

Appendix I - Budget proposals for 2022/23 – feedback from online survey

On 6 December 2021 Cabinet approved a draft MTFs and budget proposals for 2022/23 -24/25. Following this the Council launched a public engagement to seek feedback from residents on the proposals. This briefing note provides a summary of the responses.

The engagement survey went live from 13 December and closed on 12 January. The survey was promoted via a range of channels:

- social media channels
- press release
- weekly Your Croydon bulletin
- intranet
- business newsletter

A total of 386 responses were received.

Q1 - Croydon Council provides services to 386,000 residents. Most of the council's money – 62% – goes on supporting and protecting children and adults who need our help, with the rest on hundreds of other local services like collecting your bins, leisure, libraries and looking after parks

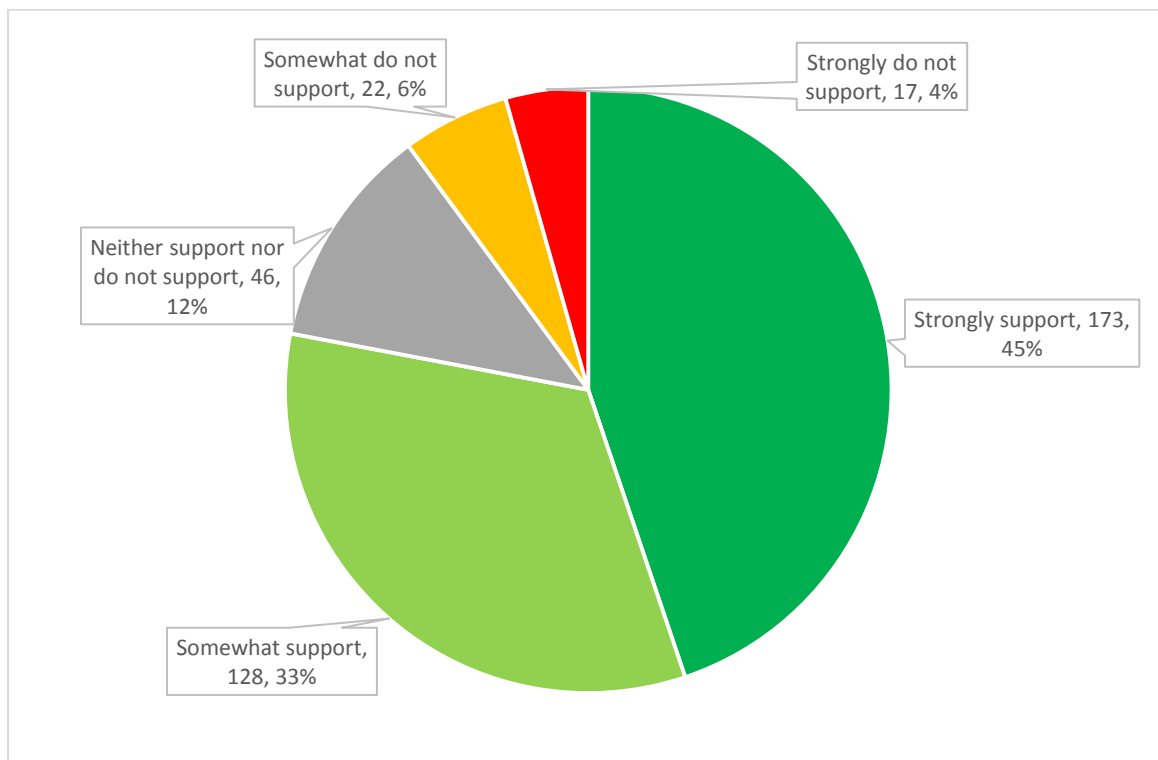
Please rank these services in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important and 9 being the least important

Order of priority	Service	Average rank
1 (most important)	Children, young people and families, and education	3.5
2	Support for elderly and vulnerable adults	3.56
3	Keeping streets safe and clean	3.91
4	Rubbish and recycling collection	3.97
5	Housing services and homelessness prevention	5.22
6	Parks and open spaces	5.5
7	Economic growth, job creation and regeneration	5.92
8	Libraries and culture	6.55
9 (least important)	Leisure and sport facilities	6.87

Q2: The council needs to make £38m of savings this year to balance its budget, which it is required to do by law. To achieve this, we have focused on transforming the way the council operates by reducing spending on contracts, administrative functions and making our services more efficient. For example:

- Reducing senior staffing spend by £1m a year
- Renegotiating our contracts to reduce costs and ensure we are getting value for money
- Renting out underused office space
- Restructuring services to make them more efficient
- Embracing better use of technology
- Reducing spending on support services
- Creating new income streams, for example new facilities at Monks Hill Leisure Centre, increased planning fees and charging insurance companies for CCTV footage

As a result, three quarters of our savings proposals come from making the council more efficient. To what extent do you support or not support this approach?



Somewhat support and strongly support	Somewhat do not support and strongly do not support
78%	10%

Q3: If the council needs to make further savings, to what extent do you support or not support each of the following ideas, with 0 being strongly do not support and 5 being strongly support?

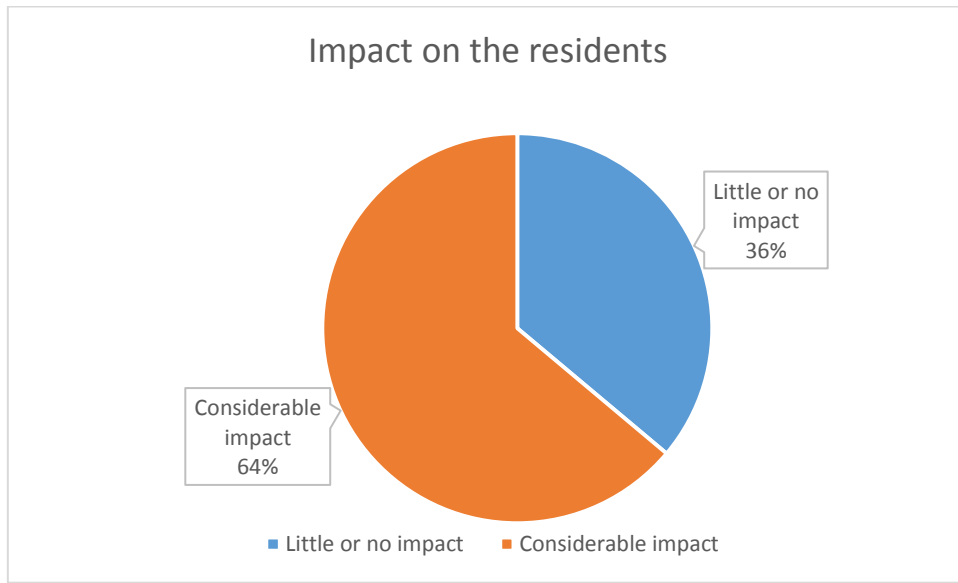
	(4) Somewhat support and (5) strongly support	(1) Somewhat do not support and (0) strongly do not support
Maximise the use of our buildings and assets to bring in income	83%	5%
Reduce spending on temporary agency staff	77%	4%
Reduce spending by making our services more efficient	74%	8%
Reduce costs by making better use of technology	71%	7%
Reduce spending on non-statutory services (services the council)	41%	14%
Increase the amount of income we generate from charges for non-statutory services	37%	25%
Reduce spending equally across all services	19%	46%
Reduce spending on frontline services	8%	66%

Q4: If the council has opportunities through alternative funding streams to invest in any of the following areas to what extent would you support or not support each of the following:

	Somewhat support and strongly support	Somewhat do not support and strongly do not support
Education facilities	74%	9%
Open space and public realm	69%	10%
Community facilities	66%	12%
Public sports and leisure facilities	60%	16%
Community projects or services that support communities	59%	15%

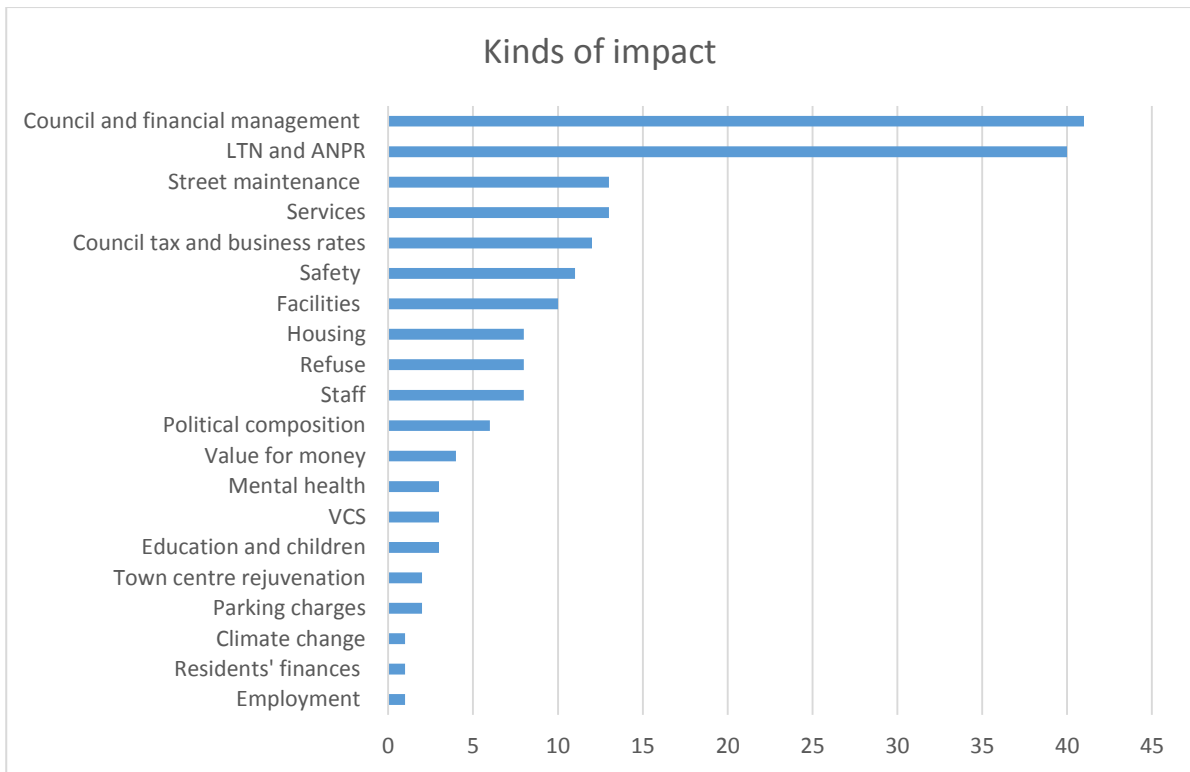
Supporting projects within the council's climate change action plan	42%	34%
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Q5: A full schedule of the council's initial investment and savings proposals is available [here](#). The council will seek residents' views ahead of any major services changes. Please tell us if the proposals being considered will have any impact on you and what you think that impact would be?



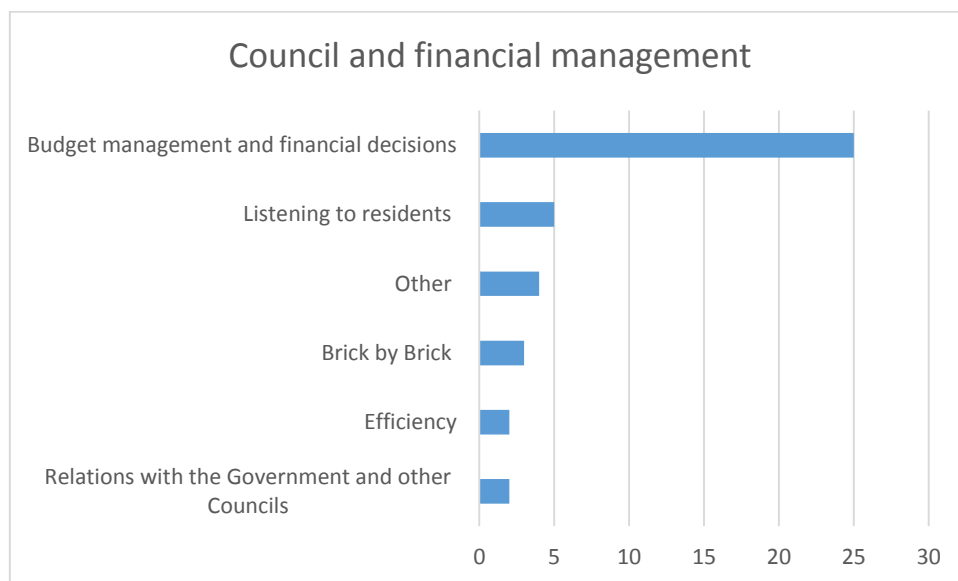
Thirty six respondents explicitly stated whether the proposed budget would affect them. Three respondents explicitly stated that the effect will be negative.

Based on 183 responses, 20 main themes were identified:



Further breakdown of the largest categories of responses (10 or more responses) are provided below.

Council and financial management (41 responses)



Sub category	Summary of comments
Budget management and financial decisions (25)	The respondent indicated that the budget and financial decision-making process needs to be managed more efficiently.
Listening to residents (5)	The Council should listen to and respond to the needs of the residents.
Other (4)	The respondent expressed their doubts about e.g., the future of the Council, the heritage of the Council.
Brick by Brick (3)	The respondent highlighted that Brick by Brick company should be sold, not financed by the Council etc.
Efficiency (2)	The respondent indicated that the Council should focus on increasing efficiency in the Council.
Relations with the Government and other Councils (2)	The Council should establish good relations with the Government and other councils.

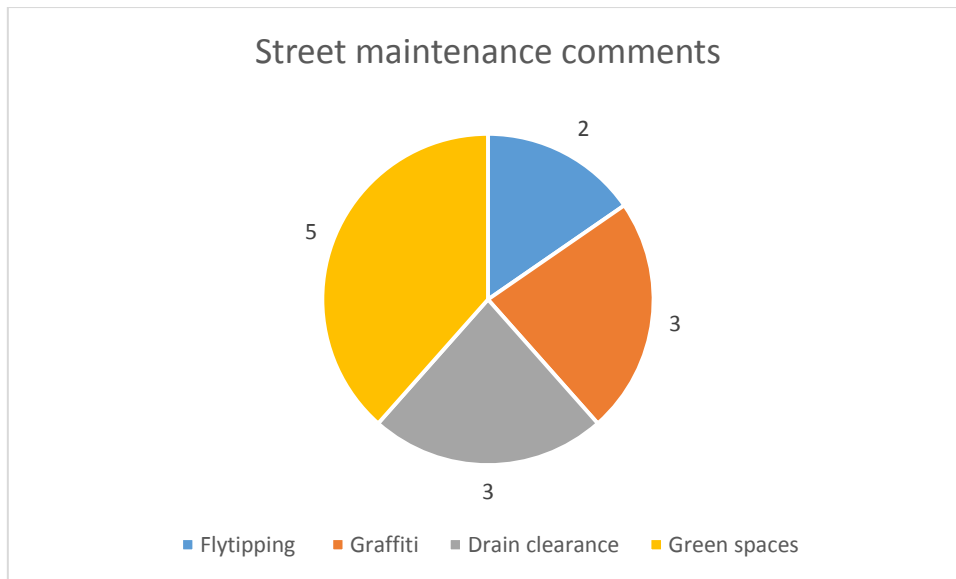
LNT and ANPR (40 responses)

Respondents indicated that the LNT scheme and usage of ANPR cameras:

- has a negative effect on the pollution and emission.
- is to increase Council revenue.

“To make £11m over 3 years from fines for ANPR camera enforcement is scandalous. You introduced temporary schemes to improve the environment, which have all had very significant objections made against them, yet you continue to push ahead with these divisive schemes, to such an extent that you make it part of your recurring finances, which demonstrates that you don't care for the environment but wish to take financial advantages by penalising your residents.”

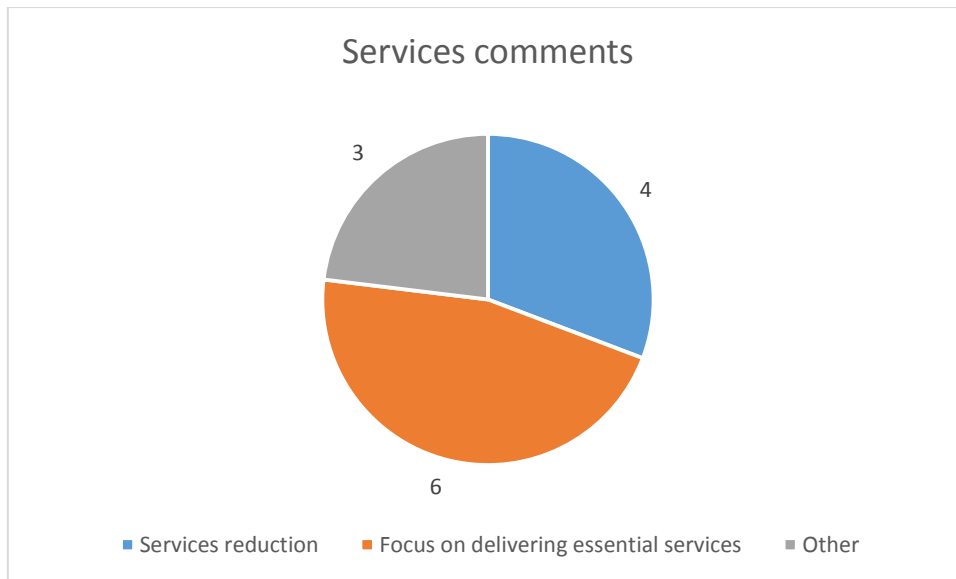
Street maintenance (13 responses)



Sub category	Summary of comments
Green spaces (5)	The respondent highlighted either the importance of green spaces, or that the maintenance of them has to improve.
Graffiti (3)	The respondent suggested that graffiti should be removed more quickly.
Drain clearance (3)	The respondent indicated that there is a risk of a flood connected to drain blockage.
Fly-tipping (2)	The respondent emphasises on the detrimental effect of fly-tipping.

“Bring back graffiti removal. Improve street cleaning and drain clearance.”

Services (13 responses)



Sub category	Summary of comments
Focus on delivering essential services (6)	The council should focus on delivering the essential services.
Services reduction (4)	The respondent criticised the service reduction.
Mental health (3)	The respondent indicated that the Council does not focus enough on providing mental health support.

“The cuts so far are visible but the council must prioritise services to the vulnerable in our borough and utilise empty buildings and sell off empty premises where these are just eating up their funds.”

Council tax and business rates (12 responses)

Respondents indicated that the

- increase of the council tax could be detrimental
- Council should offer preferable rates to local/new businesses.
- quality and scope of provided services do not correspond with the amount paid. Especially, in comparison to other boroughs.
- One respondent indicated that they would like to pay more council tax in order to maintain services.

“No council tax increase. We pay more than enough already. It's one of the most expensive council tax service and very poor service. Westminster, Wandsworth, Lambeth and Kensington and Chelsea are far cheaper council tax and service much better.”

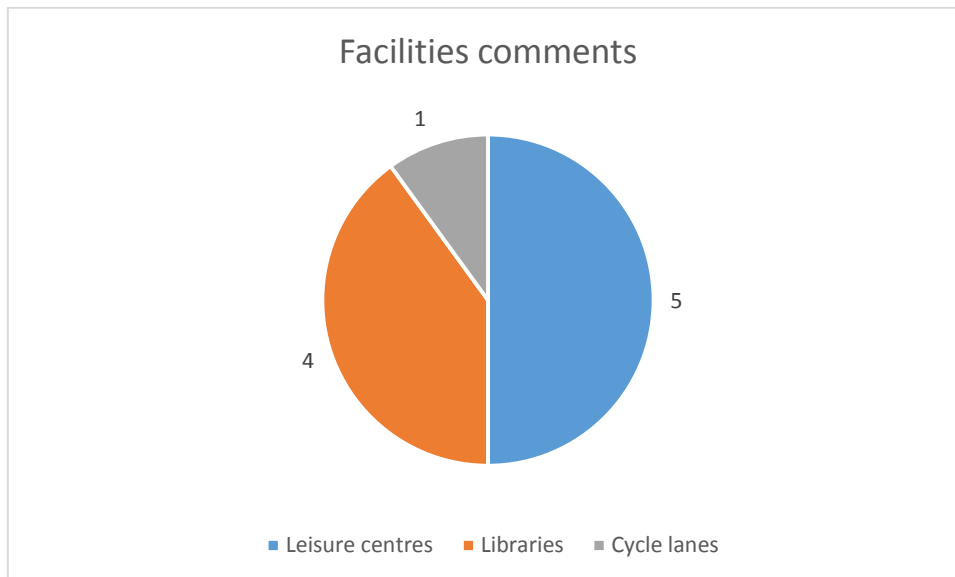
Safety (11 responses)

Respondents commented:

- concern about the crime and anti-social behaviour
- some respondents put a special emphasis on crime among young people.
- should be no cut to the crime/anti-social behaviour prevention budget.

“There should not be a reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour services or basic services such as bin and recycling and street cleaning and safety. Croydon needs to be safe and secure to walk around otherwise there is no point in any of the other services.”

Facilities (10 responses)

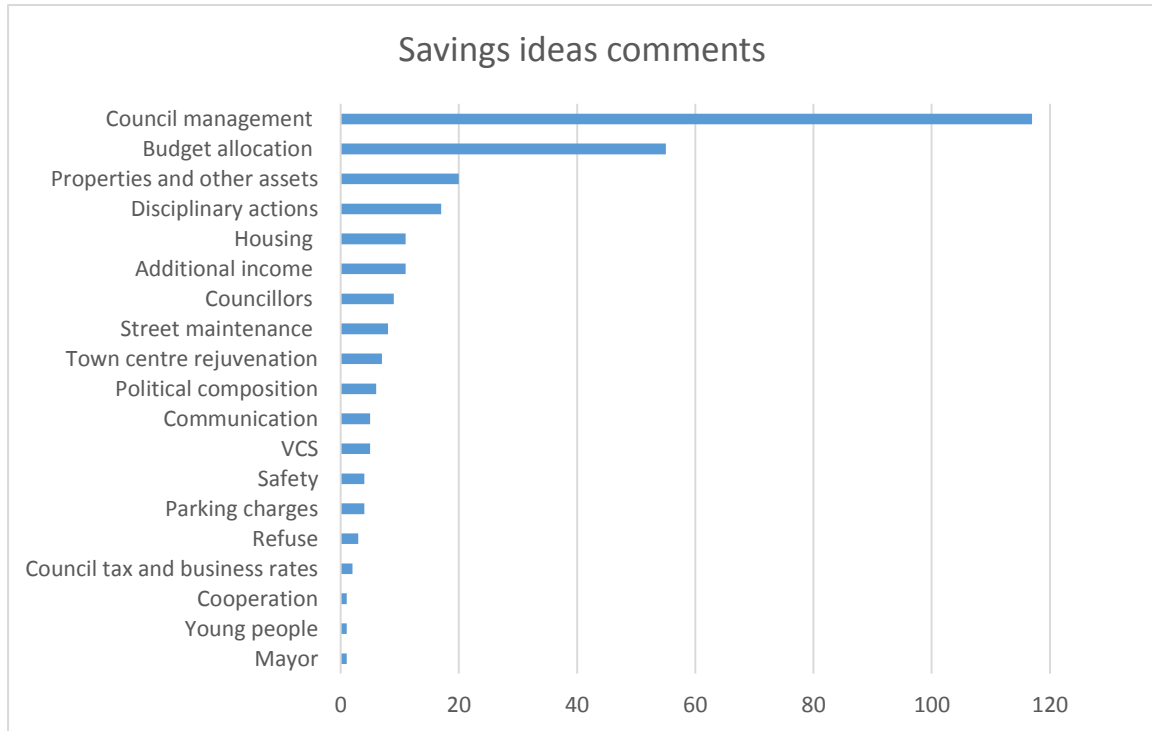


Sub category	Summary of comments
Leisure centres (5)	The respondent indicated the leisure centres, including Purley Leisure Centre should not be closed/ should be reopened.
Libraries (4)	The respondent said that the Sanderstead library should not be closed.
Cycle lanes (1)	The respondent claimed that the Council should not spend money on cycle lanes.

“Planned closure of Purley Pool would remove my only reasonable access to swimming facilities, with health impacts. This will also impact most other residents in the south of the borough and there's a safety risk if children don't have the opportunity to learn to swim. I think sports and leisure facilities are important for health and wellbeing for all as well as providing valuable activities for young people so they don't resort to crime and other undesirable pursuits.”

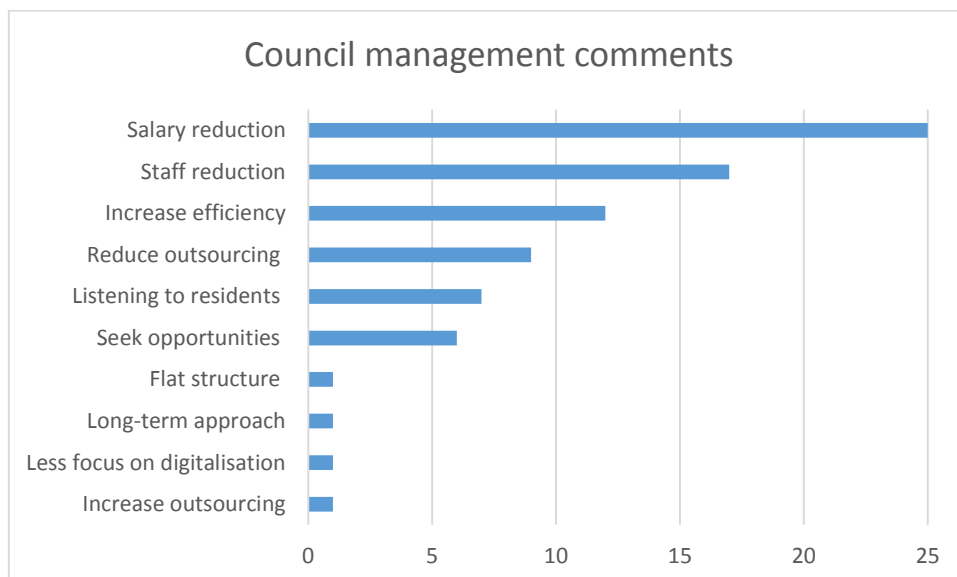
Q5: Do you have any other ideas for how the council can make savings?

Based on 228 responses 19 themes were identified. These are set out in the chart below:



Further breakdown of the largest categories of responses (10 or more responses) are provided below.

Council management (117 responses)

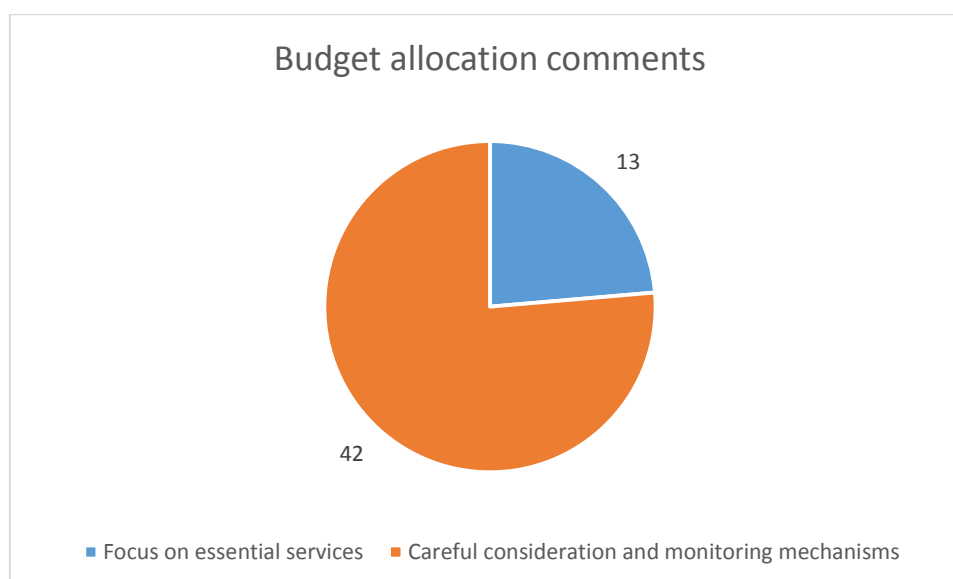


Sub category	Summary of comments
Salary reduction (25)	The salaries should be reduced, especially for the top management.
Staff reduction (17)	The Council should evaluate the staff and take appropriate actions.
Increase efficiency (12)	The Council should improve its efficiency.
Reduce outsourcing (9)	The Council should try to move some services in-house and reduce outsourcing.
Listening to residents (7)	The Council should listen to and consult residents.
Seek opportunities (6)	The Council should proactively seek new opportunities.
Flat structure (1)	The structure within the Council should be less hierarchical.
Long-term approach (1)	The Council should focus more on long-term perspective.
Less focus on digitalisation (1)	The Council should not focus on too much on digitalisation.
Increase outsourcing (1)	The Council should outsource more quality services.

“Too many senior managers: stop recruiting consultants and paying them loads of money; more working from home so as to free up space in council buildings that could be rented to others.”

“Talk to local communities who understand local needs and ways to provide these efficiently.”

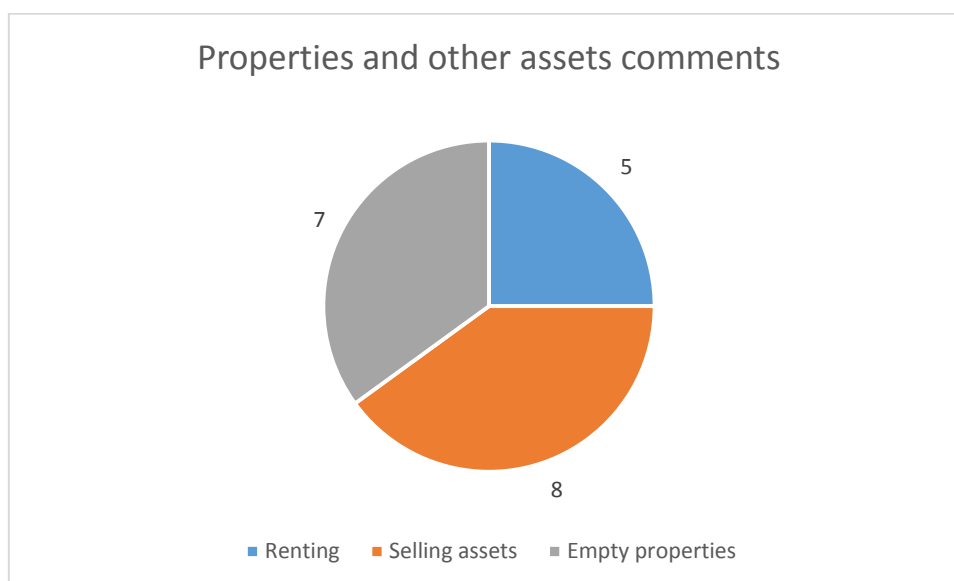
Budget allocation (55 responses)



Sub category	Summary of comments
Careful consideration and monitoring mechanisms (42)	The Council should carefully consider and monitor any activities
Focus on essential services (13)	The Council should focus on delivering the essential services.

“Consider contracts more carefully and stop investing in poorly thought out schemes.”

Properties and other assets (20 responses)



Sub category	Summary of comments
Selling assets (8)	The Council should reduce its assets.
Empty properties (7)	The Council should take actions concerning empty properties.
Renting (5)	The Council should rent out its assets.

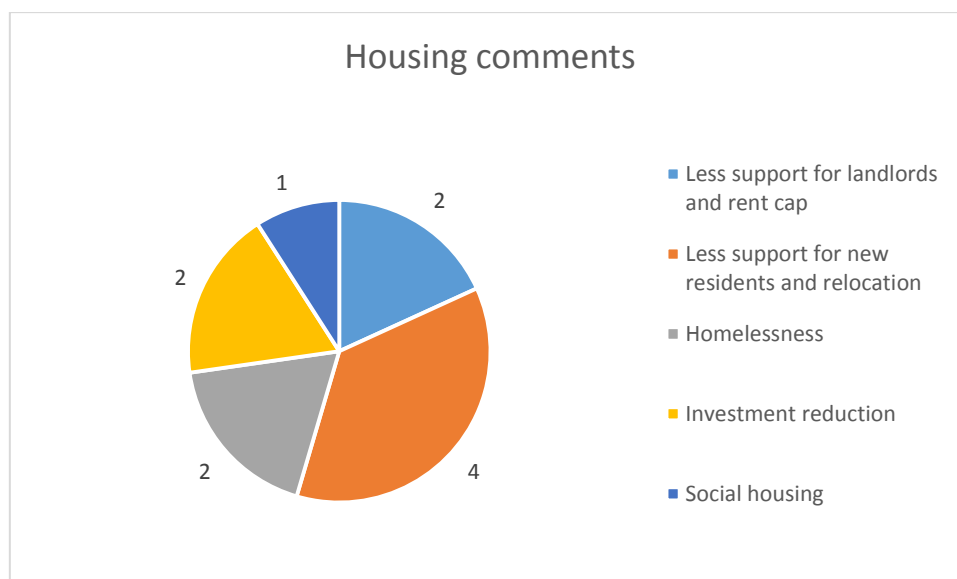
“Make sure any council properties you sell are sold by public auction. Instead of selling them off to your friends families and cronies. These properties belong to the rate payers of Croydon, something you seem to have forgotten.”

Disciplinary actions (17 responses)

These respondents indicated that the Council should take disciplinary action against former and current councillors and members of staff.

“Take to court the people responsible in the Council for squandering our money.”

Housing (11 responses)



Sub category	Summary of comments
Less support for new residents and reallocation (4)	The Council should not offer additional support for new residents, as Croydon cannot afford new residents. Also, the Council should reallocate some of the residents to other boroughs.
Less support for landlords and rent cap (2)	The Council should provide less support for landlords and introduce a rent cap.
Investment reduction (2)	The Council should stop or significantly reduce any housing investments.
Homelessness (2)	The Council should utilise empty flats and provide accommodation for homeless people.
Social housing (1)	The Council should improve the quality of social housing.

“Fairly and positively move supported people to other boroughs in the country.”

Additional income (11 responses)

11 respondents suggested how the Council could raise additional income. The ideas include, utilising street lamps and columns to obtain advertising income; having cafes in the local parks, charging insurance companies for CCTV footage and charging food delivery drivers.

“Charge deliveroo riders etc. licenses to operate in Croydon do more with the parks to make money. Like they do in other countries.”

Other saving ideas

Tag	Description
Councillors (9)	Comments indicated that Councillors allowances should be reduced and work more effectively.
Street maintenance (8)	Comments referenced more activity in relation to CCTV and fly tippers. Some respondents suggested that street lighting could be reduced in some areas.
Town centre rejuvenation (7)	The Council should focus on town centre rejuvenation, as it is crucial for the economic growth.
Political composition (6)	The respondent expressed their dissatisfaction with the current political composition of the Council.
Communication (5)	The respondents indicated that the Council should improve its PR strategy (example: <i>Improve PR, for example the removal of bus stops was not the councils fault, but they are taking the flack, VeloSmartCity and the Council both tried to stop that. Will save the councils image, and present it more professionally.</i>); should promote more the local services and sustainable facilities. Also, the respondents mentioned that the Council should promote itself less, and should not public <i>propaganda</i> materials.
VCS (5)	The respondents indicated that the Council should cooperate more with the VCS.
Safety (4)	The Council should spend more on to address crime and increase safety in Croydon.
Parking charges (4)	The Council should introduce more parking charges – overnight on public roads, in central Croydon and in library car parks.
Refuse (3)	The Council should collect waste every three weeks, increase fines for rubbish dumping. Additionally, the Council should enable residents to access refuse centres without the need to use their cars.
Council tax and business rates (2)	The Council should increase council tax for empty properties, and deduce the tax for businesses.
Cooperation (1)	The respondent would like the Council to cooperate with other councils.
Young people (1)	The respondent would like the Council to increase youth provision.
Directly elected Mayor (1)	The respondent suggested that the Council should not spend any money on directly elected Mayor.