Consultation on our budget for 2027/28

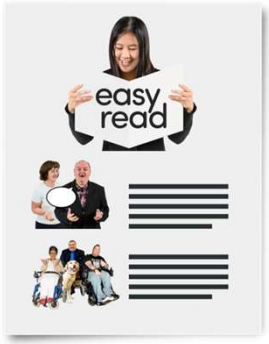
We want to know what you think.



Hampshire County Council



Easy Read



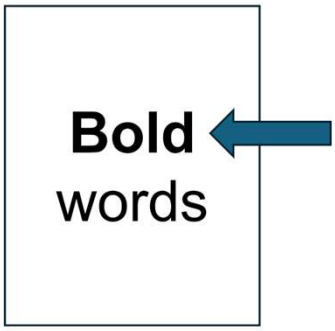
This information is in Easy Read. It uses easier words and pictures to tell you about our ideas.

It may not include all of the information, but it will tell you about the important parts.



If you would like help reading and understanding the information, you could ask:

- someone in your family or a friend.
- a support worker or a carer.



Some words are in **bold** – this means the writing is thicker and darker.

These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence and in the glossary at the end of this document.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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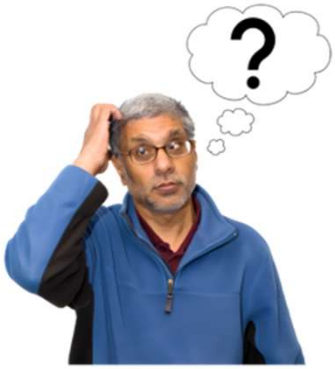
About this document



This document is about Hampshire County Council's money situation.



We need to make some difficult decisions about how we use our money.



We would like to know what you think.



This document explains the different options we could consider.



Your answers will help us understand what is important to people in Hampshire.



Please answer as many questions as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.



We will follow the law on Data Protection to keep your answers and your name private.

You can get more information about how we do this on our website: www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/strategiesplansandpolicies/dataprotection



We need your answers by Sunday 13 December 2026.

What Hampshire County Council does

Hampshire County Council provides public **services** for people in Hampshire.

Services include things like schools, libraries, roads, recycling centres, and support for children, families and adults who need help.



Question 1: Have you used any of these services in the last year? *You can tick more than 1 box.*



☐ Child social care - for children and young people who need extra support.



☐ Concessionary bus travel - this is cheaper bus fares for some groups, like older people and disabled people.



☐ Country parks and other outdoor spaces, including public rights of way.



☐ County archives - these are old records, photos and documents about Hampshire.

There are more answers on the next page.



☐ Education and child care, like schools and nurseries.



☐ Highways - this includes street lights, footpaths, cycleways and fixing roads.



☐ Libraries and discovery centres.



☐ Public health services, like NHS health checks or drug and alcohol support.



☐ Registration services - for births, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths.

There are more answers on the next page.



☐ School meals.



☐ School Transport or Post-16 Transport provided by the County Council.



☐ Services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



☐ Services for disabled people and people with mental ill-health.



☐ Services for older people, like nursing homes and day care.

There are more answers on the next page.



☐ Services to stop floods happening in Hampshire.



☐ Support for businesses and creating new jobs in Hampshire.



☐ Support for carers.



☐ Support for young people who are not at school, college, university or work.

There are more answers on the next page.



☐ Trading Standards - these are laws that protect you when you buy things or pay for services.



☐ Waste services, such as Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

☐ None of these services.

☐ Other services - please say:

What is most important to us

We have 4 things that are most important to us:



1. Helping people stay healthy and independent.



2. Helping communities do well by supporting businesses and new ideas, protecting the environment, and helping Hampshire have a good future.



3. Keeping people safe.



4. Providing good services that people need.



These help us decide what work is most important and how to spend money.

About our budget



Every year, we plan how much money we have to spend on services for people in Hampshire.



This year, Hampshire County Council will plan the **budget** for April 2027 to March 2028.

The **budget** is how much money we will have to spend on services.



The law says we must **balance our budget**.

Balance our budget means not spending more money than we have.

Where our money comes from



Providing services costs money.



Most of our money comes from Council Tax.

We also get money from:



- the Government,



- business rates, and



- asking people to pay something towards the cost of some services they use.



Since 2022/23, we have not had enough money to cover all our costs.



We have also used our **reserves** to help pay for services.

Reserves are money that we have saved up over the years.

How the money is spent

At the moment we spend about:



- £917 million on Adult Health and Care – things like supporting older adults and disabled adults and helping people stay healthy.



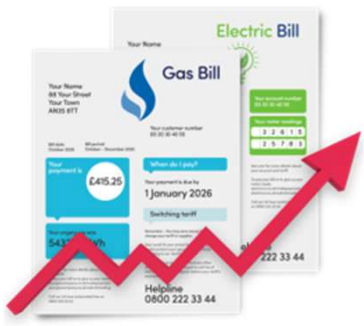
- £517 million on Children's Services – things like schools, transport and keeping children safe.



- £219 million on Universal Services – things like looking after roads, parks and waste recycling centres.



- £133 million on Corporate Services – paying for services that support the Council, such as managing money, computers and supporting staff.



- £103 million on Capital financing and other costs – things like paying back money we borrowed for building schools and fixing roads and saving some money to help with unexpected costs.

How we manage our money



Hampshire County Council manages its money carefully.



We want to keep providing good services for people.



Over the last 18 years, we have spent less money while continuing to provide important services.



We have done this by:

- Planning ahead.



- Working in better ways.



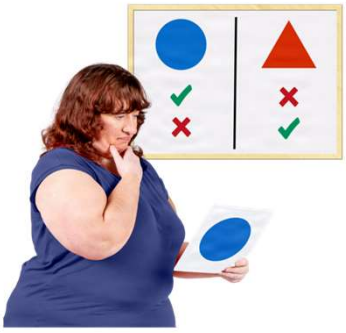
- Checking carefully how we spend money.



- Making extra money to help pay for services.



- Giving help first to people who need it most.



- Looking at all other options before stopping or reducing a service.



- Learning from what other councils have done to save money.



- Using savings carefully when costs have gone up or more people need support.



Question 2: Do you agree with this way of managing our money?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Why we need to think about different ways to balance our budget

We are facing some big challenges that make it harder to **balance our budget**:



- More people need care and support.



- The cost of providing services is going up.



- The money we get from the Government has not increased enough to cover these higher costs.



- Our **reserves** are running out.



- £198.9million

Because of this, we expect a **funding gap** of £198.9 million in 2027/28.

A **funding gap** means we do not have enough money to pay for all the services people need.



We need to think about different ways to reduce this **funding gap** and **balance our budget.**



We would need to use more than one option.

Ways we could balance our budget



We need to look at different ways to save money or get more money.



This includes:

1. Working differently to save money.



2. Asking Government for more money and changes to the law.



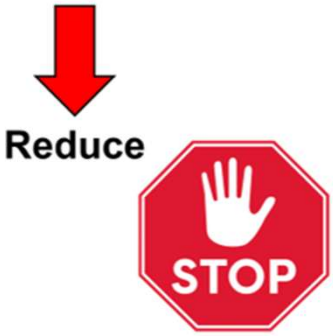
3. Getting more money from selling services or land.



4. Asking people to pay for some services and putting up charges for others (like parking, ceremonies like weddings, or keeping old records and documents).



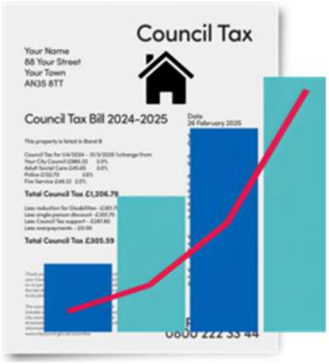
5. Reviewing how services are provided.



6. Reducing or stopping some services.



7. Delaying some of our spending on things like building repairs or staff training.



8. Increasing Council Tax.



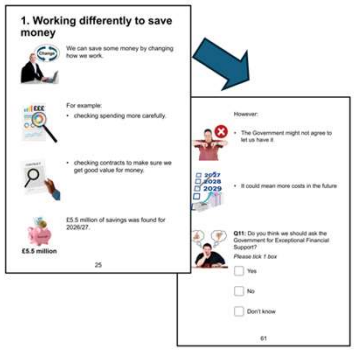
9. Using our **reserves.**

Reserves are money that we have saved up over the years.



10. Applying to the Government for **Exceptional Financial Support.**

Exceptional Financial Support is special help from the Government for councils that do not have enough money to pay for all their services.



Each of these options is explained on pages 25 to 61.



There are questions about each option.



If you want to say something about all options in general you can do that on page 63.

1. Working differently to save money



We can save some money by changing how we work.



For example:

- checking spending more carefully.



- checking contracts to make sure we get good value for money.



£5.5 million

£5.5 million of savings was found for 2026/27.



We can keep looking for ways we can save money for 2027/2028, such as using technology.



Most of the big savings have already been made, so it will be harder to save a lot more money this way.



You can tell us your ideas for ways to save money on page 63 of this form.

2. Asking Government for more money and changes to the law



Councils get some of their money from the Government.



The Government also makes the rules that councils must follow.



This means there are some things we cannot change ourselves.



We can ask the Government to give us more money so we can keep services running.



We can also ask the Government to change some rules.

Changing some rules could help us:



- get money in new ways.



- manage our money.



This can take a long time.



It may not be successful.



On the next few pages we have some ideas for what we can ask the Government.



Please tell us what you think of these ideas.

Do you agree we should ask the government to do these things?



Question 3a: Work with councils and local leaders to help improve services and make better use of public money?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Question 3b: Provide reliable long-term funding and clear laws so councils can plan for the future and make improvements with confidence.

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you agree we should ask the government to do these things?



Question 3c: Changing how councils in England are paid for?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



Question 3d: Giving councils more money to pay for care for older people, and other adults who need care?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know

Do you agree we should ask the government to do these things?



Question 3e: Not letting companies charge councils as much to look after children in care?

Please tick one box.

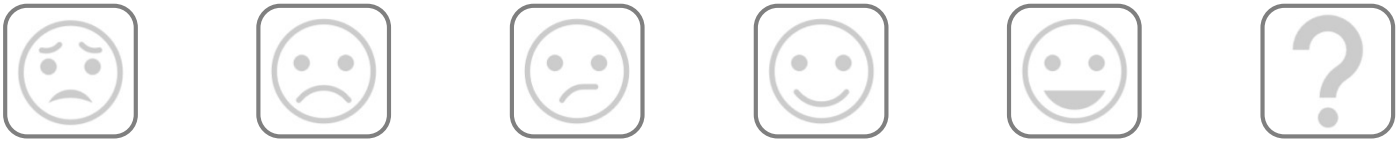
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



Question 3f: Letting councils decide if other trained staff can do some jobs that a social worker would usually do?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



Do you agree we should ask the government to do these things?



Question 3g: Letting councils decide their own rules around School Transport, like only giving the service to families without much money?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Question 3h: Letting people who get care at home delay payments like people in care homes can?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you agree we should ask the government to do these things?



Question 3i: Let councils look at people's needs and how much money and support they have when deciding if they need help paying for care?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



Question 3j: Let councils charge a small amount for more things, like:

- providing travel for older and disabled people
- giving people a bus pass
- using the local recycling centre

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



Do you agree we should ask the government to do these things?



Question 3k: Changing the rules so councils can charge more for some services if needed?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



Question 3l: Giving councils more choice about how much Council Tax they ask people to pay?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



3. Getting more money from selling services or land

The County Council can get money to pay for services and cover some costs by:



- selling services to businesses or schools.



- renting out buildings we are not using.



- selling land or buildings we no longer need.



This money helps reduce the amount of money we need to save.



We can look at ways to do more of this, but it would not balance our budget by itself.



Question 4: Do you agree or disagree that we should make money in these ways to pay for our services?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Asking people to pay for some services and putting up charges for others



We could ask people to pay a small amount to use some services.

For example, we could:



- Put up the cost of parking at countryside sites.



- Put up prices at country parks.



- Put up charges for weddings and other ceremonies.



- Put up charges for some care services.



- Introduce new parking charges for parking on streets or outside homes.



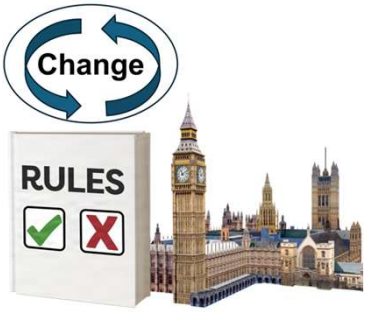
- Introduce charges for looking after old records and documents.



- Introduce small charges for recycling centres.

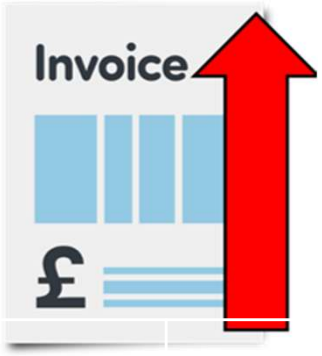


- Introduce small charges for bus passes and concessionary travel.



Some of these changes would need the Government to change the law first.

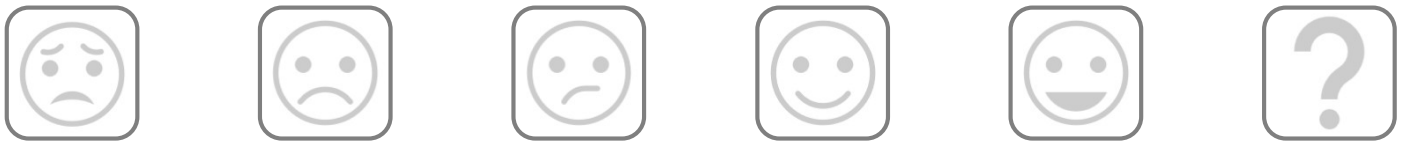
Do you agree we should make these changes?



Question 5a: Increasing charges for some services that people already pay for?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know

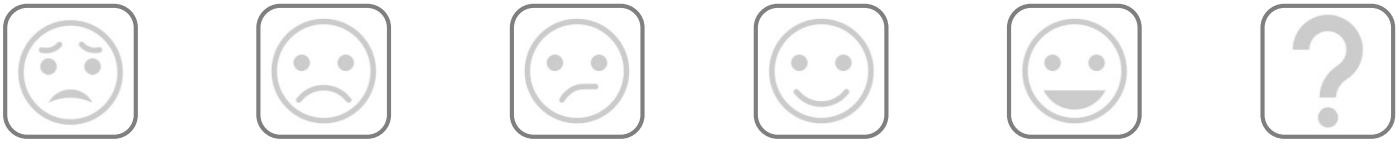




Question 5b: Introducing new charges for some services that are free now?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know



5. Reviewing how services are provided



We regularly check our services to make sure they work well and give good value for money.



Sometimes we find that a different organisation could provide a service that works just as well but costs less.



We also look at how technology can help services work better and save money.

Do you agree we should review our services to do these things?



Question 6a: To tell us if services should be provided by another organisation or closed to save money?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know

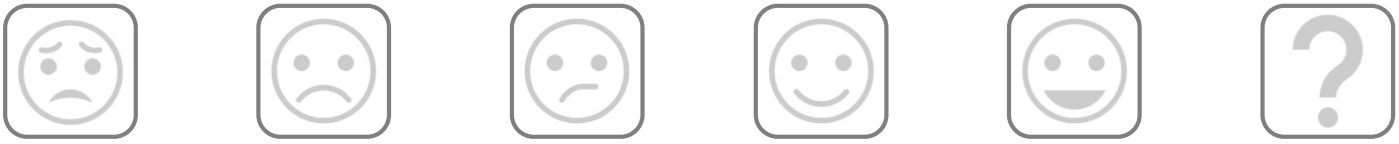




Question 6b: To find ways to reduce costs by using new technology?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know



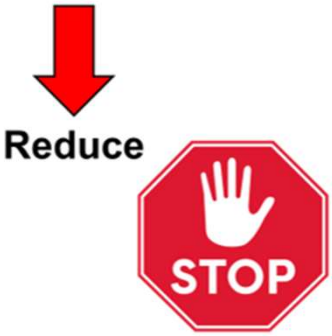
6. Reducing or stopping some services



Some services must be provided by law.

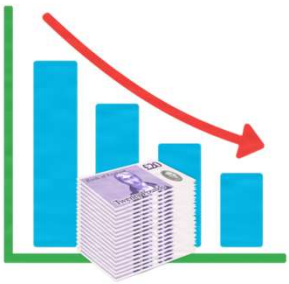


Other services do not have to be provided by law.



We could save money by reducing or stopping some services.

However:



- The amount of money we could save is now smaller than in the past.



Not enough

- This would not save enough money on its own.



- Changes could have a big impact on residents.



We prefer to find other ways to save money if possible.

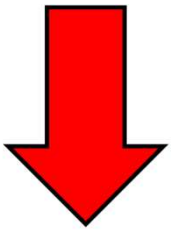


If we choose to reduce or stop a service, we would ask people what they think before making a decision.



We would still provide the services we must provide by law.

Reducing or stopping some services



Reduce

Question 7a: Do you agree with our idea to reduce some services to help save money?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know

Question 7b: Do you agree with our idea to stop some services to help save money?

Please tick one box.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know



7. Delaying some of our spending



There are some things we could choose not to spend money on now.

For example, we could choose not to spend money now on:



- Repairing council buildings.



- Staff training.



- Replacing computers and other IT equipment.



We would still need to pay for these things in the future.



There could be problems later on if we delay some of this spending, such as:

- Buildings getting worse.



- Staff may not have the skills they need.



- Services not working properly.



Question 8: What do you think about our idea to delay some of our spending?

Please tick 1 box.

I agree with this idea

I disagree with this idea

I don't know

8. Increasing Council Tax



Most of the money we spend comes from Council Tax.



Hampshire has one of the lowest Council Tax of any County Councils in England.



We are allowed to increase Council Tax by up to 4.99% per year.



If we increased Council Tax by less than 4.99% this would raise less money and make the budget gap bigger.



If we increased Council Tax by 4.99% it would help, but we would still not have enough money to balance our budget.



We could ask the Government if we could increase Council Tax by more than 4.99%.



To do this, we would need:

- permission from the Government, or



- a public vote of residents (called a **referendum**).



This would let us pay for more services.

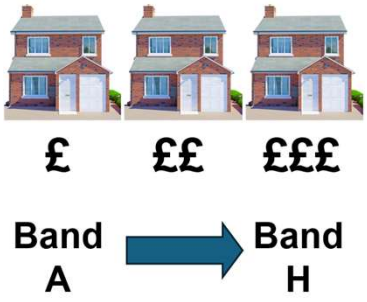


Any increase in Council Tax would mean households in Hampshire have to pay more.

How much is a 4.99% Council Tax rise?



The amount of Council Tax you pay depends on your home's Council Tax band.



All homes have a Council Tax band from A to H.

People in Band A pay the least. People in Band H pay the most.

Examples of how much Council Tax would go up by for a Band D home

The information below and on the next page shows how much extra Council Tax a Band D household may have to pay if Council Tax goes up by 4.99%, 7.49%, 9.99%, 14.99%, 19.99% and 24.99%:

Band D



- A rise of 4.99% would mean an increase of £84.33 per year for a Council Tax Band D property.

Band D



- A rise of 7.49% would mean an increase of £126.59 per year for a Council Tax Band D property.

Band D



- A rise of 9.99% would mean an increase of £168.84 per year for a Council Tax Band D property.

Band D



- A rise of 14.99% would mean an increase of £253.35 per year for a Council Tax Band D property.

Band D



- A rise of 19.99% would mean an increase of £337.85 per year for a Council Tax Band D property.

Band D



- A rise of 24.99% would mean an increase of £422.36 per year for a Council Tax Band D property.



Question 9a: Which Council Tax band are you in?
Please tick 1 box.

- ☐ Band A
- ☐ Band B
- ☐ Band C
- ☐ Band D
- ☐ Band E
- ☐ Band F
- ☐ Band G
- ☐ Band H
- ☐ I don’t know
- ☐ I’d prefer not to say



Question 9b: Which of these 3 options do you prefer first, second and third?

Write number 1 next to your first choice, 2 next to your second choice and 3 next to your third choice.

☐ Increase Council Tax by less than 4.99%.

This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay less than £5 more.

☐ Increase Council Tax by 4.99%.

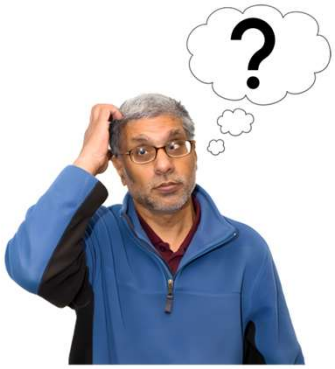
This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay about £5 more.

☐ Increase Council Tax by more than 4.99%.

This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay over £5 more.



We might ask the Government for permission to increase Council Tax by more than 4.99%.



Question 9c: If we do this then how much should we ask for permission to raise it by?

Please tick 1 box.

- ☐ Increase Council Tax by 7.49%.
  This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay about £7.50 more.
- ☐ Increase Council Tax by 9.99%.
  This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay about £10 more.
- ☐ Increase Council Tax by 14.99%.
  This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay about £15 more.
- ☐ Increase Council Tax by 19.99%.
  This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay about £20 more.
- ☐ Increase Council Tax by 24.99%.
  This means for every £100 you pay in Council Tax, you would pay about £25 more.
- ☐ Don’t know

9. Using our reserves



We have some **reserves**.

Reserves is money that we have saved up over the years.



Most of this money needs to be used for other things in the future, like building new schools or roads.



Some of the money is saved for emergencies.



Not much

We do not have much money in our reserves that we could use.



Not enough

It would not be enough to balance our budget.



We could spend some of these reserves, but this would mean:

- Some improvements to buildings or services would be delayed.



- We may have to borrow more money in the future.



Question 10: which of these ideas do you think is best?
Please tick 1 box.

☐ Using some of our reserves.

☐ Not using any of our reserves.

☐ Don't know.

10. Applying for Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)



Exceptional Financial Support is special help from the Government for councils that do not have enough money to pay for all their services.



This could allow us to:

- Borrow money.



- Use money from selling land or buildings to pay for services.



This could help in the short term and give us more time to make changes.

However:



- The Government might not agree to let us have it.



- It could mean more costs in the future.



Q11: Do you think we should ask the Government for Exceptional Financial Support?

Please tick 1 box.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

Reviewing the main options



Question 12: Please tell us what order you would put our ideas in.

Write a number 1 next to your favourite option, 2 next to your second favourite option and carry on up to number 10 next to your least favourite option.

- ☐ Asking Government for more money and changes to the law.
- ☐ Making services more efficient.
- ☐ Getting more money from selling services or land.
- ☐ Charging for some services.
- ☐ Changing how services are provided.
- ☐ Reducing or stopping some services.
- ☐ Delaying spending on things like building repairs or staff training.
- ☐ Increasing Council Tax.
- ☐ Using our reserves.
- ☐ Applying for Exceptional Financial Support

Your comments and ideas



Question 13: Do you have any comments, suggestions for things we could do to save or find money, or ideas about how our proposals could affect people?

Please write your answer in the box below.

About you



Question 14: Who are you answering these questions for? *Please tick one box.*

☐ For myself – *go to the next page.*

☐ For an organisation or group – *go to page 72.*

☐ As a councillor or MP – *go to page 75.*

More about you



Please answer these questions about yourself.



We are asking these questions because we want to make sure we are hearing from different groups of people in Hampshire.



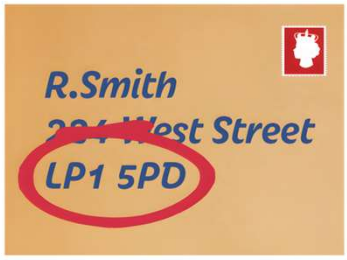
You do not have to answer these questions if you do not want to.



Question 15: How old are you? *Please tick one box.*

- ☐ Under 16
- ☐ 16 to 24.
- ☐ 25 to 34.
- ☐ 35 to 44.
- ☐ 45 to 54.
- ☐ 55 to 64.
- ☐ 65 to 74.
- ☐ 75 to 84.
- ☐ 85 or over.
- ☐ I do not want to say.

If you are aged under 16, please now go to page 76.



Question 16: What is your postcode?



Question 17: What is your **gender**?
Please tick one box.

Gender means whether you are male, female or use a different word to describe your gender.

- ☐ Female.
- ☐ Male.
- ☐ I use a different word – please say:
- ☐ I do not want to say.



Question 18: Do you have any disabilities or health conditions?
Please tick one box.

- ☐ No.
- ☐ Yes, but it does not stop me from doing everyday things.
- ☐ Yes, and it stops me from doing everyday things a bit.
- ☐ Yes, and it stops me from doing everyday things a lot.
- ☐ I do not want to say.



Question 19: Are there any children or young people under the age of 16 living in your household?
You can tick more than 1 box.

- ☐ Someone in my household is pregnant.
- ☐ Yes - aged 0 to 4.
- ☐ Yes - aged 5 to 8.
- ☐ Yes - aged 9 to 11.
- ☐ Yes - aged 12 to 15.
- ☐ No.
- ☐ I do not want to say.

Question 20: What is your **ethnic background**?
Please tick one box.

Your **ethnic background** is your race and the country that your family comes from.



Asian or Asian British

- ☐ Bangladeshi.
- ☐ Chinese.
- ☐ Indian.
- ☐ Nepalese.
- ☐ Pakistani.
- ☐ Any other Asian background - please say:



Black or Black British

- ☐ African.
- ☐ British.
- ☐ Caribbean.
- ☐ Any other Black background - please say:

There are more answers on the next page.



Mixed or from more than 1 ethnic background:

- ☐ White and Asian.
- ☐ White and Black African.
- ☐ White and Black Caribbean.
- ☐ Any other mixed background - please say:



White:

- ☐ English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British.
- ☐ Gypsy or Irish traveller.
- ☐ Irish.
- ☐ Any other White background - please say:



Other ethnic background:

- ☐ Arab.
- ☐ Any other ethnic background - please say:



Question 21: How much money comes into your household each year before tax?

Please tick one box.

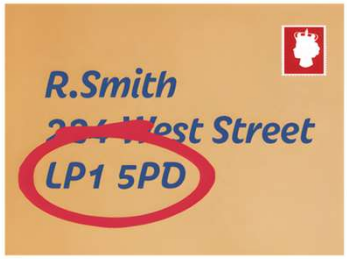
- ☐ Up to £10,000.
- ☐ £10,001 to £20,000.
- ☐ £20,001 to £30,000.
- ☐ £30,001 to £40,000.
- ☐ £40,001 to £50,000.
- ☐ £50,001 to £60,000.
- ☐ £60,001 to £70,000.
- ☐ £70,001 to £80,000.
- ☐ £80,001 to £90,000.
- ☐ £90,001 to £100,000.
- ☐ £100,001 or over.
- ☐ I do not know.
- ☐ I do not want to say.

Questions for organisations and groups

Question 22: If you are answering for an organisation or group, please tell us:



The name of the organisation or group:



The postcode of the organisation or group:



Your name:



Your job in the organisation or group:

If you are are answering for an organisation or group, we might:



- Include the name of your organisation or group in our final report.



- Have to give your answers to others if they ask for them.

Question 23: If you are answering for an organisation or group, please tell us:



What sort of organisation or group is it?
Please tick one box.

- ☐ A charity or community group.
- ☐ A local business.
- ☐ A local council, like a county, district or parish.
- ☐ A nursery, school or college.
- ☐ A public service like Fire, Police or Health.
- ☐ Other – please say:

If you are answering for an organisation or group, please now go to page 76.

Questions for Councillors and MPs

If you are answering as a councillor or MP, please tell us:



Question 24: What is the name of the area that you represent?



Question 25: What is your name?



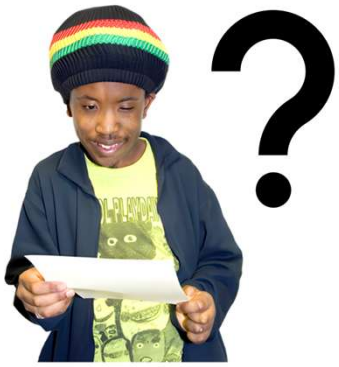
If you are answering as a Councillor or MP, we might:

- Include the name of the area you represent in our final report.



- Have to give your answers to others if they ask for them.

If you are answering as a councillor or MP, please now go to page 76.



Question 26: How did you hear about this consultation?

- [ ] On social media, like Facebook or Twitter.
- [ ] In the news or on a news website.
- [ ] On a Council website.
- [ ] Email or letter sent to you.
- [ ] A place of education, like school or college.
- [ ] In a resident's newsletter.
- [ ] At work.
- [ ] Somebody told me.
- [ ] Newspaper, radio or TV.
- [ ] At a bus stop or on the bus.
- [ ] In a library.
- [ ] Other – please say:

How to send us your answers



Thank you for answering these questions.



Please send your answers back to us by post.

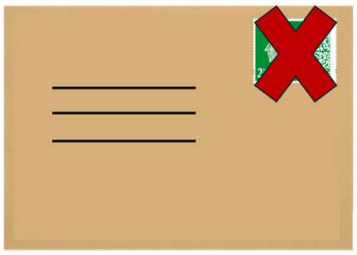
Please use the envelope we gave you.



If you did not get an envelope, you can send it to:

Freepost HAMPSHIRE

On the back of the envelope, write:
Budget Consultation, B026R



You don’t need to use a stamp.



Please send us your answers before Sunday 13 December 2026.

Glossary

Services include things like schools, libraries, roads, recycling centres, and support for children, families and adults who need help.





Balance our budget means not spending more money than we have.



Reserves are money that we have saved up over the years.



A **funding gap** means we do not have enough money to pay for all the services people need.



Exceptional Financial Support is special help from the Government for councils that do not have enough money to pay for all their services.



A **referendum** is a public vote of residents



Gender means whether you are male, female or use a different word to describe your gender.

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