

# **BUDGET PROPOSALS**

## **CONSULTATION ANALYSIS**





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This document displays the results of the Budget Consultation Survey conducted between 23rd January 2025 and 22nd February 2025.

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# BUDGET PROPOSALS

## CONSULTATION ENGAGEMENT



**CONSULTATION  
RESPONSES**

**243**



**E-NEWSLETTERS  
TO RESIDENTS**

**15k**



**ENGAGEMENT  
SESSIONS AND  
DROP-INS**

(FACE-TO-FACE AND DIGITAL)

**650+**



**WEBSITE  
VIEWS**

**5,539**



**RESPONSES  
CAPTURED,  
AGE RANGE**

**11-85+**



**SOCIAL MEDIA  
REACH**

**63k**



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy



**Y GYLLIDEB**  
**BUDGET 25/26**

### **Scrutiny & Stakeholder Engagement**

#### **Monmouthshire County Council - Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee**

The Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee provided feedback to the Cabinet regarding the Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals, addressing various issues and concerns. The Committee scrutinised the report, emphasising important matters for the Cabinet Member's consideration. Key topics discussed included proposals to redesign the Hub's opening times, how the council is minimising redundancies, the impact of teachers' pay awards, and changes to national insurance. Committee members also inquired about the budget gap and questioned what actions the Cabinet is taking in negotiations with the Welsh Government to address this issue. Cabinet members confirmed that if the additional funding from these negotiations does not cover the budget gap, the council will explore other income streams and does not anticipate increasing council tax further. Other subjects included how schools manage their budgets, potential options for the Borough Theatre, and support for the business community. The Committee also raised concerns regarding the authority's confidence in managing the budget, especially given the cost pressures arising due to increasing demand levels.

#### **Monmouthshire County Council – Place Scrutiny Committee**

The committee posed various questions and comments to the cabinet members who attended the Place Scrutiny meeting. The topics discussed included the review of car parking and proposed fee increases, the proposal to transition the youth service to a more sustainable model, and its potential impact on rural areas. Concerns were raised regarding changes to Old Tintern Station. Additionally, there were comments about the council's proposal to make changes to our ICT security provision. An extensive discussion took place regarding the proposal to redesign the opening hours of the Community Hubs. A discussion was held regarding the varying increases in social care charges and their effects on services.

#### **Monmouthshire County Council – People Scrutiny Committee**

The committee raised questions regarding the £2.9 million funding gap, the timing and administration of the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept, and the management of the social care budget. There are also inquiries about how car parking fees will be reinvested and the potential savings related to Welsh language services. The committee also questioned the shortfall in MonLife's budget and proposed savings from the staffing review within home care teams. Other discussions included changes planned for youth clubs in rural areas, the council's success in obtaining CHC funding from the NHS, and the investment in key infrastructure, including bridge maintenance. Concerns were expressed about reducing some ICT security provision, savings related to community hubs, and the impact of reduced opening hours on residents. Finally, there were questions about extending leisure centre opening times to support their strong performance.

#### **Digital Engagement Sessions (x4)**

Digital engagement sessions were conducted at various times during the consultation period. These included three public forums and one session specifically for council officers. After a presentation by Councillor Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources, participants could ask questions in a Q&A format. Comments and questions were raised regarding the



council tax increase and the support available for residents struggling to afford the new rates. Others questioned the need to change the hub's opening times and emphasised the importance of protecting its vital services. Additionally, participants raised questions about budget allocations within education. All sessions were well attended.

### **Public engagement drop-ins**

Drop-in sessions saw engagement across the county. These sessions raised awareness of the consultation and allowed residents to raise questions on things that may impact them. Concerns were raised around the proposal for Hubs opening times and redesigning of the service, with residents praising the vital services they offer. Other discussions were seen around the schools' budgets and the county's social care and health provision.

### **School Governing Bodies**

Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Ben Callard, provided a presentation on the Budget 2025/26 proposals. Cllr Callard presented information on all directorates, bringing attention to the Learning, Skills and Economy directorate information. The proposals included that all pay, pension and national insurance pressures will be met and an additional £1m will be invested in schools to help address the deficit balances.

### **School Headteachers**

Following an introduction presentation by Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Ben Callard, headteachers from across Monmouthshire were provided an opportunity to give feedback and raise questions. Comments were made about the difficult times schools are seeing financially, and questions were raised if the council could provide more support. Some suggestions of additional support were for supply teacher costs to be centralised within the council budget. A question was raised about whether moving out-of-county Additional Learning Needs provision made sense financially. Other comments were made about council tax and whether different bands could be looked at. Whether council tax could be raised for the wealthier residents of Monmouthshire to support the less wealthy.

### **Secondary School Student Council**

Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Ben Callard, met with King Henry VIII 3-19 School students to discuss the budget proposals and to hear what students saw as important issues for them. Questions from students were varied, covering topics from voting age and engagement of young people to issues more specific to Abergavenny, such as littering, leisure centre upkeep and the new Henry VIII school, which students will soon be moving into. Students present were from a variety of age groups from years 7 to the sixth form.

### **Town and Community Councils**

Following an introduction presentation by Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Ben Callard, Town and Community Council representatives provided feedback and raised questions about the budget proposals. Issues about flooding, potholes, and inefficient traffic light management were raised, emphasising the importance of visible improvements to local infrastructure. The discussion highlighted the challenges of increasing health and social care costs, with concerns about future funding and the need for long-term strategies to manage

these expenses. Participants discussed the difficulties in balancing the budget, particularly in protecting essential services like waste recycling and leisure centres, while considering a council tax increase to support these services. Questions were raised about the management of council-owned land and buildings, with calls for better use or disposal of unused properties to generate revenue and reduce liabilities. The impact of pay inflation on the budget was discussed, with plans to manage vacancies and potential redundancies to control costs while maintaining essential services.

### **My Mates**

Cabinet Members for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services, Cllr Ian Chandler, along with MCC officers, met with representatives from My Mates to discuss updates regarding the council's Draft Budget for 2025/26.

Cllr Chandler provided an overview of the current consultation process and opened the floor for questions and feedback. Two main topics emerged from the discussion: the importance of support for carers; the need for reliable public transport and linked to this the importance of having the right support networks in place (both formal and informal) helping people to live as independently as possible in their own homes. The support people felt was important included access to clubs and social activities; access to volunteering and work opportunities and help with daily living.

Support for carers is crucial, as these individuals help residents access valuable resources and information that enable them to live independently. This support also boosts residents' confidence in managing their finances and encourages them to engage in various experiences within the local community.

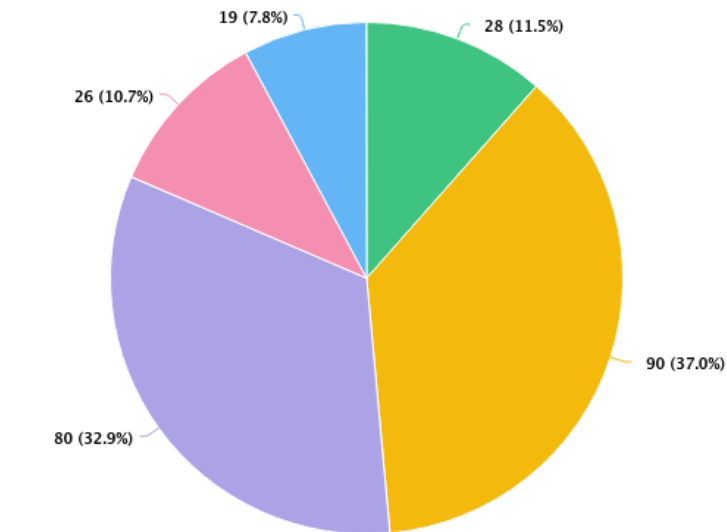
Public transport plays a vital role in allowing residents to carry out everyday tasks, attend planned events, and enjoy outings. However, participants noted that delays and cancellations of local transport services can hinder these activities.

### **Joint Advisory Group**

The Joint Advisory Group held a meeting where Trade Unions had the opportunity to discuss the Draft Budget Proposals with Cabinet Members and Council officers. The Cabinet Member noted that there were minimal redundancies contained within the draft budget proposals and that where possible this would be managed through natural turnover in the first instance. Additionally, officers noted that a Cumulative Impact Assessment had been completed to evaluate the effects of the budget on different household types and income levels, as well as the impact on groups with protected characteristics as identified by the Equality Act. Mitigating actions were considered as part of the proposals wherever possible.

## Learning, Skills and Economy

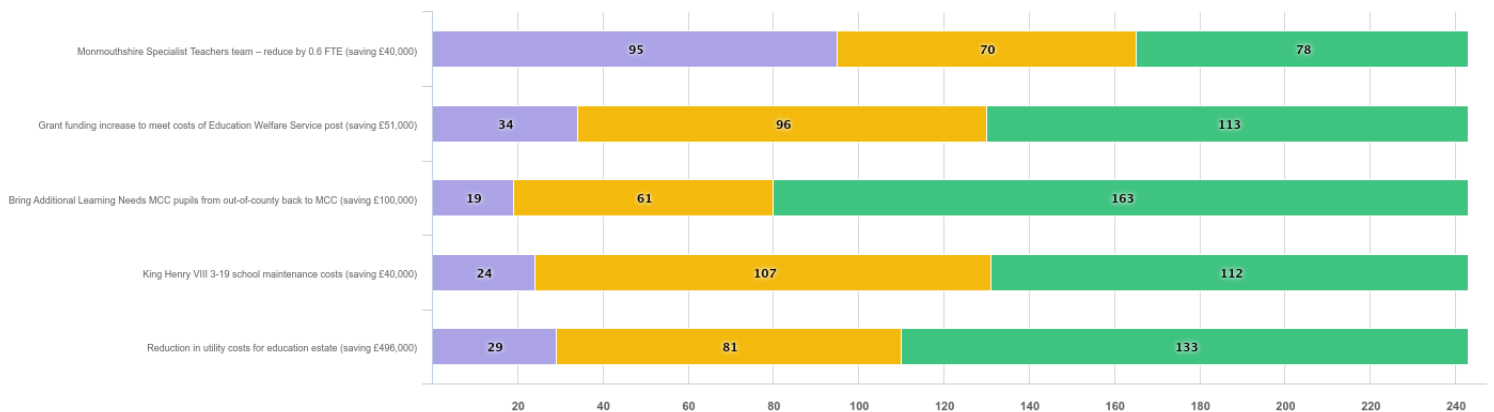
Do you agree with the proposals to the Learning, Skills and Economy directorate?



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please let us know which of the Learning, Skills and Economy budget proposals you support or oppose.



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Oppose Neutral Support

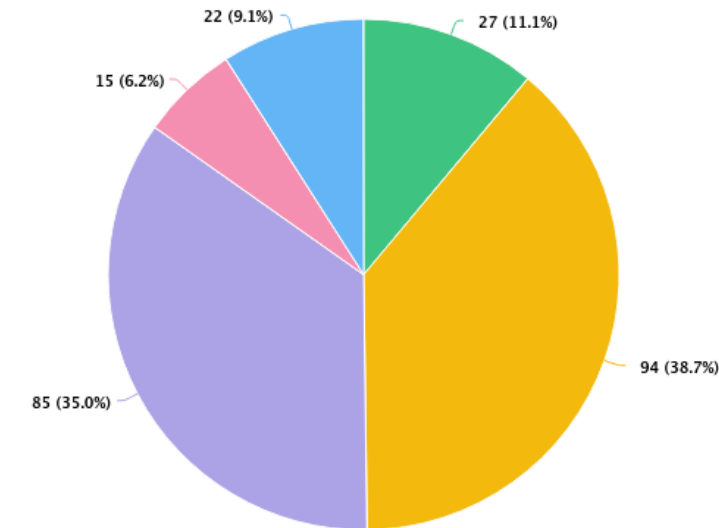
**Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the Learning, Skills and Economy directorate?**

The comments in the Learning, Skills and Economy cover a wide range of topics related to education and budget concerns in Monmouthshire. Many comments highlight the inadequate support for ALN children and the need for more resources and specialist teachers; this was raised further by the proposal 'Reduce 0.6 FTE MoSTS (Monmouthshire Specialist Teachers) team'. Some comments suggest that digitalisation could save administrative costs in the long term. There are also concerns about the cost of maintaining small schools. There is a call for more efficient use of funds, especially in areas like teaching quality and estate maintenance. There are general concerns about the overall increase in the budget, the impact of further cuts to school budgets, and the need for more efficient decision-making.



**Social Care & Health**

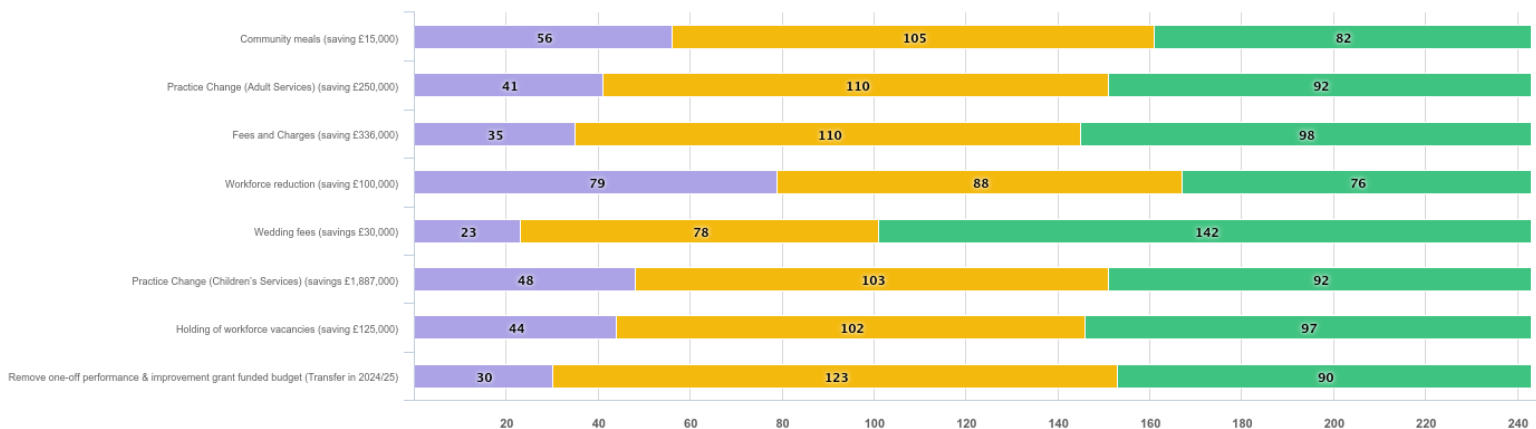
**Do you agree with the proposals for the Social Care and Health directorate?**



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

**Please let us know which of the Social Care and Health budget proposals you support or oppose.**



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

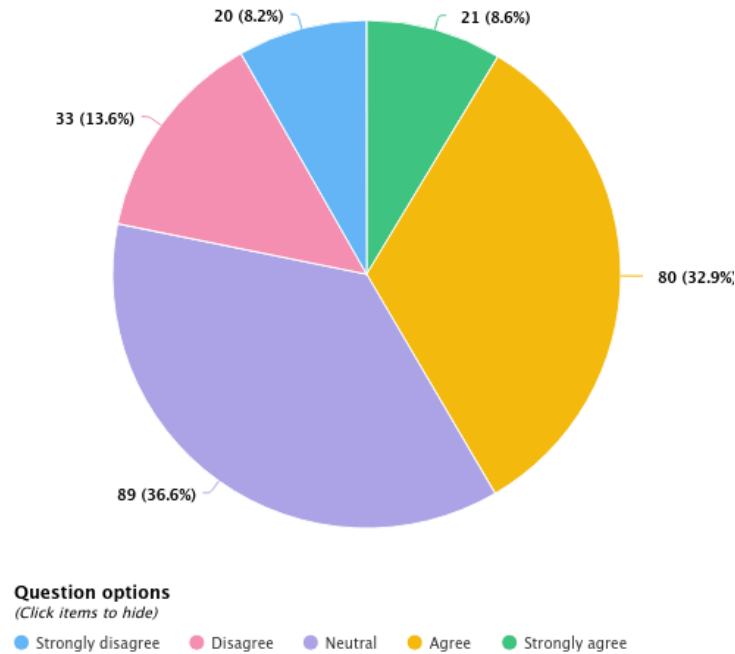
Oppose Neutral Support

**Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the Social Care and Health directorate?**

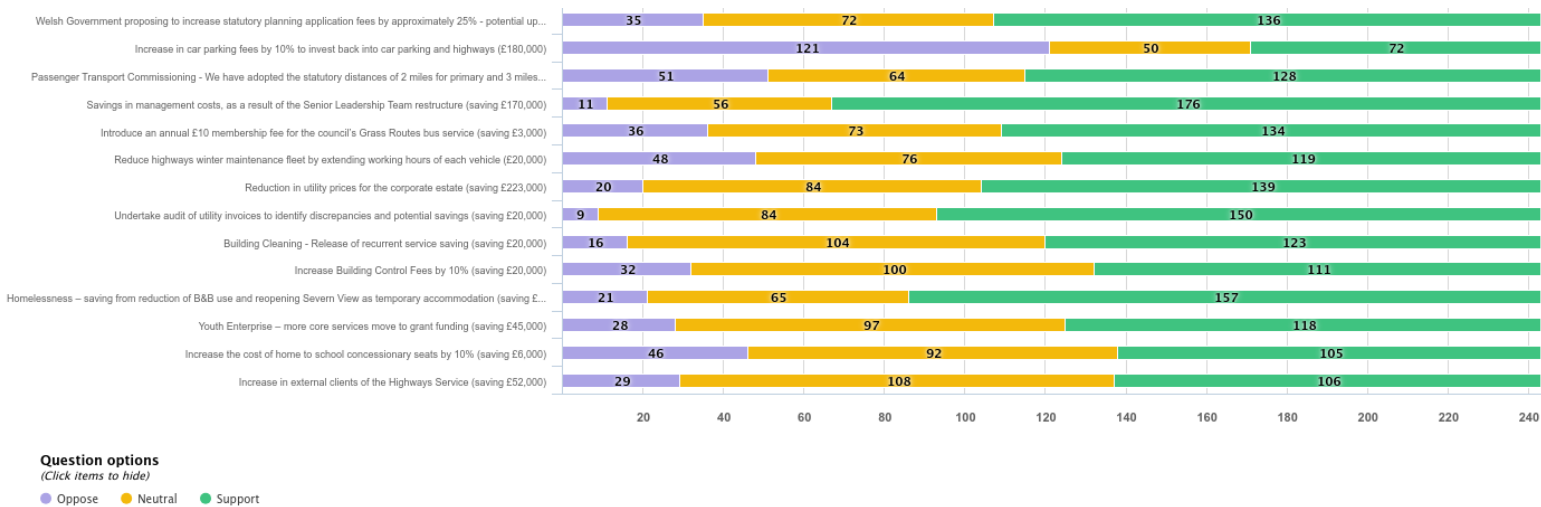
The Social Care and Health comments cover a wide range of topics. Comments emphasised the importance of increasing funding for social care and not making cuts, highlighting the essential role of social care in keeping people out of hospitals. A few comments mention the need for greater efficiency and better management by administrators. Concerns about the feasibility and impact of specific savings include the Children's Services saving and practice change for adult services. There are comments about the fairness and sustainability of council tax increases and the need for national solutions for social care costs.

## Infrastructure and Place

Do you agree with the proposals for the Infrastructure and Place directorate?



Please let us know which of the Infrastructure and Place budget proposals you support or oppose.



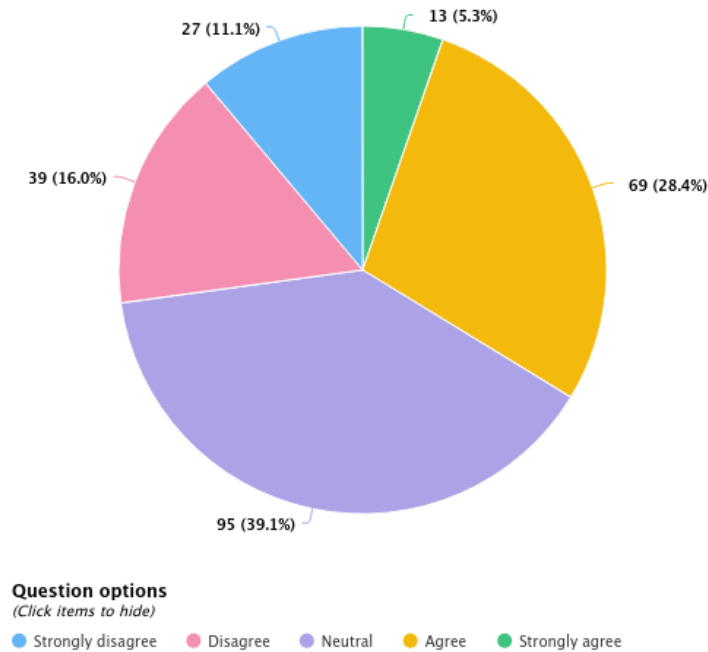


**Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the Infrastructure and Place directorate?**

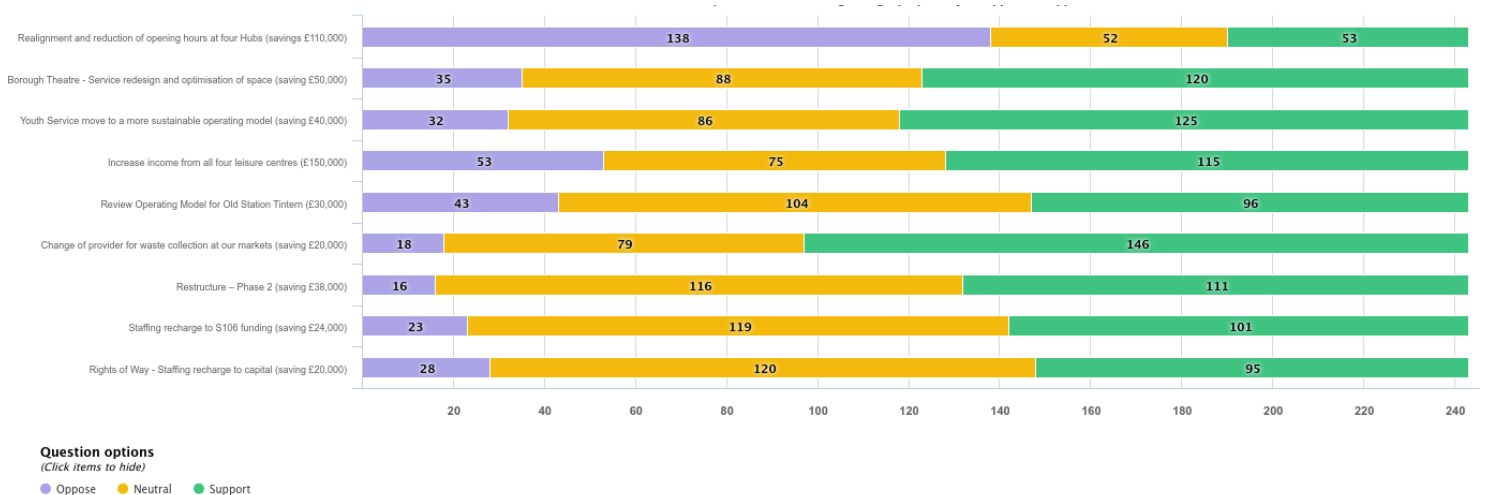
The Infrastructure and Place comments cover a wide range of topics. Concerns are raised around the impact and fairness of car parking fees increase. Several comments highlight the need for better road maintenance and efficient use of resources. Comments suggest improvements in waste collection efficiency and reduced costs associated with waste services. Comments showed mixed opinions on reusing buildings for homeless services and the impact on local communities.

## Customer, Culture and Wellbeing (MonLife)

Do you agree with the proposals for the Customer, Culture and Wellbeing directorate?



Please let us know which of the Customer, Culture and Wellbeing budget proposals you support or oppose.



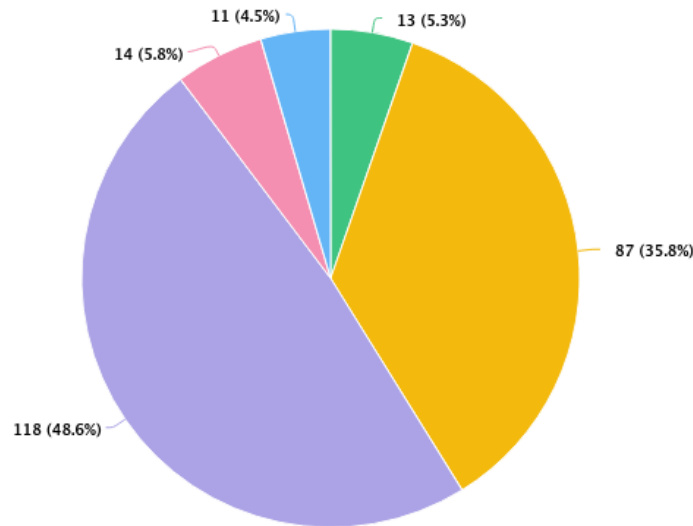
**Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the Customer, Culture and Wellbeing directorate?**

Comments within Customer, Culture and Wellbeing highlight the importance of community hubs and libraries to residents and the potential consequences that may arise from the proposal to realign and reduce opening hours. Many comments made around the important services available at hubs, and opening hours across the county should reflect the local needs. Comments oppose changes that may negatively affect Old Tintern Station, highlighting its significance as a leisure area and a source of revenue. There are concerns about the adverse effects of reducing leisure centre hours, with suggestions to extend hours to serve the community better and increase revenue.



## Resources

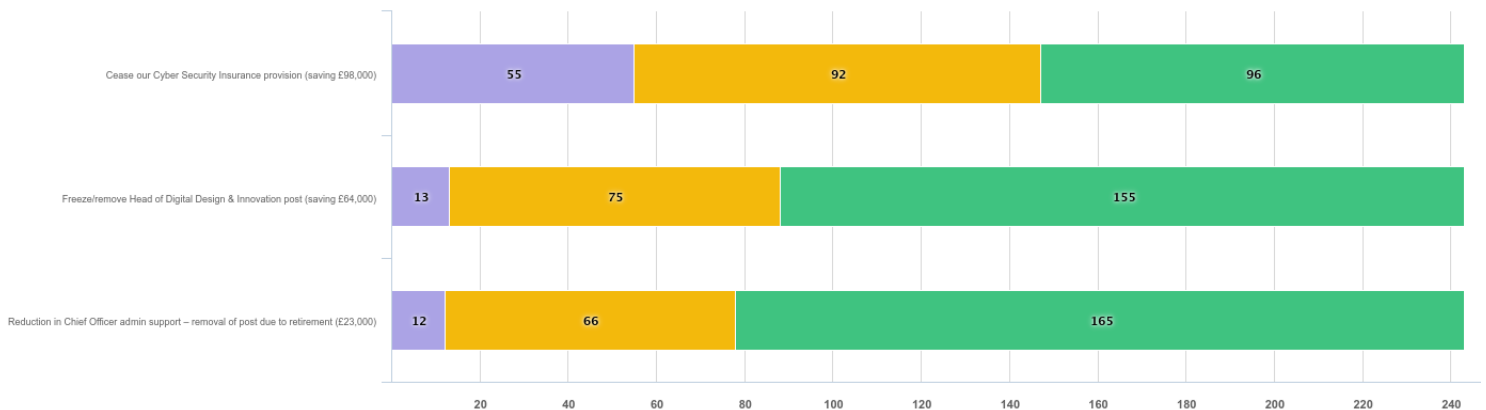
Do you agree with the proposals for the Resources directorate?



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

Please let us know which of the Resources budget proposals you support or oppose.



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

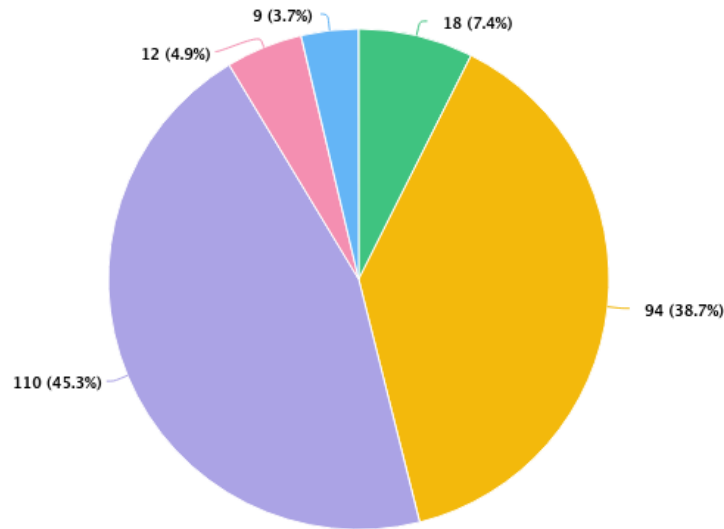
Oppose Neutral Support

Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the Resources directorate?

The comments within Resources raise concerns around reducing ICT security provision, with concerns around the increasing threat of attacks and the potential risks of not being insured. Comments were made around organisation structure and merging directorates.

**People, Performance and Partnerships**

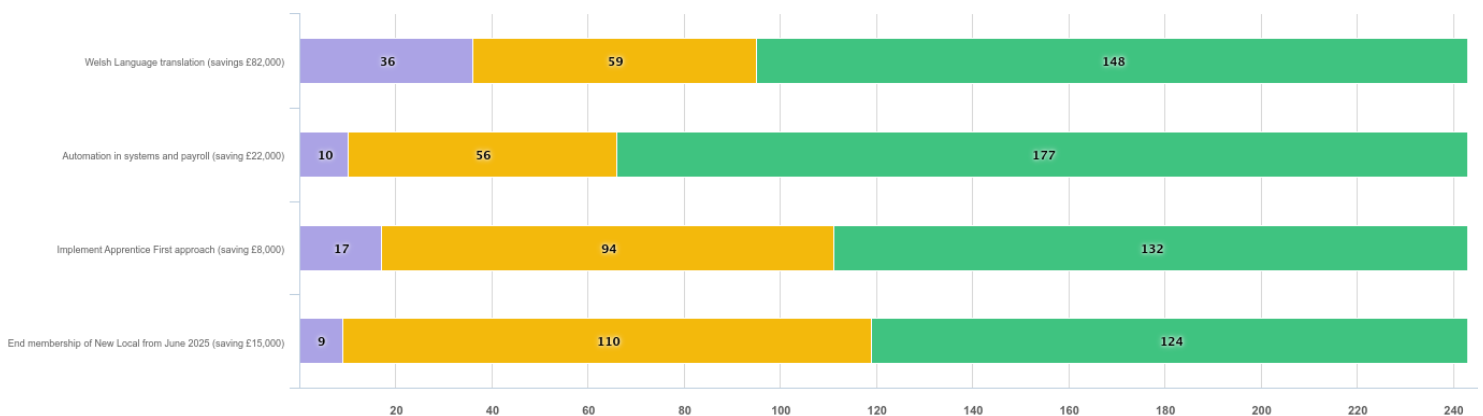
**Do you agree with the proposals for the People, Performance and Partnerships directorate?**



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

**Please let us know which of the People, Performance and Partnerships budget proposals you support or oppose.**



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Oppose Neutral Support

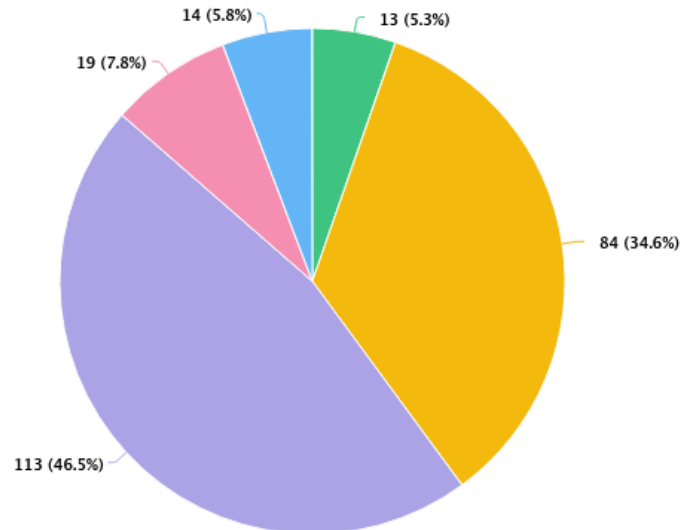
**Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the People, Performance and Partnerships directorate?**

There are mixed views on the importance of Welsh language services. Some comments suggest that the council's response should be proportionate to the Welsh language demand within Monmouthshire. Others feel that Welsh translations should be optional and paid for by those who want them. There are also strong opinions on promoting the Welsh language. Some comments question the value of membership to the New Local to groups and organisations within the county. There are comments on the need for better support for adults in the area, the importance of having people sort things out when automation goes wrong, and the user-friendliness of switchboard services.



**Law & Governance**

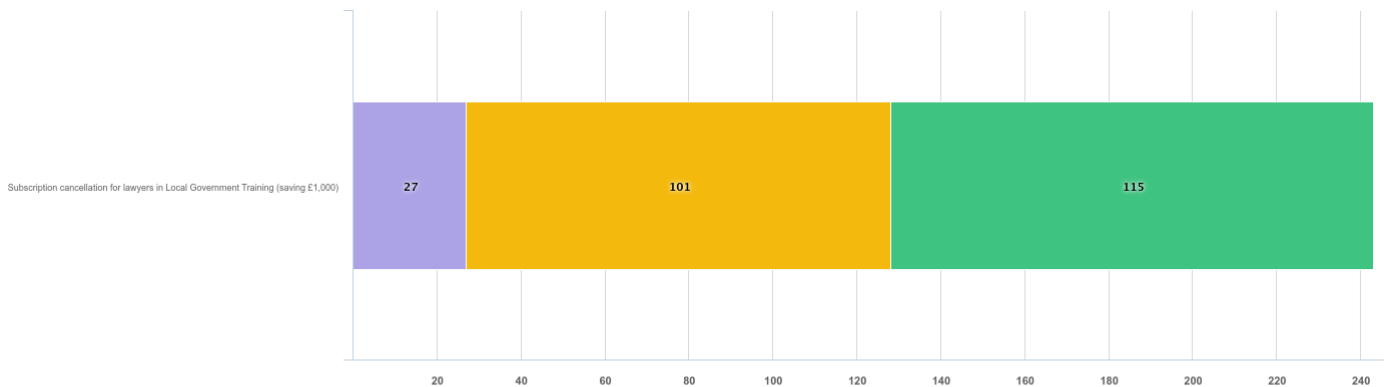
**Do you agree with the proposals for the Law and Governance directorate?**



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

**Please let us know if you support or oppose the Law and Governance budget proposals**



**Question options**  
(Click items to hide)

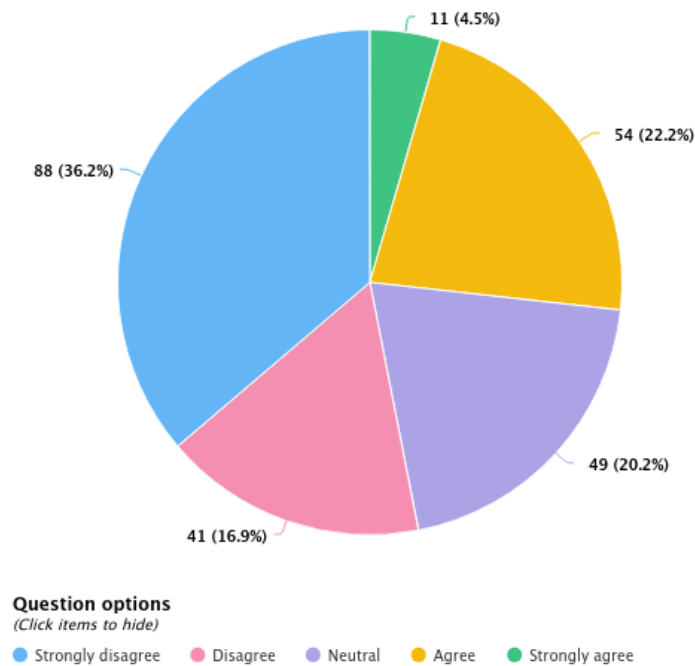
Oppose Neutral Support

**Is there anything else you would like us to consider within the Law and Governance directorate?**

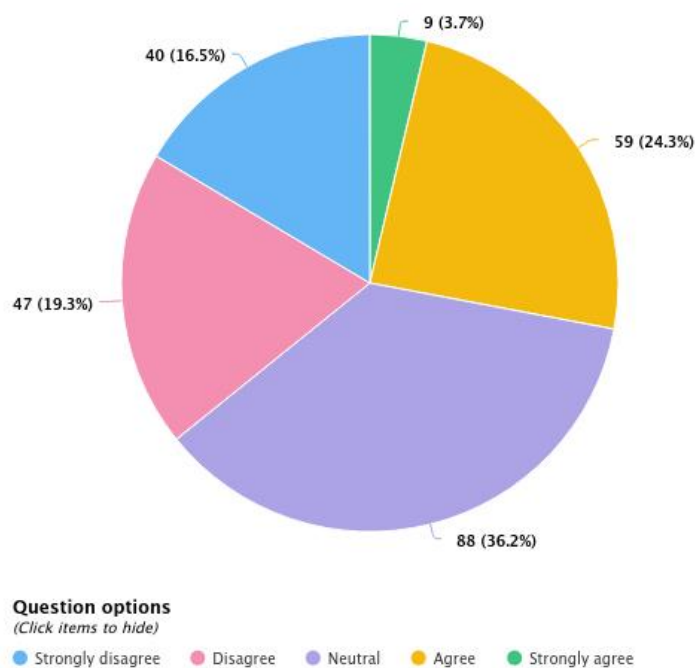
Within Law and Governance, comments are made around efficiency and the need to outsource or collaborate with other local authorities to save costs. Some comments also question the minimal savings in certain areas despite having large budgets.

**Overall Budget Proposal Summary**

Within the 2025/26 Draft Budget Proposals, the Council proposes to increase the Council Tax by 7.8%. Do you agree?



Do you agree with the overall draft budget for 2025-2026?



**Please provide us with any further comments you'd like us to consider as part of the draft budget for 2025-2026.**

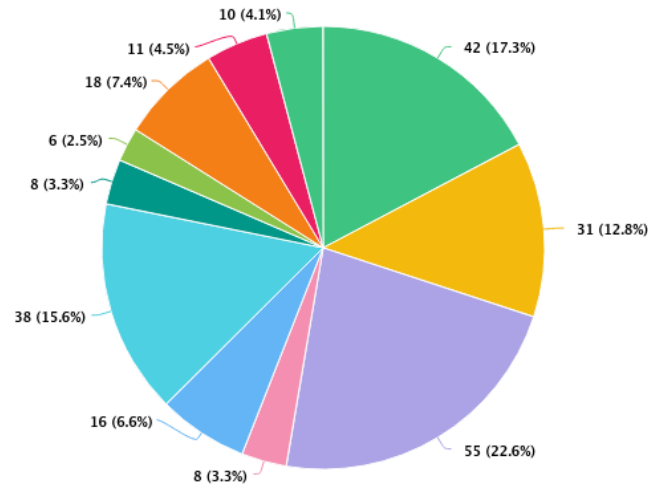
The comments cover a range of concerns and suggestions from residents regarding council tax increases and service provisions. Several comments highlight the impact of inflation on pensions and the struggle to afford council tax increases. Many residents express concerns about cuts to community services like hubs, libraries, and social care, emphasising their importance to the community. There is significant opposition to the proposed 7.8% council tax increase, with residents arguing it is too high and unaffordable, especially given the current cost of living crisis. Residents propose various ways to save money, such as reducing elected members' expenses, cutting unnecessary projects, and improving efficiency. There are calls for better transparency in budget allocation and clearer communication about where money is being spent. Several comments stress the need to prioritise support for vulnerable populations.



## Survey Demographic

A selection of demographics of participants that took part in the online survey.

### Location of participants

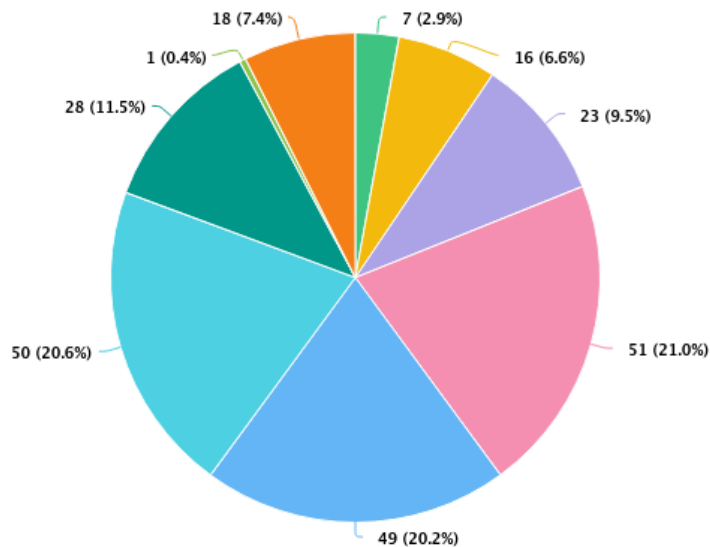


#### Question options

(Click items to hide)

Other (please specify) Prefer not to say Usk Tintern Raglan Monmouth Magor and Undy Gilwern Chepstow Caldicot Abergavenny

### Age of participants

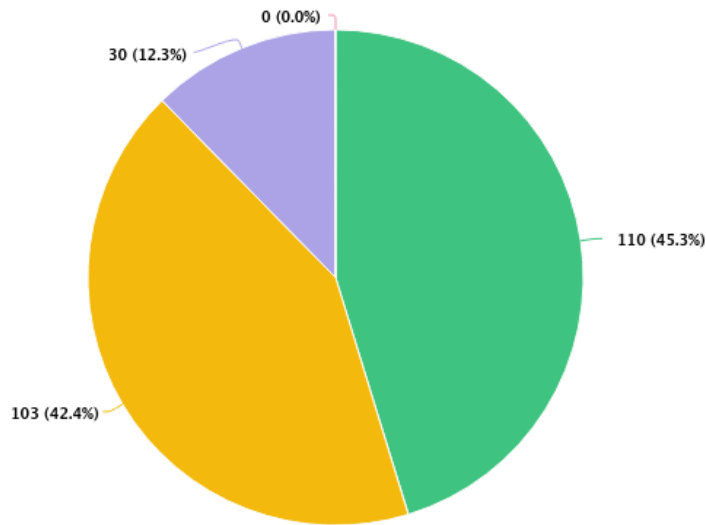


#### Question options

(Click items to hide)

Prefer not to say 85+ 75-84 65-74 55-64 45-54 35-44 25-34 16-24

## Gender of participants

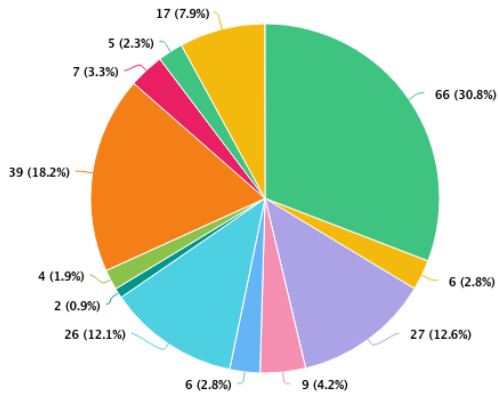


### Question options

(Click items to hide)

Non-binary Prefer not to say Male Female

## How participants hear about the consultation survey

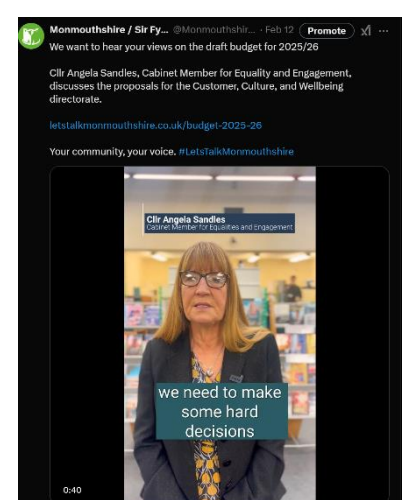
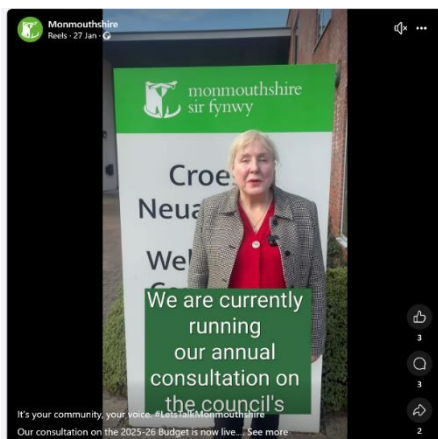
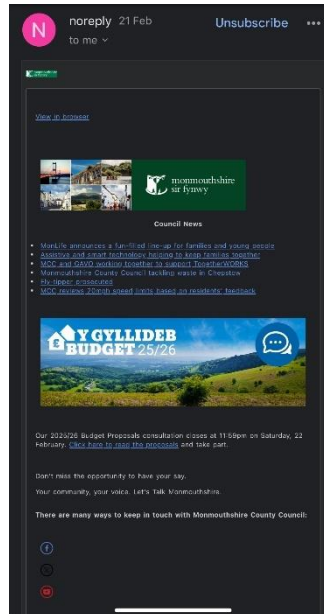


### Question options

(Click items to hide)

Other (please specify) Via my local councillor Word of mouth In a library or community hub On Instagram On X (Twitter) On Facebook From a newspaper Via MyMonmouthshire Via the council's Weekly News email On monlife.co.uk On monmouthshire.gov.uk

## Examples of Communications







Thank you to everyone who  
participated in the Budget  
Proposals Consultation 25/26.

[www.letstalkmonmouthshire.co.uk](http://www.letstalkmonmouthshire.co.uk)