

Annex 10: Budget 2026-27 Consultation Report

1. Background

This report sets out the process and outcomes of Bath & North East Somerset Council's consultation on its draft spending plans for 2026-27. The consultation took place from 12 December 2025 to 19 January 2026.

Our thanks go to all those who participated in the consultation. We have listened to the feedback received and this will help shape the final budget proposals to be considered by Cabinet on 12 February and Council on 24 February 2026.

2. Consultation on draft detailed budget proposals

On Friday 12 December 2025 the council opened an [online consultation](#) on its draft spending plans for the next financial year, 2026 to 2027. This was made available on the council's website and ran until 5pm on 19 January 2026. A [press release](#) and social media messages encouraged residents to complete the consultation and the public were able to submit a hard copy by post.

The consultation offered an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft growth proposals, budget pressures and budget rebasing. This was in relation to the council's operational spend on day-to-day services, known as the revenue budget. It did not include one-off spending on infrastructure such as transport projects, known as the capital budget.

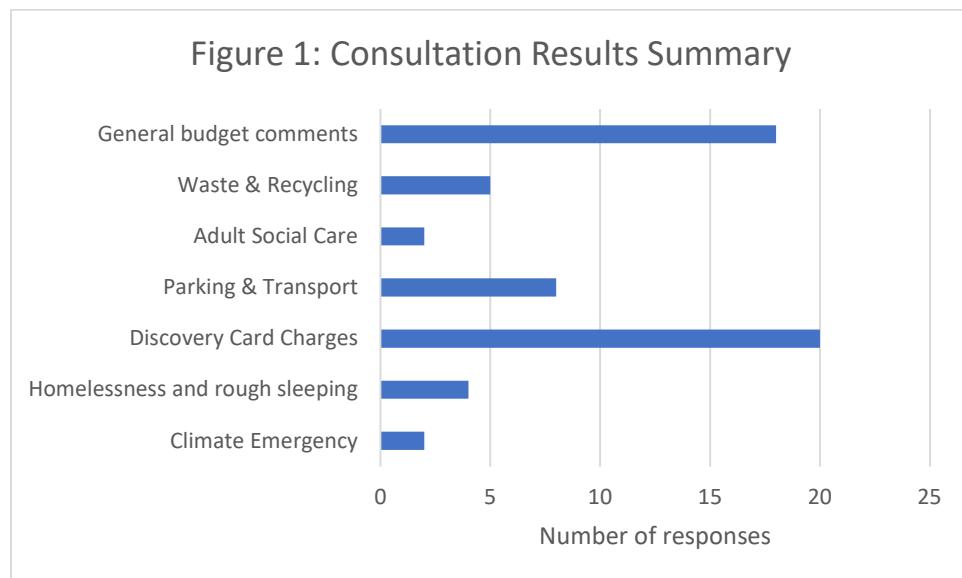
In response to last year's consultation feedback, residents were invited to share their views in a single text box rather than commenting on each proposal individually.

3. Consultation results

The council received **59 submissions**, the summary of which is represented in Figure 1 below.

Two responses were sent directly to budget@bathnes.gov.uk and 57 of the responses were submitted via the online portal

Figure 1 consultation results summary



A) General budget comments

Some respondents recognised the financial pressures faced by the council and supported the proposals to protect essential services. Comments acknowledged the difficult choices when faced with rising demand, inflationary pressures and reduced government funding.

A few comments highlighted opportunities to improve how these financial pressures were managed, suggesting closer alignment across service areas and calling for an even greater focus on income generation.

The cost-of-living crisis was a recurring theme, with respondents highlighting that the budget proposals were taking place at a time when residents were facing severe financial challenges.

“I appreciate that the council has got to make tough decisions about spending, with demand rising on all sides and your settlement from central government contracting.”

“real income from the local economy is needed to keep pace with the increasing demands on council services.”

Council response

B&NES Council continues to demonstrate strong financial management and a well-managed, balanced budget, despite pressures from growth, inflation and long-term reduced Government funding. Next year's budget will enable us to apply our resources carefully to protect essential services and support residents through the cost-of-living crisis.

B) Waste & Recycling

Responses to the waste and recycling proposals were mixed. Some residents welcomed plans to maintain seven-day access and praised the booking system for recycling centres, others objected to changes in opening hours. Saltford Parish Council warned that rotational closures or reduced availability could lead to increased traffic congestion, air quality deterioration, and breaches of planning commitments for the Pixash Lane facility.

A great idea. I hope you'll also keep the booking system, which is great!”

Council response

The importance of maintaining access to recycling centres, whilst avoiding potential challenges linked to rotational opening will be factored into the final budget proposals.

C) Adult Social Care

Increased investment in statutory adult social care was well supported, with respondents recognising the growing demand for services.

Concern was raised that non-statutory services, such as homelessness prevention and wraparound support, risk being overlooked. Suggestions included commissioning more local providers and exploring in-house provision to improve efficiency and responsiveness.

The ambition to deliver better value from contracts supporting people with learning disabilities was highlighted. It was emphasised that the developing commissioning framework – which would deliver these efficiencies - should be co-produced with stakeholders to ensure dignity, safety and human rights are protected.

“Appropriate investment in statutory adult social care will make a real difference for many people. However, this budget increase will not reach the vast majority of the people we support who do not qualify for statutory support.”

“Coproduction as required is essential to lawful and ethical commissioning. It cannot take place after key budget decisions have already been made.”

Council response

The council is investing more than £2 million to meet rising demand in adult social care. Focusing on prevention is a corporate priority and we will work closely with partners and service users to ensure the right support is provided at the right time

D) Parking and transport

Feedback on parking and transport proposals highlighted concerns that the parking proposals could impact local businesses. Respondents encouraged greater emphasis on sustainable transport.

The recent government announcement to provide additional powers to councils to restrict pavement parking was seen positively, both from an accessibility and income perspective.

“Hopefully BANES will fully engage with this (pavement parking) policy to help eliminate what is becoming a City-wide issue and at the same time generate some much-needed additional revenue to assist with the annual budget.”

“Park and ride charges should be reduced, not increased, to encourage people out of their cars.”

Council response

The proposals enable the council to maintain sustainable transport park and ride services, despite inflationary pressures, to the benefit of more than one million users per year. The car parking proposals support this initiative whilst also helping to improve air quality and public safety for residents.

E) Discovery Card charges

The proposal to introduce a charge for the Discovery Card attracted more than a third of the total responses. Residents viewed the card as providing affordable access to cultural assets, whilst also offsetting some of the challenges of living in a city attracting six million plus annual visitors. It was argued that even a small fee would be prohibitive. Respondents suggested alternative funding models, such as a visitor levy or donations.

“Introducing a fee creates an unnecessary financial barrier...”

Council response

The final budget recommendations will take into account the Discovery Card proposal feedback.

F) Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Although not part of the of proposals, respondents used the consultation to request for a clear funded long-term strategy to address homelessness and rough sleeping. The risk to Bath's long-standing emergency hostel in Manvers Street was highlighted. The consultation responses emphasised increasing pressure on statutory services, including those provided by the council.

“B&NES needs a strategy to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping sustainably, not sticking-plaster short-term fixes. What is the council doing to find an alternative site for the hostel, and secure the future of other vital services to prevent homelessness?”

Council response

The council is actively working with partners in relation to available accommodation for rough sleepers and in the last twelve months has increased the support provision for rough sleeper services.

G) Climate Emergency

Some participants would have liked to see more explicit budget growth allocation within the budget proposals for climate action, and urged the council to prioritise resilience measures, such as flood prevention and sustainable transport.

“There appears to be a significant gap in the budget proposals with no mention of the Climate Emergency. Where is the spend to support how we respond as a local authority?”

Council

Responding to The Climate Emergency continues to be the main policy objective for B&NES Council. The progress made in this area was most recently reported to Council in November 2025 through the [Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report 2025](#). The 2026-27 budget will ensure continued progress in tackling the emergency.

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28 January 2026