

## **Appendix B- Budget Simulator Feedback- October 2023**

The Budget Simulator launched on 19 September and closed on 31 October 2023. In total, 342 people completed it, an 83% increase on the 187 people who completed it last year.

The results show that on average people wanted to broadly protect, with reductions of 2.1% or less, the following service areas:

- Education and children's social care
- Cleansing, waste and recycling
- Transport and roads
- Community safety and neighbourhood services

On average, there were large reductions proposed, of 7.5% or more, for:

- Growing the city
- City centre and events
- Community engagement and cohesion
- Customer services
- Back-office services

Community activities and growing the city do not appear to be as important to the people that completed the survey. Similarly, customer services and back-office functions are not as important, perhaps as these are not things the residents experience or see the value of in the services they receive as they are not visible.

Interestingly, people wanted to, on average, increase spend on Public Health but that may have been skewed as there was not an option to reduce it as this funding is ringfenced by Government and cannot be spent on anything else.

On average people wanted to increase Council Tax by 2.42%, on top of the 4.99% already proposed. To enact this a referendum would be required.

The full results are on the next page.

All comments start on the following page.

Average **Expenditure** Change for Each Slider

% change

Average <b>Expenditure</b> Change for Each Slider		% change
<b>Adult social care</b>		
Commissioning - longer term care		-3.51%
Reablement and therapy		-2.87%
Community services - day opportunities, short breaks		-5.18%
<b>Children's and young people services</b>		
Education support services		-0.77%
Special educational needs and inclusion services		-0.35%
Social work and child protection services		-1.36%
Targeted Support – early help		-1.29%
Services for looked after children - fostering and adoption		-0.72%
Home to school transport		-3.63%
<b>Public health</b>		
Public Health		4.05%
<b>Cleansing, waste and recycling</b>		
Waste and recycling		-1.61%
City Cleaning		-2.12%
<b>Regeneration and employment</b>		
Growing the city		-8.54%
Transport and roads		-1.43%
Housing Needs		-2.87%
<b>Communities and safety</b>		
Community safety and neighbourhood services		-1.36%
Licensing and public protection		-4.08%
Community engagement and cohesion		-7.50%
<b>Customer relations</b>		
Customer services		-9.84%
<b>Parks and leisure</b>		
Parks, trees and open spaces		-2.57%
Culture and leisure services		-3.46%
City centre and events		-7.66%
<b>Resources</b>		
Constitutional and democratic services		-10.67%
IT and digital services		-7.65%
Finance, Internal Audit, HR, Communications, Legal and other support services		-10.26%
Property, procurement, commercial, health and safety		-9.42%

Average **Income** Change for Each Slider

<b>Council tax</b>	
Council Tax	2.42%

## Comments (all)

<p>It is clearly an incredibly difficult challenge to reduce the budget by £5.1m as all of the potential impacts have direct and negative consequences on the people in our community. In reality, the detail of the individual budget areas would need to be known to look at how these broader savings can be better distributed.</p>
<p>Schools need more support than ever with special educational needs children - 9 students have been accepted into a standard primary school where they most definitely will not thrive without a lot of support, please consider this increase, my reasoning for customer services is that people will be willing to wait if it's urgent, for constitutional and democratic services, the people just need to work efficiently with statutory services and put it at the top of their priority list.</p>
<p>Power to the people</p>
<p>I think that fundamentally you need to find a way to trust the staff you have and make their lives working for you as good as you can. I doubt my budget will do that as I've suggested cutting the HR and back office. I think you need to review your governance and make sure decisions are being made as low as possible. Put in place staff who are good at procurement and who can help spend the money as effectively and efficiently as possible to allow other staff to do their jobs. Don't interfere once decisions are made but support the staff as they deliver for everyone. Some of the things which will stop with budget reduction are things which probably shouldn't be happening anyway. You cut the grass too often and hack the bushes which provide better green infrastructure for residents. I saw little mention of the climate change crisis in any annotations. I didn't have time to watch the YouTube and apologise to those people who have spent their time producing them. I did read as much as I could and it seems some that had smaller budgets perhaps had less time to write more meaningful explanations as some of them read similar over 5, 10 and more cuts. There's engagement with society and there's trying to get others to do your jobs for you. Please trust the culture you've put in place and the staff you have to work together across departments. Are there any departments who are complimentary and can link in visits and advice to the public? Your staff will know the answer. I don't agree with cutting adult social care as I've put in the budget nor did I think I'd agree with parks reduction in budget but when you see what it's being spent on maybe there needs to be some fresh ideas which are linked to having better green and blue infrastructure, some of the recent changes to landscaping for eg around the lido have made the place look much better and hopefully are less intensive on maintenance. JR's are very costly I agree so please don't put any budget in place which will make those more likely. I do think you need to increase the budget for people earlier in life so they make better choices as adults. I gather you've had to give back some funds eg for the vine, if that's the case maybe you need to identify your project managers in the organisation and give them more responsibility to see future projects through. Identify the skills you've currently got and make the most of those staff and all the volunteers and councillors you have. It must be hard to avoid politics when you're in politics but please try and you've asked us so listen to what we say. Instead of cleaning up after others is there a way that any council's helped people produce less litter. Personally I've always struggled with the bins in town not being clear enough if they're recycling or not. They look too similar. Could you paint some, and the benches are looking drab, they've not lasted long, could volunteers paint them? A lot of money was spent on making benches people didn't want to sit on if I remember rightly so we'd all shop more, how did that work out? Was it evaluated. What evidence do you already have and skills and knowledge already in the organisation to make this budget balance without finding yourself in the situation of other local authorities. I have no idea what your staff turnover is like and hope you are able to keep staff and allow everyone to work at their best without too much stress. Is there a way you can help residents help themselves, I'm convinced the gully's on my street haven't been cleaned for years, I do that regularly. What can we all do for public pride, I know the things I need to do that I need help with and will be looking to local charities, not the council to help me. I wish you well in balancing your budget but we are already half way through the year. Is the issue that government or the joint authority is making more decisions and needing</p>

money at a higher level. If that's the case I'm not sure what else you can do. Maybe make sure you're not doing anything that others are now responsible for. Focus on the things you need to do for your community. Peterborough has a vibrant active, strong village-like set of communities. Make use of them all in your activities. Once people and processes get stressed the whole thing can break down. Please reduce the stressors and make life fun for all, as well as you can. If you keep paring back on the things you might see as trivial you are inadvertently increasing stress in the system. It's the seemingly trivial to some, less costly things which keep humans going. Support the community centres; the festivals; the fun and the communities will be better able to support themselves. I remember when Glasgow turned itself around in the 80's. Instead of trying to attract others to visit, it focused on the city and what its residents wanted and would turn up to. It worked, they created an events programme the city turned up to bringing their family and friends and the tourists came too. Just a thought. I'm sure the councils staff, residents, councillors and partners have many good thoughts they can get behind and project manage to fruition. I've listened to a lot of other cities over the past couple of years talking about things they've done linked to climate action and greening cities and some of the common messages seems to be dream big, fail quickly, get up again and sometimes small things grow. Pull together, work together, thrive together. Ether comments as I'm not convinced anyone will actually read this or make any use of the suggestions those of us who are spending an hour or so of our time on here have put forward. I've used this exercise as a bit of self learning and to get me enthused to tackle my own personal budget issues. Best wishes, again, and sending positive thoughts.

Spending money on such a survey seems superfluous. Whilst this has taken up an hour of my time on a Sunday, councillors are elected to do a job alongside many very experienced and skilled council staff. Some of the departments seem to have very small budgets whilst the 5% changes for others are enormous. You could make a huge difference for a small increase and a large saving if you looked closer at supporting your departments with reduced corporate process. How sustainable are your parks processes. The areas where planting has changed the 'lawns' (outside the lido) are wonderful through the seasons. Less harsh cutting of hedges will be better for wildlife and cutting and removal of verge cuttings after seeding will make more bee friendly wildflower areas, you might need increased community awareness budget to explain why you're doing what you're doing and upskilling the current contractor. There seems to be little mention or awareness of green infrastructure and how important that is to a positive wellbeing for residents and those that work in Peterborough. Engaging your retired community to participate in more volunteering will be beneficial all around. Peterborough had wonderful volunteers during covid vaccinations. How are those individuals with amazing skills being used now. I might have made some decisions which will put us at risk. I've tried to make sure we are legal whilst cutting some of that budget. I don't understand how spending money on a footbridge when childrens services would improve so much with such a small amount can be justified. When you are already overspent I would urge you to find other ways of updating and promoting the regional pool without rebuilding. I was left feeling there were lots more information which hadn't been included here. Obviously some departments had more resources to input to this process than others. As a community engagement tool I'm sure it will provide discussion if it is used by people. It's been easier to comment online than trying to get in to comment on the public engagement of the changes to embankment which were unfortunately held during severe weather and I was unable to get in. If you can provide this sort of IT resource can you make something like this available when seeking public consultation for making planning

decisions? You are needing long term health support because you do not appear to be investing in the things which will reduce that need for long term health support. You have senior staff in house that I'm sure can advise you on Peterborough Budget much better than I can so please use them and find a way to listen to them better. They can tell you which services are severely under pressure. Stress on staff should be the main worry of any council as having staff functioning will provide much better services for the whole community and environment. There seems little mention of the climate crisis emergency which is a huge concern. Is it possible for every decision to be put through a quick audit (I know, I've cut the audit budget and also think that extra process should be avoided, can you lower your governance levels so decisions are made at a lower level in the departments) to ensure your decisions are not making the climate crisis worse by your choices. I have no idea if you have a climate change team but we've got PECT and presumably you listen to them. There's little mention of clean water, air quality and soil quality or of use of land and food security. It feels like you're spending a lot of money on keeping the council functioning, presumably with more and more processes and audits to make sure money's not wasted while with more trust in council staff and an increase of spending in some areas which are currently working within very small budgets compared to others, such a huge difference could be made to people lives which will benefit the city overall. You can learn a lot by what the staff feel are their values. From the report earlier this year your values are: inclusive; respect; integrity; transparent; collaborative, innovative. From the wording in this consequences budget simulator I'm surprised Trust didn't come out but maybe it's within respect and integrity. Trust your staff. Trust Peterborough. Follow your values and you will balance the budget, not put us in risk as many others are doing and continue to make Peterborough a greener, better, multicultural place to live, work and play. Thank you for asking for my views but I don't think you need them, your staff are plugged into the whole community across Peterborough and your councillors should be representing our views to help keep Peterborough within statutory requirements whilst stretching as a city and providing innovative solutions to today's challenges. Wishing you all the best to stay within budget and find ways to increase the budget without going into special measures. You will notice I chose not to increase the council tax and was interested in the order that you put choices, I deliberately went bottom up to find where the most budget was going in the first place. Constantly stripping small amounts of money from poorly funded departments is not the answer in my humble view. You need to challenge your ambitions and see who's benefitting from any business decisions to make sure you stay honest. I am also wondering who's reading this and I'm sure your time could be spent doing something more important than listening to my ramblings of a Sunday morning. I have no skills in finance and do not work in that areas. I do understand how hard it can be to navigate procurement process and how making that process more trusting and streamlined will help everyone who works for the Council and the rest of us as residents and users of your services.

Simulator options are too restricted, For instance a 2% reduction in adult social care would have less consequences than the 5% option available. There are savings to be made in adult and children social care services. 5% of the budget on these services is over the top albeit within a statutory framework. These budgets do contain the nice to have as well as the statutory minima. The city has grown at a faster rate than the national average and that has not brought wealth to the city average earnings have fallen in comparison to the national average and that is down to attracting low wage business to the city Amazon and Ikea to name but two Peterborough is transforming in to a storage and distribution centre. Businesses are closing because of the low wage economy and inflationary pressures. recognise the realities.

It was really good as there were a lot of realistic options available

Tory Peterborough...

We don't need to grow the city, we need to invest in what we already have. And focus on the environment and climate change

Essential to tidy the city impressions count and will increase visitors as the regeneration around Key Theatre have shown
Why have you allowed me to reduce spending somewhere which would result in the spending being reduced in statutory services which you have said is illegal? On top of that, I reduced spending in multiple areas and the picture being painted is that you would be forced to not meet statutory obligations. So are you saying that we are on such a dire position that the only option we have is to not meet statutory obligations? There's no way around it at all?
People's health and safety must be a priority, preventative health care and safe streets a must.
This is your mess to sort out
Use of AI in customer services should result in no less in SL. And reducing costs where I have are better than not investing in children and homeless.
Its a cost that I would be willing to take if it mean our services to keep the running of the city are kept as they are whilst also balancing the budget
Is every pound being spent in the most efficient way today? Change processes on how budgets are spent, think much more commercially / like the private sector. Move forward with creative & more collaborative ideas to better utilise current resources. It's too easy to stay with processes because that's 'how we do it' - times have changed so councils need to change too & operate with much more financially-focussed mindsets. Increase car parking charges, charge homes for bins, close/sell under-used community centres/ unused council building spaces, stop holding annual ward elections (big waste of resource!), challenge 'statutory' services that were set 50years ago under very different circumstances. Validate every pound of spend, including on staff & agency staff as likely a proportion of staff not being fully utilised efficiently. Review HR processes so those continually off sick are not automatically entitled to full salaries. Ensure all managers of all levels are working to the same standards and are accountable through quarterly performance reviews. Recruit the right people, as all levels. Is the level of internal employment grievances / internal audits acceptable? How much resource is diverted in these areas due to poor management? When in-house is running more efficiently, the wider impact is spend on services is spent more efficiently. Be clear with city residents too what is 'council responsibility' - council housing is not a given in 2023 for example for the majority.
REDUCE THE TOP HEAVY Management staffing far too many levels of management which wasnt in place before they worked with Cambs
Given such small % reductions make proportionately large savings when compared to other budgets, there must be ways that this service can work more effectively. My experience with some Adult services gives the impression that there is some level of disorganisation that could lead to efficiency savings.
An inability to select anything other than " No change " OR " +5% ", on council tax, illustrates how pathetic those responsible for that option are.
Higher standards for what exists, cap on consultant and contractor pay in line with local rates, make areas of development pay.

Cut the councillors salaries and expenses because most of them do nothing. The tax payer needs value for the money they pay. I don't want to pay to transport children to school I apologise for the directness of the comment but they already receive benefits pip and other mobility help. Help the working tax paying person. We need better healthcare more dentists we can access. Give us parking spaces. Focus on the working individuals who are actually contributing to society instead of making it difficult for them to live in Peterborough. I have witnessed Peterborough go down hill especially over the last 5 years. I used to love my city now I am embarrassed. You hand out contracts for child services to private companies however they do not deliver value for money. Stop paying them from an endless pocket and make them accountable. Drive the freeloaders away not the workers

Take a pay cut instead of keep voting for your own Pay raisers you are paid to much and do to little

Start jailing thieves & criminals or the people WILL deal with them ourselves. We can only take so much.

Why can I only reduce growth by 1m - don't build the bridge at keys site, it is a luxury. Don't loan Hilton hotels money, the list goes on. It is clear that this is designed as a tool to put up council tax (one sided options - no consequence text for a tax increase - how about pushing more Peterborough residence into poverty, costs go up but nothing improves), just do it, you will anyway!. No option for just a bit of a council tax rise - 5% or nothing. Patronising level of detail and consequence that are purely gaslighting - close paddling pool, bins collected every 4 weeks. Actually just overspend! - get the government auditors in as Peterborough needs a mighty shakeup starting with with the leader of the council - he is just a gaslight to Peterborough residents now.

Tax the developers and improve the roads

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