

# Budget consultation gets results

The results from the biggest budget information and engagement exercise carried out by the City of Edinburgh Council are made public today, Wednesday, 10 November.

The report – [published on the Council website](#) – includes feedback from around 1,700 Edinburgh residents, key stakeholders and local businesses.

The results of the engagement and consultation are detailed in the the report. However, broadly, it is the view of residents that the Council needs to deliver greater operational and organisational efficiencies before cutting or withdrawing services. Introducing charges or increasing existing charges are not ruled out. Appropriate increases in Council Tax may be acceptable, provided the Council is clear that funding is directed to priority services.

While the majority of respondents were in favour of delivering services differently, there were concerns regarding service quality and accountability being maintained. In addition, opinion on reducing domestic waste collections was divided.

A range of methods were used as part of the engagement process. This included gathering feedback from participants on a consistent set of eight themed questions, focusing on some of the key budget issues being faced by the Council.

In addition to making the questions available online and through Outlook, six local summits in each of the neighbourhood areas was held. At each of these, scribes noted the debate and fed comments and suggestions into the process.

And, while there were some heated exchanges at meetings, many attendees appreciated the effort made by the Council to go out

and talk face to face with the public.

Groups and individuals were also encouraged to hold their own budget meeting and send in their responses.

The local meetings were followed by a citywide conference, held in association with Scotsman Publications.

In addition, budget meetings were held by the Edinburgh Equality Network and the Edinburgh Youth Forum.

There were about 900 responses from the online survey, around 300 residents attended the six local summits, 120 attended the City Summit and a further 400 people responded via Outlook or by other means.

In addition, participants at all the meetings and the general public were encouraged to give further feedback via a freepost address or a dedicated budget email.

The Administration is now considering feedback from the public and will set its budget on Thursday, 10 February.

Council Leader, Cllr Jenny Dawe, said: "I really appreciate the fact that so many people have taken the time to be involved in what is undoubtedly the biggest ever public consultation and engagement exercise this Council has ever undertaken.

This feedback will now add to the other methods of engagement we have carried out such as previous budget consultation and the residents survey. All of the results of each engagement exercise are already being used as helpful guidance to inform the extremely difficult decisions we now have to make as part of the budget decision making process."

Everyone who attended the local meetings, the city summit or submitted a response to the budget engagement will be advised that the report is now available.