stop fly tipping, improve local transport so less people use cars
70. Recycling as refuse services is quite adequate
71. Increasing fees for refuse collection and recycling will only increase fly-tipping. Why should a gardener cutting grass for the elderly be charged for taking it to the tip? The elderly person would no doubt have taken it free of charge themselves if they had been able.
72. A charge could be made for households with more that 2 black bin bags and
73. Residents frequently ask for litter bins (which could be attached to bus stop posts). Dog mess continues to be a complaint
74. Waste recycling I suggest the council takes a more business like approach and make money out of waste like the private companies
75. Use increases for environmental issues to tackle pollution, dog waste, etc
76. Recycling and environmental waste services are the most important. Businesses should be given a chance by the council to better plastic and cardboard recycling

Car Park Charges/Traffic issues x 48

1. If car parking charges were increased perhaps more would use public transport!
2. The parking in Knaresborough was cut to 2 hours only. Let people pay for what time they want 3/4 hour. Charge more for services used by people who can pay and not people on low incomes. No customers no income
3. Car park charges are too high already. More disc parking
4. Car parking is currently very cheap in Harrogate. Other services can be increased
5. Car parking prices need to be increased at the same time park and ride services are started, use Ripon as a park and ride centre to the North.
6. In the last few years all roads around the stray and beyond are full of parked cars from 8am - 6pm. If these areas were limited by time (not more than 4 hours) it would encourage people to either use the certified car parks or use public transport.
7. Close and sell off any car parks (used by councillors and senior council officials) for housing. Make them use public transport like they keep telling us all to. use the houses that are built for the homeless and the money raised from the sale to pay for customer service and IT investment. Either it will not happen or, if it does, we will suddenly have the best public transport in Britain - fat chance
8. Cars will be parked on the edges of commercial district ie residential and leisure areas.
9. Increasing car parking charges would reduce traffic and congestion problems and mean less pollution.
10. car parking is a way to drive visitors/ shoppers away from town centre.
11. a charge for parking extra vehicles outside residential property - issuing residential permits at a charge for these vehicles.
12. Recycling could be more user friendly for rural areas especially help OAP's. Car parking is already very expensive for Harrogate residents. Why can't there be a reduced fee for local residents? This would encourage people to stay longer and spend more in town
13. Q24 parking charges are much less in Harrogate than York
14. Increase in parking fees in town centre locations eg Fisher St, Silver St, Castle Yard and further reduce parking fees at York Place and Conyngham Hall
15. I am in favour of creating more car parking spaces
16. Increase car parking. Maybe new people would walk / use public transport. Fine cyclists on stray / pavements they are dangerous and totally self centred
17. Providing free car parking for blue badge holders makes no economic sense - they have the same range of wealth as non blue badge holders
18. The council seem to view parking fees as a cash cow - you do nothing to encourage residents to shop in the town centre. The shops are becoming bog standard replicas of every other town centre across the country - the town has lost its individuality
19. People pay enough, fees are always been increasing and if they continue to rise people will not be prepared to pay them
20. No more increasing car parking fees
21. Parking fees can double but more people will use traders outside towns
22. I am against increasing car-parking charges, I think they are set at the right level to encourage people into town. Any rises could damage businesses
23. Car parking is already astronomical in Harrogate, putting the charges up further could cause a backlash and boycotting of the town centre, driving traffic to the outer areas and reducing income raised from charges
24. Traffic calming measures are required on Grove Lane especially either side of the play area. Litter from McDonalds on Harrogate Road is a problem
25. I know this is a difficult issue but as a childless couple living in the countryside, never seeing a local policeman, having no street lights, using a private health centre for exercise and being sick and tired of having to pay for parking in Harrogate when my express purpose is to go there to keep individual shops in business which maintains the character of this lovely town - I think it is about time I paid less council tax and the large corporations paid more

26. Car parking in Harrogate is already excessive and any more increases will be detrimental to shops/ services in town
27. . Car parking fees should be massive to support improvement in public transport
28. Your services chosen are the typical first choices that are targeted. Increasing parking drives customers away. Some of these can be offset by increasing in business rates, rather than the services themselves
29. Consider pre-sold car parking tickets, as on Jersey, to reduce costs. Investigate police surplus, in view of rising precept. Try to consider that non local authority employees do not receive increasing salary every year
30. If car parking charges are increased for there local residents would secretly object resulting in affecting businesses
31. Increase in parking charges would not then matter as those choosing to use cars would be doing so out of choice rather than necessity ...
32. Death and car parking are non discretionary the rest are so we should charge more.
33. car parking restrictions in town centre are now affecting non domestic income as people choose retail parks eg St James, new car initiatives are impractical for flexible working arrangements, car parking for day visitors is too restrictive and costly
34. More car parking because you can't park on a Saturday
35. Has the car share scheme had any significant effect?
36. Reduce dependency on the car. The town centre would be far more attractive without cars. Need to make travelling by car the least attractive option. Promote walking and cycling as a healthy alternative.
37. The council seems to lack the will to encourage cycling by providing facilities for cyclists. This would reduce traffic congestion and encourage the population to live a more healthy lifestyle for a limited budgetary outlay.
38. The cost of car parking in the town is already exorbitant and serves in my opinion to drive people away or at least deter some from returning.
39. Car parking increase, to encourage people to leave cars at home. Council should work together with bus and train companies to encourage use of public transport.
40. parking permit could be higher for the second car of the household
41. Too many free parking in Harrogate, the car is king, it's hard to cross some of the roads. I would like to see Commercial Street for pedestrian (and cyclists).
42. To revitalise Knaresborough and it business car parking charges should be removed apart from waterside car park.
43. I would introduce concessionary charges for residents car parking
44. I suggest that disabled people are charged for parking in car parks just like every one else.
45. Revenue could be gained by the use of fixed penalty notices. We should do more enforcement.
46. Proper promotion and incentives for car sharing but higher prices for those that don't and SUV's.
47. Stop putting up unnecessary signs everywhere especially useless road signs.
48. Too much emphasis is put on finding new gimmicks to spend money on ie:car sharing and then cuts are made to existing services ie: Alexander House.

Efficiency x 32

1. Look more seriously at efficient improvements
2. Efforts to reduce wastage and improving efficiency should be the first priority
3. People feel that the council tax is fairly high in this area already. I do not want to see reduced services but I feel that there must be further ways to save money or make money without increasing council tax to more than 4.4%
4. Less is more - Rates are at the highest level and should be reduced via efficiency savings
5. Rather than spend more and more money, why not try decreasing the amount of money being spent, it seems to be taken as a given that I wnt to waste my money. The council should stick to the basic services and nothing else

6. People on a fixed income do not get a 4.4% increase where is this money going to come from?
7. Efficiency and good house keeping, plus best practise should be ongoing in a drive to get best service and value for money ie keep waste to a minimum. Those that produce most waste, pollution and do not recycle should pay over a certain level
8. Target efficiency savings of a further 1% to fund additional spending
9. Use more council workers rather than contractors, who are always very expensive. Cut costs within the council. DO jobs when they first need doing rather than leaving until they cost more to repair because they have worsened. Be careful which contractors you use
10. Reduce bureaucracy and run services more efficiently
11. Overstaffing, overspending, should be addressed. Remove one light bulb in 10 in council offices. Use 80gm paper instead of 90gm to save money. Review database to save postage. Observe good house keeping and make ends meet
12. Local government have a problem with requirements being set by national government but no money being given by national government.
13. What about looking at overall efficiency and cost effectiveness in each department. As a business woman we need to achieve service without increasing costs and more often that not review expenditure and efficiency first.
14. Most councils (come election time) say they are going to cut down on waste, red tape - there is still plenty around.
15. Continue to seek to make overall efficiency gains in accordance with Gershon and focus on front line services
16. Why not make efficiency savings?
17. I would rather see the funds come from increased efficiency and penalty charges for those abusing council facilities/ time
18. Look at where money is being wasted through efficiency. Provide local recycling points and ensure everyone has knowledge of their existence to cut collection costs
19. Would like to see council become more efficient. Understand upfront investment in IT services is required to improve services, but this should give big term cost savings. Would like to understand what these would be, how the savings would be passed on or invested further
20. Reduce expenses and entertainment for councillors and reduce expenses
21. There is not an area identified for checking whether areas of work could be done in a more economic way
22. Can money be saved on the glossy bookers and leaflets that are sent out by the council
23. Q19 - You should manage your costs more efficiently. This is way above inflation.
24. It is not just a case of increasing fees or reduction in services. The council only needs good housekeeping
25. Move more to a business model where people pay for what they use directly
26. Don't spend more - use what you have more efficiently and effectively
27. All areas of council should look for financial savings. How much has this survey cost?
28. Maybe if we were to look at the smaller things that the council purchase and see whether any savings could be made there. As an employee i see how sometimes we can be wasteful (not on purpose). The purchasing of IT consumables including printer cartridges could be centralised, which would eventually save a lot of money as bulk purchasing would be entailed.
29. None of the above - attract increased usage by keeping prices competitive which would in turn generate more income (exclude cemeteries)Beneficiaries of the visitors to the town should have to pay more not residents.
30. The council should take a long good look at its burocracy - savings could be made by efficient use of resources
31. I do not believe any increases are necessary if the council take more care on current expenditures
32. Privatise any possible areas

Leisure Facilities x17

1. Excellent new swimming pool Bradley Stokes, S. Gloucestershire cost £1.45 per person at over 50's session whilst Hydro fess is £3.45
2. I find it difficult to answer questions regarding future expenditure against the background of excessive costs approved by the council, specifically in regard to the Royal Hall
3. Reducing the cost of use of leisure facilities may bring about a greater take up.
4. Promoting sport in the young will reduce strain on health service in future.
5. Need to be selective in what charges are levied. Increasing charges for sports centres/ pools etc would result in more kids on street corners
6. Reduce annually planted areas and replace with permanent planting - not just shrubbery, grass beds, perennials. Provide more naturalised areas - bulb planting under trees etc, reducing mowing regimes = better environment
7. To increase services/ fees in sports centres, swimming pools etc would counter productive and cause more crime/ nuisances from young - again costing more money
8. Sports should be all free for children
9. Harrogate needs a speedway track to bring the motorsport or outdoor recreation with motorsport
10. Children need services to prevent future vandalism
11. Sports centre - this has just happened in Ripon
12. There are too many bars and clubs in Harrogate. They should be charged a levy and money given to ale dept in Harrogate
13. Coming back into use of Royal Hall could yield good opportunity for increasing letting
14. The users of council provided services such as sports centres should pay the market rate. Will the council ignore the results of this years survey as they did last year?
15. The Leisure facilities already charge some of the highest prices in the region. People cannot afford to use them.
16. Sport centres etc essential for health and welfare of young people
17. Leisure services should be paid for at cost by those using them instead of subsidies from every payer. Maintaining flowerbeds around Harrogate parks has no benefit to residents or businesses elsewhere in the town and district

Further information required x 11

1. Inflation is currently around 2.5% yet we have council tax increases near 5% every year. Why? Whilst the council boasts of hitting it's recycling targets - it is simply not enough, the trail collection of plastic bottles should have been made permanent. Millions go to landfill every year. Less to landfill means less oil used. Finally we don't want houses being built on green belt sites
2. With council tax going up every year how do you expect people to afford this increase every year. Did you know that when you go to the bank for a mortgage the only bill they take into consideration is the council tax because it is so high
3. I think it was disgraceful for the police to increase their rate by 13.6% when they had such a large cash surplus after their 47+% increase. They should not be allowed any increases until the surplus is used up. If the amalgamation goes ahead we will get no advantage from the surplus.
4. Not knowing the details of day to day expenditure, it is very difficult to answer the above question. This is why we elect the councillors who can then decide these things knowing all the detailed information
5. There is not enough information to make judgement on the above questions ie homelessness - who are these people that are homeless? Drug users, young mothers?
6. Difficult to answer such questions without knowing which services come directly under the HBC responsibility and how much they cost.
7. Council tax levels are already high - with wise management - surely further increases unnecessary

8. I would just say that I hope the amount of tax we pay for the police, will not rise this year, after reading the amount of money they have in hand
9. Q24 - I do not have sufficient information you give a balanced answer
10. I don't think I am in the position to make informed responses to most of these questions
11. It is very difficult to answer the above question intelligently without full knowledge of the council's expenditure on services

Council staffing costs x 12

1. I trust the council regularly reviews the cost effectiveness of all its administrative departments. Whilst I acknowledge administrative support is important, I wonder if staffing levels are, in certain areas, too generous and whether all individuals are working to full capacity.
2. There are probably too many managerial posts in the council offices - to streamline the working of the various departments, increase efficiency
3. Greater efficiency would be preferred - staff should work less bureaucratically this getting greater value from existing payroll
4. Any increases should be used to improve services in the borough, and not to inflate it's salaries of those employed in the council offices
5. You have large staff with highly paid directors and it is their job to manage within available resources. With a complete organisation there must be some slack somewhere. Priorities change and in an organisation like yours it is just not possible that all staff are fully occupied on useful work
6. The removal of needless administration would enable efficiencies to be achieved and allow the increases in charges to be avoided
7. Better use of manpower to create greater productivity therefore reducing costs of staff
8. 1% saving in staff costs is an enormous saving - this is possibly - be more efficient
9. Jolly day trips for council members to view wind farms. Teaching staff spending most of their time on day courses
10. Reduce bureaucracy and unnecessary staffing to reduce costs
11. Chief executives salary and first line staff. Give these position to the people from Poland who work for 50% less
12. Stop huge waste on over administration cost especially by unqualified committees

Cemeteries x 10

1. Don't go around knocking down headstones.
2. Funerals are expensive enough, even kept to the basic requirements
3. Cemeteries should be lowered, it costs enough when the undertaker rips you off.
4. Cemeteries are a major resource and biography - they should be highlighted and supported as such
5. Bereavement services should be means tested
6. Bereavement services should be pay as you go.
7. Cemetery walls and memorial safety could be contracted out on a one off basis. Once safe, they could then be maintained by the council
8. Dog fouling, cemeteries - I oppose to health and safety measures to flatten gravestones, just put a sign up saying children should not play in cemeteries
9. The problem in the cemeteries (headstones laid down) has been caused by HBC. They need to use the funds to repair the damage caused to the bereaved in Harrogate by the insensitive reaction to one awful incident in a cemetery.
10. Bereavement services are not a every week payments - maybe charge more but offer longer payment terms???

Pensioners x 9

1. As I live on the state pension and invested savings which are difficult into every year, I dread any increase in council tax.

2. Its my believe pensioners should get help when using the council sports centres/ swimming pools
3. Once again I plead the case for pensioners. The proposed increase is well in excess of any pension increases we can expect
4. There is no consideration for fixed income ie pensions. The council financial department should consider council spending on their administrations. Also gas, electric and water companies have huge increases in their products
5. For anyone on a fixed income, the thought of having an increase in council tax will cause great alarm. All household bills are rising as it is, unfortunately pensions don't get increased accordingly
6. I feel I am being very negative asking for reductions to council services and increased fees, but my husband and I are on fixed pensions and cannot afford council tax rises year on year
7. I find the levels of council tax already too high. How retired or OAPs manage to pay these high amounts must be a constant worry
8. It is wrong pensioners on fixed incomes should pay increased council tax when householders on the same band get wage rises and bonuses are able to afford council tax increases.
9. More special fees/ charges for pensioners who are on a fixed low income

Police x 8

1. Withhold the police precept from council tax and refund to tax payers
2. I would reduce the allotted fees to the police authority, let them use their reserves
3. Cap the budget for North Yorkshire police authority and review on a 3-5 year cycle depending on circumstances
4. My biggest concern is the lack of police presence in the town area. I cannot remember the last time I saw a policeman walking the beat, and I do feel that this would be a great deterrent to those coming to the town and causing trouble
5. Again you are only offering the options you want. What about the year on year increase we pay for policing? When we ring for help they take 2-3 days to turn up, if they bother to at all
6. Questions should be asked regarding NY police authority budget - reserves and expenditure on cars
7. Reduce the increase by asking the Police to cap their proportion of the tax, due to their excessive collection of funds in the last few years.
8. I do not see why the police get such a large chunk of the money as they have been under spending for years and have a surplus of funds they do not use. if the proportions were changed for the fire and police that would feel more justified when paying council tax

Comments re increase in fees x 6

1. Although it may be absolutely necessary to increase fees for services mentioned in Q24 they are all essential for a healthy life
2. Rising costs mean more contributions
3. If we seek to maintain and increase the quality of services given, we take public have to accept that this will cost money. a 4.4 - 4.9% increase increases whilst itself is not unreasoned above provided. HBC are ensured that this is no waste of this money
4. Our council tax increased 2005/2006 and to be quite honest I have not seen any difference in the services I receive.
5. Every attempt should be made to maintain existing services and all reasonable economisers in day to day council work should be made in order to afford some increased service
6. It is important that all services are accessible to all and other costs of living in the district are very expensive. Hire/letting -may need preferential rate for small local groups wanting to use premises.

Town/rural balance x 6

1. A better balance between services that benefit town dwellers and those of us who live in rural areas

2. Why should we pay more for council services when, living in Ripon, I see no improvement and as usual we are still second class citizens to Harrogate
3. I feel we pay the police far too much and receive a poor service in Ripon - its not worth reporting a crime as nothing ever is done. Total waste of our money
4. Policy aimed specifically at reducing disparity between level of services in rural areas (low) and urban areas (relatively high)
5. Council tax in our area is one of the highest and services locally are few and far between. We live in a small rural village and see very little of the money spent on specified services above
6. Higher charges should be paid by those who actually see the benefits of what the council does - not my people in small rural communities that get nothing more than there bins emptied once a week!
higher

Do not increase x 6

1. I appreciate the need to increase funds to increase services, but council tax is a very big chunk of our monthly bills already, so I also would find it difficult if it increases again
2. Why keep increasing the council tax when the cost of living keeps going down, eventually nobody going to afford it
3. Why should the council tax rise every year - what are we getting for it? Our wages don't go up in line with rises. Stop the council tax rise
4. A standstill budget is preferred
5. Why have an increase greater than inflation?
6. None - reducing services would have a knock on effect. It would put more strain on existing staff and customer satisfaction would diminish rapidly

Housing x 5

1. Provide adequate housing for the needy, not people from abroad or teenage mothers and their children
2. Re that last question: none on the list, but I would increase rents for Council houses, and apply zero tolerance for dangerous/inconsiderate parking would result in an increase in penalty charges.
3. Hire and letting of property you decorate to your standard - would you move into a property done by the council?
4. Many of our young people in the area are unable to find homes that are a reasonable price to buy. Instead of taking so many immigrants and housing them - we should be thinking of more affordable homes available for our own younger people
5. Council premises get a good deal - cheap rent and all this knocked off the price of their house if they buy - so I would increase this.

Consultation technique x 5

1. I am not sure that trying to gain opinions from the community on prioritising services, which services to increase/ decrease etc is best done through closed/ tick box questions in this survey. There is good practice from other local authorities involving more interactive, face to face methods which would be better for these key questions
2. We do not feel the questions are unbiased
3. Questions are designed to get the desired answers
4. This was a very poor questionnaire
5. Some of the questions/categories are too broad. For example I would increase licensing fees if we can.

NYCC x 3

1. I am surprised by how much money goes to NYCC. Also it is obvious more money should be spent on having police on our streets

2. The amount of money spent on NYC police authority is criminal. It needs drastic improvement both in terms of the service and the amount allocated
3. Are very dissatisfied with the police service. They never seem to be available when required (not from personal experience but comments from others)

Why increase fees at all? x 3

1. I do not see why you should increase the fees for any of the services; the refuse collection in this area is very good. You get the maximum fees for car parking as now there is no free parking spaces in Harrogate, crematorium and cemetery fees are not cheap
2. The level of council tax for anyone living remotely as we do is astronomical - few services locally and high council tax is unacceptable
3. The items at Q24 are a 2-edged sword - significant increases may decrease usage or be unfair to sectors of the population. I believe you should think beyond these measures - eg do the council have access to that rate payers would like

Homeless x 3

1. Tax rises need to be justified and uses for important services like homelessness. More council houses and flats should be built and the right to buy should not be an option, Harrogate needs council properties
2. People come first and the council is doing ok but must tackle homelessness
3. Money should be used to help people help themselves. I do not think money should be spent on homelessness

Customer service/IT x 3

1. Once customer services/ IT input has been improved, costs should decrease
2. Why do local people need easy access to council services electronically?
3. Money should only be spent on essential customer services and IT ...not just doing it because of some central govt dictate

Attract visitors to the District x 2

1. Increasing car parking and outdoor recreation would only encourage people to go elsewhere. Wetherby thrives on free riverside parking where as Knaresborough often looks like a ghost town
2. The best way to increase revenue would be to attract visitors to use our leisure facilities

Disagree with the questions asked x 2

1. Q19 is loaded, where is the no rise alternative - as inflation is 2.5% why should we pay double that rate, or we council pensions looking wobbly?
2. Some questions rather peculiarly worded ie Q19 nobody wants or prefers a rise

Small increase to all x 2

1. A small amount increase on all
2. By creating a small increase in all services a substantial amount of extra revenue would be raised - This as opposed to raising one or two services substantially.

Question extra charges x 2

1. Why are additional charges required? Are existing charges too low and why?
2. Council tax rises are an unfair way to increase the council budget, alternative means must always be formed

Reduce fees to attract visitors

In some cases reducing fees can bring in extra revenue by attracting more customers/ clients. Has the market hall ever been full since being built? Do the council premises sometimes price themselves out of business?

NYCC

Harrogate and North Yorkshire councils pay little attention to country villages and the rural community in general.

Increase fines

Try increase fees of undesirable activities/ bad for environment ie – car parking costs to deter people from too much driving

Non Essential services

It may be acceptable to increase fees for non essential services eg hire/ letting of rooms, sports centres etc. But the charges must remain affordable and compete favourably with similar services provided by others or fewer people would use the facilities and any increase would be self deflating

More Government Funding Required

Government targets should be met by extra central funding

Pleased with the financial service provided by Harrogate Borough Council

I think Harrogate Borough Council has a good balance of adequately financing services and see no reason to make any drastic changes

A year of big increases in bills

This is very difficult. Personally I have had many increases this year ie gas/electric, and would prefer not to have a big increase next year.

Unsure what is for the best

What ever you put up people will complain so I just don't know

Health and Safety

The council should not be intimidated by health and safety regulations or matters such as cemeteries, paddling pools etc

Controlled Expenditure

Most essential for controlled expenditure in whatever category.

Council Tax

I don't see how I pay the highest level of rates, I live in a large 5 bedroom property with a large family, yet I have receive only 2 bin bags per week, same as a small property with 1 or 2 occupants. How can this be fair!

More effort should be made to collect council tax from all residents

Fight the cuts

The only solution is to fight government cuts. It seems that the government does not recognise market forces in public sector employment and they must acknowledge these rises, particularly when it cost so much already to live in a place like Harrogate

Planning

Require all new planning applications to include a financial contribution.

Council Tax

Single occupancy should be 50% less on council tax, instead of 25%, particularly for pensioner age - group, it is grossly unfair at 25%

Fines

Those on benefits, OAP, disabled already get benefits from sports centres so increasing fees a little wouldn't cause much difficulty. More vigilant fining of those allowing dogs to foul should bring in plenty of revenue. Traffic wardens could monitor and fine on the spot

Disability

I have a disable husband and we find that many shops and restaurants, especially in the suburbs, have still not complied with the governments guide lines, especially small businesses

Spend money wisely

We want to know that existing funds are spent wisely. So I would challenge the council to do this

Central Government Help

More financial help from central government for their own self imposed targets

Further Comments x 54

1. Obviously all that is suggested is making services reduced or increasing cost of services.
2. Are there any plans to use volunteers to offset rises in manpower costs
3. Too much government waste leaves taxpayers footing bigger bills. Its not on
4. Council tax rise should not be greater than the rate of inflation. (pensions increase less than salaries and wages)
5. Review service provision process. Too much wasted resource implies cost increase. Q22, 24 - questions are assumptive and have little or no value to the objectivity of the questionnaire
6. HBC do an excellent job. Why automatically increase our council tax? Why is so much spent on layabouts?
7. The assumption that any increase in rates is acceptable given no perceptible improved services
8. The council may benefit from extra tourism created by festivals, exhibitions and shows etc. The smaller financial contribution by the council to the Yorkshire and Humber regional assembly would create a saving and thereby more money for spending. A general overview of local government finance in looking for alternatives to the council tax or bigger say on the central government block front
9. The £42 billion shoved across to the EU should stop completely and be spent here in the UK
10. Each year it seems that the council tax will increase by more than the rate of inflation, even without any new initiatives or services
11. I feel that many of the true reasons are being misrepresented. The current level of rates is ludicrously high without further increase
12. I find it difficult to answer these questions because there are things that need to be done, which cost money, but I don't want to have an increase in my council tax bill
13. Any increase must be shown in improved services
14. I would pay more for services if there was a noticeable improvement in the facilities/ services which in rural areas you rarely see and need much improvement
15. Introduce the equivalent of a parish precept for Harrogate residents and also additional revenue alternatively stop expenditure on services for Harrogate residents which others pay for via parish precepts
16. These very difficult questions should be answered by the professionals we employ for that purpose. Rate payers are never going to opt for decisions involved with paying more money
17. Voluntary and community sector needs to be sustainable - they provide vital services at excellent value for money
18. I think the percentage allocation of council tax billed for HBC should increase
19. I would like to see graduate scales for hire/ letting ie less for charities, car parking less for rural customers, sports centres etc

20. I think that councils will have to cut services but this will further alienate the public and a rise in council tax will lead to protests as when the poll tax was here
21. Reduce expenditure on bureaucracy
22. Local income tax would be fairer
23. I feel that the council tax should be abolished and we should go back to a rates system. Allowance should be made according to how many people occupy the property. Very large houses 6 beds and should be rated accordingly to the number of rooms
24. Harrogate should be a wealthy authority because of conference input and the large number of high value houses
25. The services incurring penalties must be dealt with first it would be a complete waste of money to pay government extra money without receiving benefit
26. How can you increase services without increasing council tax?
27. As a socialist I believe there should be access to services for those who are not able to fund themselves
28. I feel we pay a great deal of council tax - its our largest outgoing per month. We have no children, don't drop litter and don't need sports centres, so I think we pay enough already
29. Every year to have the same services we are asked to pay an above inflation increase, why can't the council make improvements to services through productivity gains without significant increases in cost every year?
30. Increasing all but hire fees would be more likely to hit those who can least afford it
31. I would question some of the workmanship of chosen workmen
32. There most certainly are other areas where expenditure could be curbed and savings made or areas of present expenditure where better value could be obtained
33. This is a difficult area to comment on or give opinion about as people feel strongly about increase anywhere above the current low inflation rate. Salary up 2% - council tax up 5%
34. I feel the council tax bill we pay is big enough already. It goes up every year well above inflation. I wish my wages did the same
35. Commercial use of council premises and facilities could be logical
36. Would not feel happy increasing the fees for any of the above, the first four are essentials - people can't avoid paying and the last in view of our unhealthy society must be encouraged not discouraged by charging more
37. I think increasing fees are counter - productive. I know extra cash is needed in lots of services but if the costs go up sometimes less people use the services so maybe try and keep prices as they are
38. Increase planning fees. They are far too low in relation to the value they add
39. It seems an increase in council tax is to fund central governments requirements/ targets
40. Please note local wage earners cannot afford the large annual rises in council tax, neither can they afford price rises in services
41. I am astonished that Harrogate manage an above inflation rise in council tax year on year and have done so far for the past 8 years that I've been living here
42. I think there is too much emphasis on IT investment - it does not provide a beneficial community service
43. Any rise in fees of services ideally would be minimal, larger rises could lead to less use of services
44. The Harrogate district needs many more recreational facilities for both children and adults. It is a disgrace that a town of this size doesn't have independent facilities
45. I would collect all outstanding rent and council tax details. I pay my way and I think others should be made to pay their share too
46. Increasing costs for any of these services would reduce the use of them. Causing more illegal dumping of refuse, less use of facilities and therefore ultimately less income for the council.
47. I notice that council tenants enjoy two rent holidays a year.
48. This questionnaire only covers three areas money can be saved. The council needs to look at there own expenditure
49. Promote public health and services that support it through subsidy and service development.

50. The Council performs a lot of functions which are critical to the community and the questionnaire only focused on a few.
51. It is all very well to mention HBC's relatively low contribution to overall council tax but we could do better especially in the areas that I have identified and it always strikes me as a little bit mealy mouthed! The public don't see it in those terms! For many people the overall burden of Council Tax doesn't make it good value for money.
52. If the Council has to increase fees, then the increase should be over as big a base as possible in order to keep each individual increase as low as possible.
53. Cost savings generated by improving our efficiency could be used to implement a complete range of new and improved services
54. Any increases in charges should ensure that those who cannot afford to pay are still able to access services