



London Borough of Harrow Draft Budget 2024/25 - Public Consultation Results

What was the consultation about?

The consultation presented London Borough of Harrow's draft budget for 2024/25. The consultation ran for five weeks from 20 December 2023 to 24 January 2024.

We legally must share with Harrow residents our plans and ask what residents think of them to set a balanced budget in February.

Every year, we deliver services to more than 261,000 people.

Some are statutory that we must deliver by law, others essential and some are what we consider important - they all help us restore pride in Harrow and deliver our key priorities:

- A council that puts residents first
- A borough that is clean and safe
- A place where those in need are supported.

In planning our spending for the year ahead, and future years, we asked residents some questions on budgets. We provided information that explains where our money comes from, and more importantly where it goes.

How was the consultation advertised?

The consultation was available on the council's consultation platform MyHarrow Talk. The project page hosted the consultation documents, including, the December 2023 Cabinet Report and Appendices, background information, videos and an online survey.

The consultation was promoted via the council's weekly e-newsletter MyHarrowNews to c.130,000 MyHarrow account holders and subscribers, the council's social media channels, news on the council's website and by Harrow Online.

Some 1,000 individuals visited the consultation pages on MyHarrowTalk, nearly half of them looked at the information contained on the pages. Some 63 responses were received from the online survey.

What feedback was received?

Six questions were presented to respondents. The graphs below summarise the results received.

In summary, the majority of respondents said they understood the budget pressures the council was facing, and the council's plans to spend the budget were supported. But there was not majority support that council tax should rise by 4.99% (2.99% for Council services and

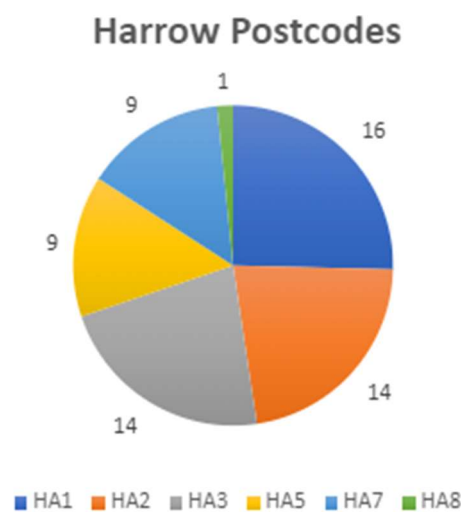
the 2% social care levy) to fund it. More respondents (41%) agreed with how the council planned to spend the budget in 2024/25, compared to those who disagreed (32%).

Almost half (48%) said they understood the need to increase council tax to spend more on adult social care. But only one-quarter (26%) agreed that a growing demand on services meant more needed to be spent on core council services.

Only one-quarter (25%) of respondents agreed that a rise in council tax should pay for the budget increases, with six out of 10 respondents disagreeing.

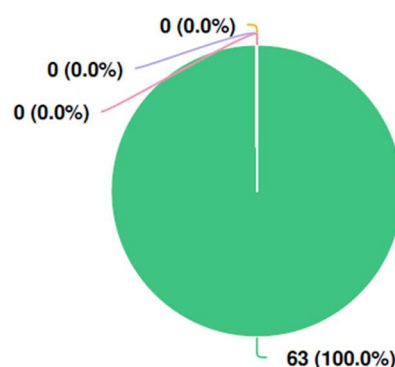
Q1. Please provide your postcode, or if you prefer, the first four characters from your postcode

There were 63 responses to this question. Most respondents live in the HA1 postcode area of Harrow.



Q2. In what capacity are you taking part in this consultation?

All 63 respondents to this question identified themselves as a Harrow resident.



Question options

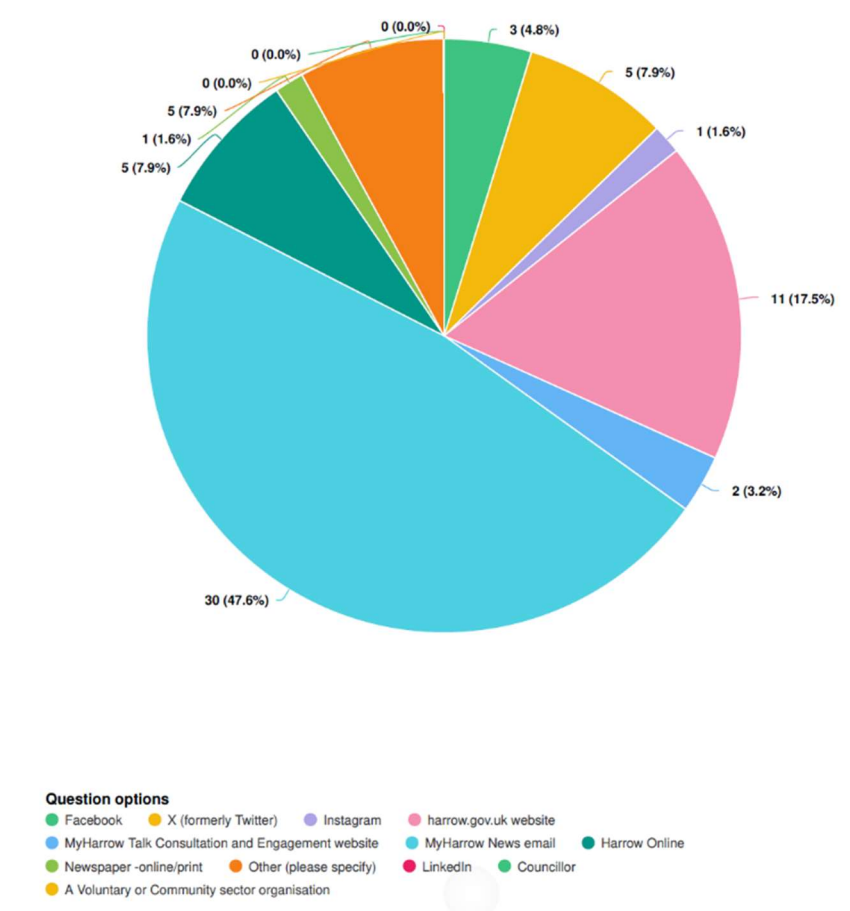
- I live in Harrow
- I am responding for someone who lives in Harrow but do not live here myself
- I am responding as an individual but do not live in Harrow (for example I work for LB Harrow)
- I am providing the official response of an organisation, group or business based in Harrow

Q3. How did you find out about this consultation?

There were 63 responses to this question.

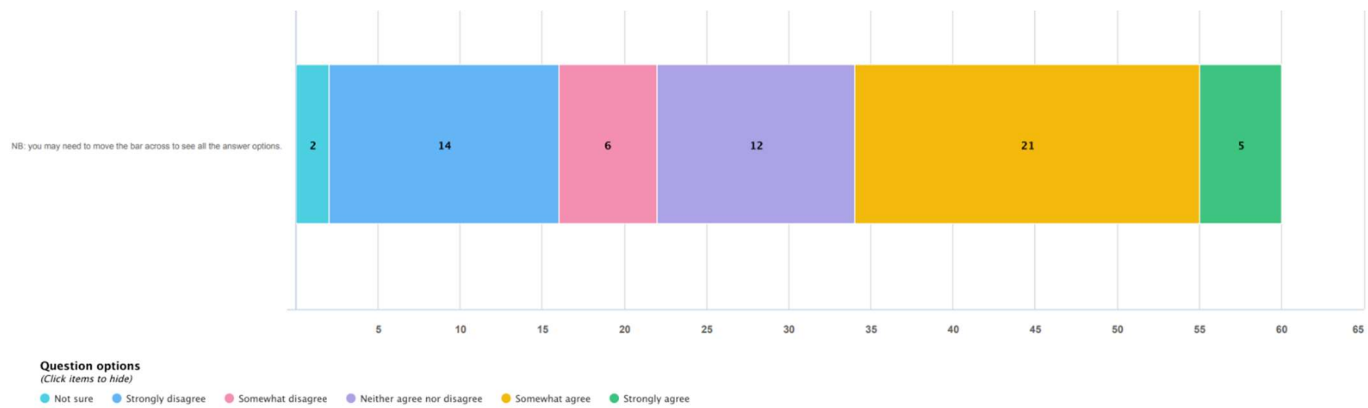
Nearly half of the respondents (47.6%) found out about the consultation via MyHarrow News, with the council website (17.5%) the next highest response.

People also found out about the consultation through social media (X (formerly Twitter) 7.9%, Facebook 4.8%, and Instagram 1.6%) and Harrow Online (7.9%).



Q4. The London Borough of Harrow has a Corporate Plan for Restoring Pride in Harrow. And it has three priorities – to be: ✓ a council that puts residents first, ✓ a borough that is clean and safe, and ✓ a place where those in need are supported. The 2024/25 budget has been put together to ensure funds are available and resources are committed to deliver these priorities. Do you agree with how the council plans to spend the budget in 2024/25?

There were 63 responses to this question. 26 (41%) agree with how the council plans to spend the budget next year, 20 (32%) disagree, 12 (19%) neither agree nor disagree, 2 (3%) not sure, 3 (5%) did not answer the question.



Q5. Please share any comments you have on the budget proposals for 2024/25. For example, do you have ideas on where or how we can save money, or generate more income? Is there anything in our plans that might adversely or unfairly impact you or your family? Please don't give us any personal details that may identify you.

There were 49 responses to this question – the themes in the responses were:

- Concerns around services and initiatives not being run as efficiently as possible.
- Concerns about the visibility / quality of services received in return for Council Tax paid.
- Calls for the Council to approach central government for more funding.
- Concerns about the impact on households of an increased Council Tax bill, considering pressures on finances. Question about what support there is for those struggling.

Q6. Having read the draft budget proposals and the information about the council's financial position, please answer the following statements:

There were 63 responses to this question. Here are the responses to the statements:

I understand the need to increase council tax in 2024/25 by 2.99% for council services plus the 2% adult social care levy – a total increase of 4.99%.

16 (25%) agree, 38 (60%) disagree, 7 (11%) neither agree nor disagree, 1 (2%) not sure, 1 (2%) did not answer the question.

I understand the need to spend more on adult social care.

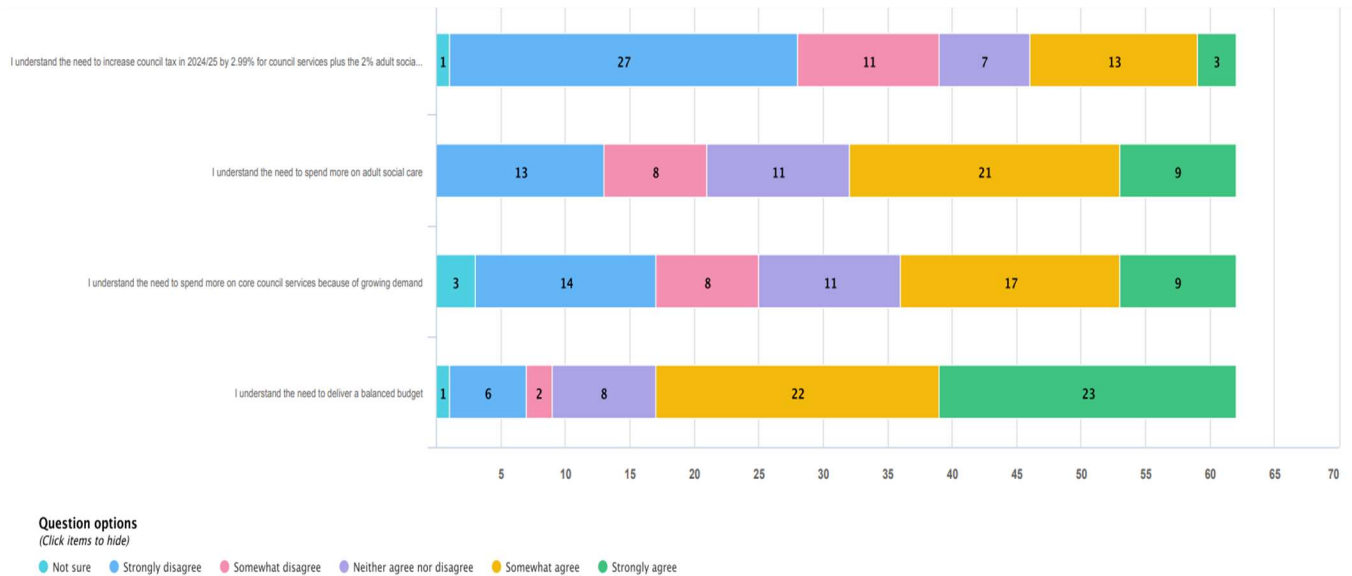
30 (48%) agree, 21 (33%) disagree, 11 (17%) neither agree nor disagree, 0 (0%) not sure, 1 (2%) did not answer the question.

I understand the need to spend more on core council services because of growing demand.

26 (41%) agree, 22 (35%) disagree, 11 (17%) neither agree nor disagree, 3 (5%) not sure, 1 (2%) did not answer the question.

I understand the need to deliver a balanced budget.

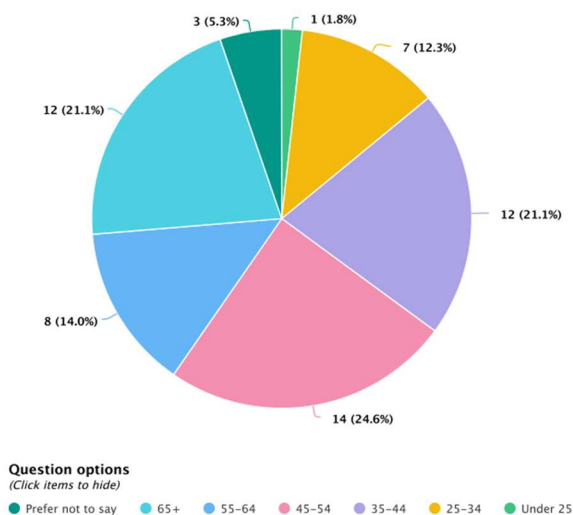
45 (71%) agree, 8 (13%) disagree, 8 (13%) neither agree nor disagree, 1 (1.5%) not sure, 1 (1.5%) did not answer the question.



Equalities Monitoring questions:

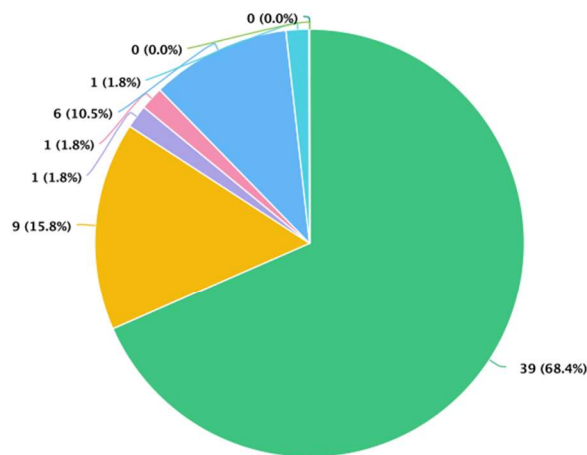
Age – Please indicate your age group.

There were 57 responses to this question. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24.6%) were in the 45-54 age group, one in five 65+ and just over a third of the respondents (33%) who answered this question are below 45.



Disability - Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?

There were 57 responses to this question. Most respondents (68.4%) indicated they have no disability which limits their activities day-to-day, with nine respondents (15.8%) preferring not to say and six respondents (10.5%) indicating they have another form of disability.



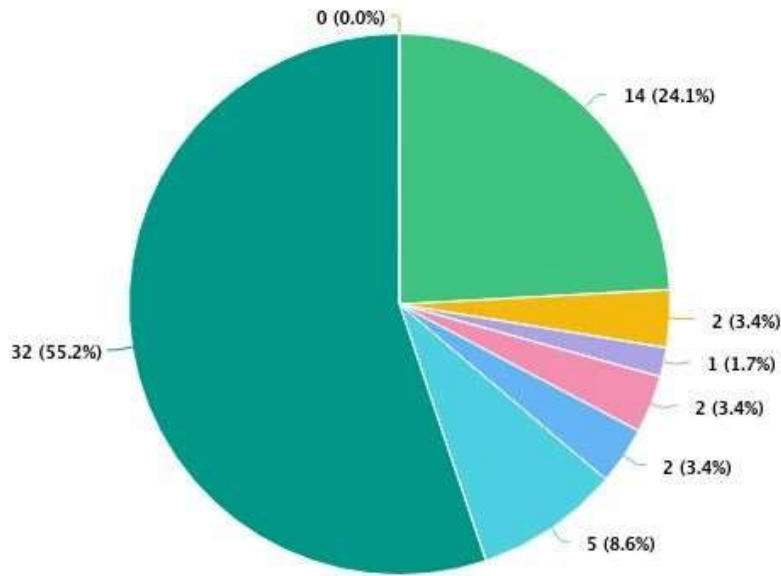
Question options

(Click items to hide)

● Yes, mental ill-health
 ● Yes, affecting vision
 ● Yes, another form of disability
 ● Yes, affecting mobility
 ● Yes, a learning disability
 ● Yes, affecting hearing
 ● Prefer not to say
 ● No

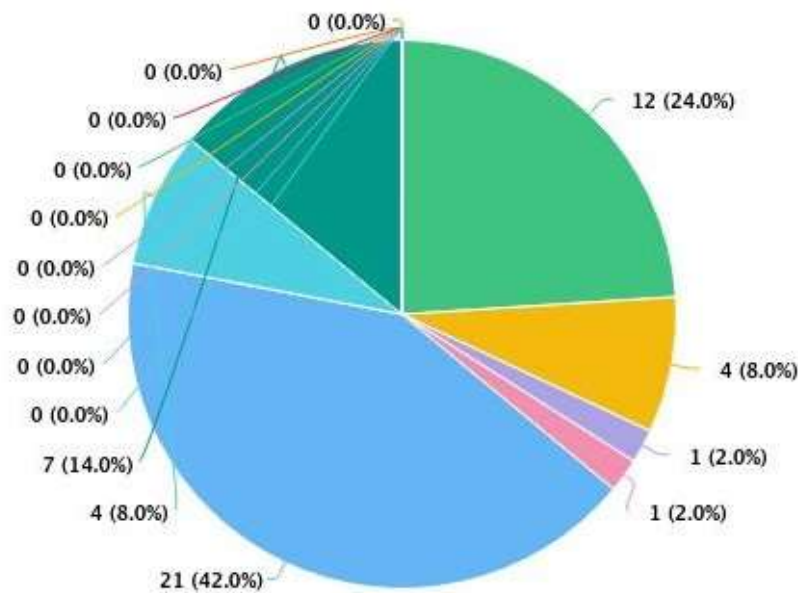
Do you have caring responsibilities?

There were 58 responses to this question. Over half (55.2%) said they have no caring responsibilities, nearly a quarter (24.1%) are the primary carer for an older person.



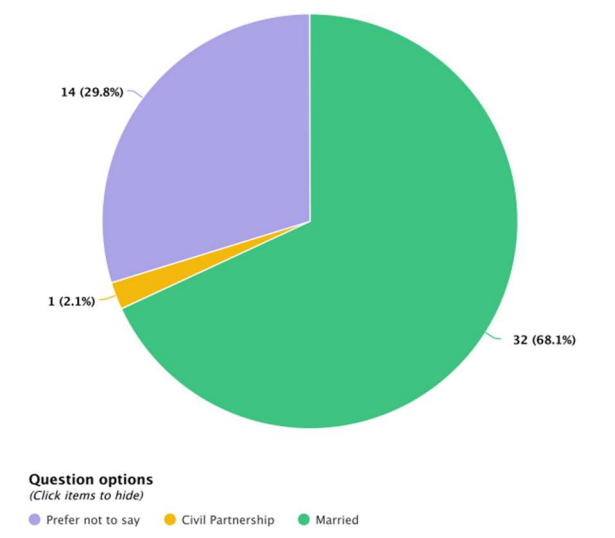
Ethnic origin - What is your ethnic origin?

There were 50 responses to this question. From the respondents (42.6%) identified themselves as White British, with nearly a quarter (24%) as Asian or Asian British Indian and (14%) preferred not to say.



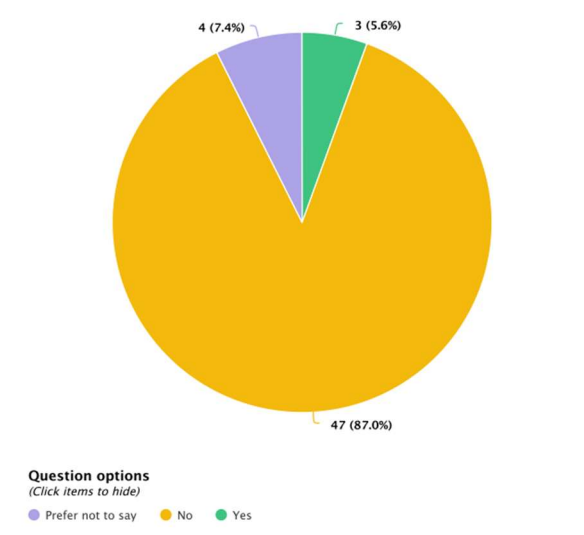
Marriage and Civil Partnership - What is your marital status?

There were 47 responses to this question. Most respondents (68.1%) indicated they are married, with just under a third (29.8%) preferring not to say and one respondent (2.1%) indicating they are in a civil partnership.



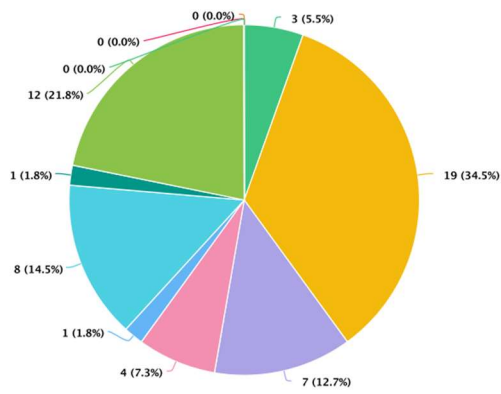
Pregnancy or Maternity - Have you been pregnant and / or on maternity leave during the past 2 years?

There were 54 responses to this question with most respondents (87%) replying no to the question. Three respondents (5.6%) responded 'yes' to the question, with four respondents (7.4%) preferring not to say.



Religion and belief - What best describes your religion/belief?

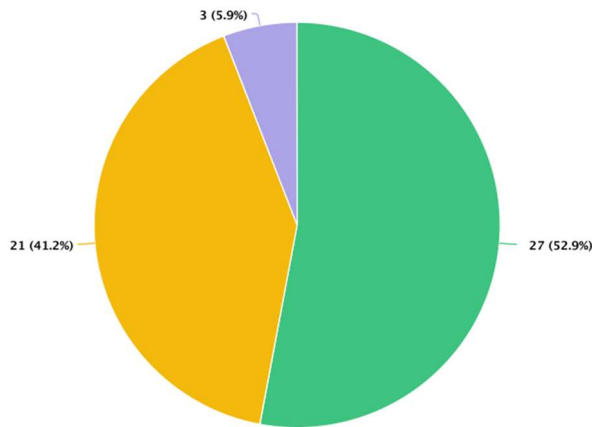
There were 55 responses to this question with just over a third (34.5%) describing their belief as Christianity. Nearly a quarter (21.8%) preferred not to say, with 14.5% answering as No religion/Atheist and seven as Hinduism (12.7%). Four respondents (7.3%) described their belief as Jainism, with three respondents (5.5%) as Buddhism and one respondent (1.8%) as Judaism.



Question options
 (Click items to hide)
 Zoroastrian Sikhism Islam Prefer not to say Other No religion/Atheist Judaism Jainism Hinduism Christianity (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other denominations) Buddhism

Sex - Are you?

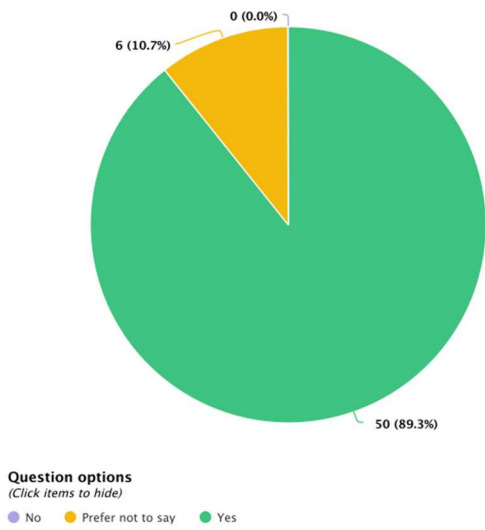
There were 51 responses to this question with just over half (52.9%) responding as Male with 41.2% responding as Female. A small number (5.9%) preferred not to say.



Question options
 (Click items to hide)
 Prefer not to say Female Male

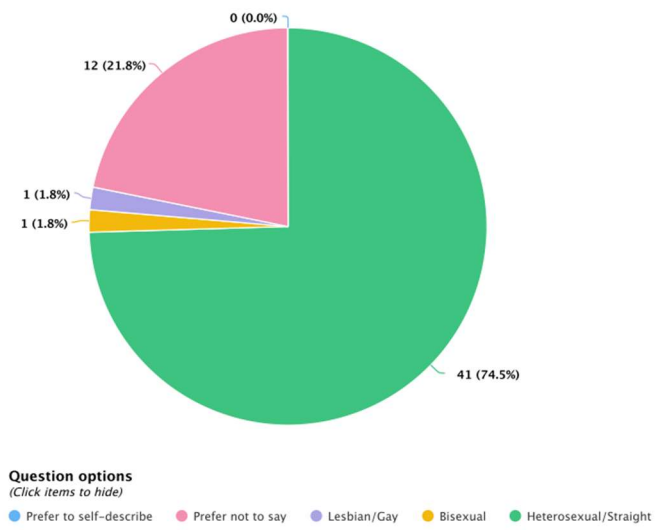
Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

There were 56 responses to this question with most respondents (89.3%) answering Yes and 10.7% preferring not to say.



Sexual orientation - What is your sexual orientation?

There were 55 responses to this question with nearly two-thirds of responses (74.5%) answering Heterosexual/Straight and nearly a quarter (21.8%) preferring not to say.



Conclusions

Through our consultation we are satisfied that we have explained the budget pressures facing the council in the next financial year and beyond and, while we hear people’s concerns, we propose to raise Council Tax for 2024/25 to ensure the budget we put together is balanced. We are taking onboard feedback about how we can look at further efficiencies and growth opportunities. We will continue to work in partnership with local partners and liaise with central government about funding for Harrow.

Assessment of Equality Impacts

Responses to the main questions by Sex

Of the 63 total respondents of the survey, 51 answered the question about Sex, with 12 people skipping it. Of those who responded, 21 people responded as female, with 27 as male and 3 preferred not to say.

The main questions have been filtered by Female and Male and the responses are set out below:

Main questions	Female responses	Male responses
The London Borough of Harrow has a Corporate Plan for Restoring Pride in Harrow. And it has three priorities – to be: ✓ a council that puts residents first, ✓ a borough that is clean and safe, and ✓ a place where those in need are supported. The 2024/25 budget has been put together to ensure funds are available and resources are committed to deliver these priorities. Do you agree with how the council plans to spend the budget in 2024/25?	20 responses, 1 skipped Agree: 11 Disagree: Neither agree nor disagree: 6 Not Sure: 3	26 responses, 1 skipped Agree: 9 Disagree: 10 Neither agree nor disagree: 5 Not Sure: 2
Having read the draft budget proposals and the information about the council's financial position, please answer the following statements...	21 responses	27 responses
I understand the need to increase council tax in 2024/25 by 2.99% for council services plus the 2% adult social care	Agree: 12 Disagree: 7 Neither agree nor disagree: 2 Not Sure:	Agree 7 Disagree: 16 Neither agree nor disagree: 3 Not Sure: 1
I understand the need to spend more on adult social care	Agree: 11 Disagree: 6 Neither agree nor disagree: 4 Not Sure -	Agree: 15 Disagree: 7 Neither agree nor disagree: 5 Not Sure -

I understand the need to spend more on core council services because of growing demand	Agree 10 Disagree: 6 Neither agree nor disagree: 4 Not Sure: 1	Agree 11 Disagree: 8 Neither agree nor disagree: 6 Not Sure: 2
I understand the need to deliver a balanced budget	Agree 16 Disagree: 2 Neither agree nor disagree: 3 Not Sure	Agree 20 Disagree: 3 Neither agree nor disagree: 3 Not Sure: 1

Responses to the main questions by Disability

Of the 63 total respondents of the survey, 57 answered the question about whether day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months, with 6 people skipping it.

Of those who responded, 39 people responded with a no to the question, while 9 indicated they do have a health problem or disability, and 9 preferred not to say.

The main questions have been filtered by those who indicated either Yes or No to whether their day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months. The responses are set out below:

	Responses indicating No to "Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?"	Responses indicating Yes to "Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months?"
Q5. The London Borough of Harrow has a Corporate Plan for Restoring Pride in Harrow. And it has three priorities – to be: ✓ a council that puts residents first, ✓ a borough that is clean and safe, and ✓ a place where those in need are supported. The 2024/25 budget has been put together to ensure funds are available and resources are committed	6 responses Agree: 3 Disagree: 2 Neither agree nor disagree: 1 Not Sure	22 responses, 2 skipped Agree: 10 Disagree: 7 Neither agree nor disagree: 4 Not Sure: 1

to deliver these priorities. Do you agree with how the council plans to spend the budget in 2024/25?		
Having read the draft budget proposals and the information about the council's financial position, please answer the following statements...	6 responses	24 responses
I understand the need to increase council tax in 2024/25 by 2.99% for council services plus the 2% adult social care	Agree: Disagree: 5 Neither agree nor disagree: 1 Not Sure:	Agree: 8 Disagree: 14 Neither agree nor disagree: 1 Not Sure: 1
I understand the need to spend more on adult social care	Agree: 5 Disagree: 1 Neither agree nor disagree: Not Sure:	Agree: 12 Disagree: 6 Neither agree nor disagree: 6 Not Sure:
I understand the need to spend more on core council services because of growing demand	Agree: Disagree: 2 Neither agree nor disagree: 4 Not Sure:	Agree: 12 Disagree: 8 Neither agree nor disagree: 2 Not Sure: 2
I understand the need to deliver a balanced budget	Agree: 4 Disagree: Neither agree nor disagree: 2 Not Sure:	Agree: 17 Disagree: 3 Neither agree nor disagree: 3 Not Sure: 1

What happens next?

The information gathered through the consultation will be used to inform our final budget which will be reported to Council on 22 February 2024.

We will publish the outcome of the consultation and the final Budget Report on MyHarrow Talk in February 2024.

Regular financial updates on the council's budget position are provided at Cabinet meetings throughout the year. These agendas and reports can be found via harrow.gov.uk