

# More have their say on council's budget proposals



The City of Edinburgh Council have told us that a record number of people have given feedback on the services that matter to them as part of the council's 2016/17 budget engagement.

There were a total of 4183 responses, up 31% on last year, relating to a variety of topics such as parking charges, school music tuition, allotments, library services, waste collections and council tax.

This year, the public have been able to have their say through a variety of methods, including an online planner and the online ['Your City, Your Say' dialogue page](#), which let people submit suggestions and rate others' views.

Results of the engagement will be detailed in a report to be considered by the [Finance and Resources Committee](#) on Thursday, 14 January.

These include:

- 1,086 people using the online budget planner, which this year focused on some of the key transformational topics
- 1,067 responses via email, telephone call, letter or participation in an online survey
- 153 ideas discussed on the dedicated dialogue page
- Social media: 376 comments made about budget proposals on Facebook and Twitter
- A budget question time event attended by over 50 people, viewed by more than 200 people on the live webcast and watched another 360 times using the archive.

Finance and Resources Convener, Councillor Alasdair Rankin,

said: “It has been an important element of the Capital Coalition’s contract with the city that we would seek your views on the decisions we make which affect you. With this in mind we have once again put our budget proposals out to consultation to ask what services are important to you in your daily lives.

“It is encouraging that a record number of responses have been received as part of the City of Edinburgh Council’s 2016/17 budget engagement and that so many of you want to work with us on what are the most important decisions that this Council will make.

“It is vital that we make it as easy as possible for you to have your say on how we spend and save money. We are already carefully considering the range of feedback we’ve received, which will enable us to make informed decisions when setting our budget. In previous years we have amended aspects of the budget to reflect what we have heard and I’m sure we will do so this time as well.”

The strength of public opinion was also demonstrated by three petitions submitted, two on proposals to introduce charges for music tuition and one on proposals to reduce hours for school crossing guides at lunch time.

This year, the range of online budget feedback tools has built on the success of an online budget planner launched in 2014. The new dialogue tool encourages people to discuss and rate their own ideas.

Online engagement was supplemented by more traditional means of communication, including face-to-face meetings, leaflets with forms, and media.

The report will be considered at [Finance and Resources Committee](#), which will take place on Thursday, 14 January and can be watched [on webcast](#). The Edinburgh Reporter will be at the meeting tweeting and reporting live on the discussions.