

Report to: **STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING BOARD**

Date: 10 February 2021

Executive Reporting Officer: **Member/** Councillor Brenda Warrington, Executive Leader
Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)
Dr Ashwin Ramachandra (Joint Chair of NHS Tameside & Glossop CCG)
Dr Asad Ali – (Joint Chair of NHS Tameside & Glossop CCG)
Sandra Stewart – Director of Governance & Pensions
Sarah Threlfall – Assistant Director - Policy, Performance & Communications

Subject: **BUDGET CONVERSATION 2021-22**

Report Summary: It is important that Tameside and Glossop Strategic Commission (Council and CCG) understand the priorities of the public – local residents, businesses, patients and service users. A public engagement exercise was launched between 2 November 2020 and 6 January 2021 to understand their priorities for spending within the context of the financial challenges facing public services. This engagement took the form of a conversation with the public on providing sustainable public services for the future, and encouraging residents to see themselves as citizens, not just consumers of services. The public were encouraged to leave comments and feedback through the Big Conversation including ideas and suggestions for saving money and improving services. The conversation has also been undertaken via virtual attendance at existing meetings/forums and dedicated engagement sessions, and supported by a communications campaign.

This report covers four key elements:

1. Outlines the results of the Budget Conversation 2021/22 and the communication / publicity conducted to promote the consultation (Section 2.0 to 4.0)
2. Details key findings from thematic engagement and consultation in 2020. This review of all thematic activity in 2020 pulls out key and cross-cutting themes that will have relevance to future priorities and spending plans (Section 5.0)
3. Feedback from engagement with Scrutiny Panels (Section 6.0)
4. Proposals for the statutory consultation with business rate (NNDR) payers (specific local government requirement) (Section 7.0)

Recommendations: That the Strategic Commissioning Board and Executive Cabinet be recommended to note the content of the report and take the findings from the conversation into consideration when setting the budget for 2021/22 and future years.

Links to Corporate Plan: An effective conversation with the public informs the budget setting process and ensures the budget aligns with the priorities of local people and the organisation's Corporate Plan.

Policy Implications: The budget reflects the policy choices that the Council and CCG intends to pursue. The outputs from the conversation with the public will inform the budget setting for 2021/22 and in turn that budget will have implications for future policy.

Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the Section 151 Officer) The feedback from the budget conversation will be considered by Executive Cabinet and the Strategic Commissioning Board as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22. The same meeting will consider the budget report, and proposals for budget savings and priorities, ahead of approval by Full Council at its meeting on 23 February 2021.

Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor) Under section 53 the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Non-Domestic Ratepayers (Consultation) Regulations 1992, the council has a statutory duty to consult ratepayer representatives on its annual spending proposals, ahead of setting its budget to help ensure that service delivery is continuously improved in relation to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition the council has a number of statutory duties arising from The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to continue to promote equality in our service planning and decision-making processes by considering how the decisions and service delivery affect people from different equality groups who share a 'protected characteristic' which must form part of the consideration of the outcome of the consultation.

Risk Management : The Council and CCG have statutory duties to engage and consult with the public. Failure to engage on the spending priorities and proposed changes to the budget could lead to challenge and negative public attitude.

Access to Information : The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Jody Smith, Policy & Strategy Service Manager, Governance and Pensions.

 Telephone: 0161 342 3710

 e-mail: jody.smith@tameside.gov.uk

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides the findings from the conversation on the 2021/22 budget for Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission (Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and NHS Tameside & Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group).
- 1.2 The Budget Conversation approach supports the public (local residents, businesses, patients and service users) in understanding the tough choices and decisions required when shaping the Strategic Commission budget and also to understand the public's priorities.
- 1.3 This report covers four key elements:
1. Outlines the results of the Budget Conversation 2021/22 and the communication / publicity conducted to promote the consultation (Section 2.0 to 4.0). All work to deliver the Budget Conversation has been undertaken within existing staff budgets.
 2. Details key findings from thematic engagement and consultation in 2020. This review of all thematic activity in 2020 pulls out key and cross-cutting themes that will have relevance to future priorities and spending plans (Section 5.0)
 3. Feedback from engagement with Scrutiny Panels (Section 6.0)
 4. Proposals for the statutory consultation with business rate (NNDR) payers (specific local government requirement) (Section 7.0)

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The key headlines from the Budget Conversation 2021/22 are:

- Undertaken between 2 November 2020 and 6 January 2021
- Information on the Budget Conversation was directly e-mailed to over **31,000** individual contacts
- Information was shared directly with over **100** groups / networks.
- **129** Budget Conversation social media posts reached our followers **91,129 times**
- A total of **524** engagements. This is based on:
 - **188** survey responses
 - **250** contacts at dedicated engagement sessions and other meetings
 - **1** e mail
 - **85** social media responses
- The key themes emerging from the Budget Conversation are outlined below. These are based on the full range of feedback received during the Budget Conversation including survey responses and wider comments (e.g. feedback and drop-in sessions, e mails, social media and letters)

Spending priorities for the Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission in 2021/22 and future years¹

- Adult social care
- Children's social care

¹ Key themes for suggested spending priorities are collated from both the Budget Conversation survey and engagement sessions

- Education
- GP / Health Services
- Infrastructure/street maintenance (including potholes)
- General health and wellbeing
- Community safety/crime
- Mental Health/loneliness/isolation
- Greenspaces/parks
- Youth services
- Fly-tipping/litter
- Road Safety
- Digital exclusion

Ideas or suggestions for how we might deliver services more efficiently, save money or raise revenue

- Improve estate efficiency
- Involve community
- Reduce staff costs
- Reduced cost of Councillors
- Better integration of services
- More digital services
- Spend less on ornamental / cosmetic objects
- Lobby national government / national bodies
- Larger fines
- Improve efficiency of services
- More speed / CCTV cameras
- Clear communication

The full list of themes emerging from the Budget Conversation survey can be found at **Appendix A**.

3.0 BUDGET CONVERSATION

3.1 The Budget Conversation was launched on 2 November 2020 and finished on 6 January 2021.

3.2 The conversation was used to educate and inform the public on the Strategic Commission's budget and its financial challenges whilst also allowing feedback and ideas on how services can be improved and savings made. The conversation focussed primarily on two questions:

- What do you think should be the spending priorities for the Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission in 2021/22 and future years?
- Do you have ideas or suggestions for how we might deliver services more efficiently, save money or raise revenue?

3.3 The Budget Conversation was open to all as everyone has the right to contribute their views on what they feel our priorities should be now and in future years. The public were provided with an opportunity to leave comments and feedback through the Big Conversation – available on both the Council and CCG websites. Dedicated webpages to the Budget Conversation were created explaining all aspects of the conversation with links to the feedback form. A dedicated email account was also provided to enable public / service users / businesses to submit any comments.

- 3.4 Due to changing national and local Covid-19 social distancing restrictions, engagement took place through virtual engagement. Methods of virtual engagement were Skype or Zoom video meetings, an online survey and social media. This was supported by an extensive communications campaign including digital methods such as websites, social media and email and non-digital methods such as newspapers and partner organisation networks.
- 3.5 The conversation took place through a number of wider public engagement sessions which were led by Executive Members and CCG Governing Body Members; as well as through attendance at a range of existing meetings / forums. The conversation was promoted extensively via existing groups / networks (further detail at 3.10 to 3.12).
- 3.6 A series of information slides were produced providing context to the Budget Conversation and the considerations the Strategic Commission must take into account to deliver a balanced budget. These covered:

- Where the Strategic Commission's money comes from: business rates, council tax and government grant.
- Change in funding over time
- Financial impact of Covid-19
- How the Strategic Commission currently spends its money: broad spending areas including general spend (wages, buildings etc.) and service spend
- Examples of how the Strategic Commission has provided support to residents during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Invite any views and comments on the information outlined above
- Invite any ideas or suggestions on how we can make further savings

In addition to being hosted on the dedicated webpages, these slides were also presented at the meetings and forums where Budget Conversation was discussed.

- 3.7 The conversation with Glossop residents related only to health services commissioned by Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission. Engagement material was tailored accordingly.

Communications / Promotion

- 3.8 To support the engagement activity, a full programme of communications was undertaken. This included infographics used to help explain the Strategic Commission's budget and spend. These were used on social media, the web pages and other publicity material. A selection of the infographics and materials used in the communication programme can be found in Appendix B.

Web pages dedicated to the Budget Conversation were created explaining all aspects of the conversation with links to the feedback form. These were hosted on the Council and CCG websites. A dedicated email account was also provided to enable public / service users / businesses to make any comments.

- 3.9 The following channels were used to communicate to the public and wider stakeholders (including staff) that the engagement was taking place:

- Press Release
- Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG websites
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Leader's Blog
- Leader's Column and other articles in Tameside Reporter and Manchester Weekly News
- Staff Portal
- Chief's Executive Brief

- Wire
- Public sector partner's newsletters, e-mails, websites etc.
- Partnership Engagement Network
- Purple Wi-Fi Mailing List
- Big Conversation Mailing List
- Information Ambassador's Network Mailing List
- Social Media Pack for External Partners and Stakeholders.

Engagement

3.10 In addition to promotion through written communications, the Budget Conversation was also promoted in a number of other ways. These include via:

- Partnership Engagement Network - a network of **390** contacts public, patients, stakeholders, partners and voluntary and community sector.
- Big Conversation - **170** members of the public who have signed up to receive regular updates on consultations and engagement opportunities across Tameside and Glossop.
- Purple Wi-Fi - a list of over **37,000** members of the public who have accessed the free Wi-Fi service across Tameside and agreed to receive marketing emails. This was sent on two occasions, once in December and once in January.
- All Patient Neighbourhood Groups were contacted and engaged in regards to the Budget Conversation.

3.11 The Budget Conversation was also promoted via existing groups / networks. Information was sent directly to **over 100** groups / networks. Service areas / commissioning teams across the Strategic Commission were also encouraged to share details widely across Tameside & Glossop.

3.12 During the budget conversation we have endeavoured to engage with people from all equality groups. Engagement has been undertaken across a range of protected characteristic demographic groups – including young, working age and older people, people with disabilities and those from different ethnic backgrounds. Details of these sessions and the key themes arising from these are outlined within Section 5.0 of this report.

4.0 BUDGET CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

4.1 Analysis of the Budget Conversation and key themes emerging from this are outlined in section 4.0. These are based on feedback taken from:

- **188** survey responses
- **1** e mail
- Feedback from **20** dedicated engagement sessions
- **85** social media comments

Survey

4.2 A total of **188** people completed the Budget Conversation survey.

4.3 Appendix C outlines the achieved sample compared to the Tameside & Glossop population.

4.4 Table 1 details the achieved sample from the survey by postcode sector compared to the Tameside & Glossop population. The achieved sample figures are based on the **95.7%** of respondents who provided a valid Tameside & Glossop postcode sector in response to Question 2: Please select the first part of your postcode from the options below.

Table 1: Achieved Sample by Postcode Sector

Postcode Sector	Tameside & Glossop Households ² (%)	Achieved sample (%)
M34 – Denton / Audenshaw	18.5	13.9
M43 – Droylsden	9.0	8.9
OL5 – Mossley	4.6	4.4
OL6 – Ashton (Hurst / St. Michaels)	11.6	13.3
OL7 – Ashton (Waterloo / St. Peters)	6.6	9.4
SK14 – Hyde	18.2	19.4
SK15 – Stalybridge	10.9	12.8
SK16 - Dukinfield	7.7	15.0
SK13 - Glossop	12.7	2.8

- 4.5 The table above and those in **Appendix C** detail the achieved sample from the survey, against the Tameside & Glossop population. Respondents who did not specify a particular characteristic have been removed from these figures. This has not impacted on considering their views.
- 4.6 Weighting the data to account for over and under-sampling of particular sections of the population is not necessary, given that the budget conversation was available via the Big Conversation web pages on both the Council and CCG websites. It was open to all residents / members of the public and was not a fixed / controlled sample. No personal data was collected as part of the consultation process.
- 4.7 A total of **188** respondents also stated their interest in the consultation (Question 1). **161** respondents (85.6%) were a resident of the area. Responses are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondent's interest in consultation

Interest in Issue	%
I am a resident of the area	85.6
I work in the area	3.7
I spend my free time in the area	2.1
I have family in the area	1.1
I am an employee of either Tameside Council, Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning group, or another public sector organisation based in the area	4.3
I am a representative or member of a charity or voluntary group based in the area	2.1
Other	1.1

- 4.8 The Budget Conversation asked two key questions:
- What do you think should be the spending priorities for the Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission in 2021/22 and future years?
 - Do you have ideas or suggestions for how we might deliver services more efficiently, save money or raise revenue?
- 4.9 The key themes arising from each of the key questions are outlined in Tables 3 and 4 below. A full table of the themes identified are available at **Appendix A**.

² Figures are based on the number of households in each postcode sector area.

Table 3: What do you think should be the spending priorities for the Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission in 2021/22 and future years?³

Theme	No.	%
Adult's social care	46	24.5
Children's social care	35	18.6
Education	35	18.6
GP / Health Services	29	15.4
Infrastructure/street maintenance (including potholes)	27	14.4
General health and wellbeing	27	14.4
Community safety/crime	21	11.2
Mental Health	20	10.6
Greenspaces/parks	19	10.1
Youth services	13	6.9
Fly-tipping/litter	12	6.4
Road Safety	10	5.3

Table 4: Do you have ideas or suggestions for how we might deliver services more efficiently, save money or raise revenue?⁴

Theme	No.	%
Improve estate efficiency	30	16.0
Involve community	27	14.4
Reduce staff costs	16	8.5
Reduce cost of Councillors	14	7.4
Better integration of services	14	7.4
More digital services	12	6.4
Spend less on ornamental / cosmetic objects	11	5.9
Lobby national government/national bodies	11	5.9
Larger fines	11	5.9
Improve efficiency of services	11	5.9
More speed/CCTV cameras	8	4.3
Clear communication	8	4.3

4.10 Cross tabulation of results by demographic group has not been undertaken due to small numbers by individual category, making meaningful analysis not possible.

Engagement Sessions

4.11 Due to changing national and local Covid-19 social distancing restrictions, the majority of engagement took place through virtual sessions. Over **25** organisations were approached and invited to arrange a virtual engagement session with their members. These were in addition to the public engagement sessions referenced in section 3.5. The organisations and groups approached for engagement were:

³ This list excludes those who stated no comment / provided no answer to this question (8.0%) and those who made a one off comment relating to specific topic which could not be analysed within a wider theme (6.9%) – these are detailed in Appendix A.

⁴ This list excludes those who stated no comment / provided no answer to this question (14.4%) and those who made a one off comment relating to a specific topic which could not be analysed within a wider theme (13.8%) – these are detailed in Appendix A.

- Age UK Tameside and Glossop
- Ashton Sixth Form College
- Autism Reference Group
- BAMER Group
- Clarendon Sixth Form
- Dementia UK
- Denton Community College
- Derbyshire Carers Group
- Diversity Matters North West
- Greenspace Volunteers
- Healthwatch Tameside and Glossop
- High Peak CVS
- Independent Advisory Group
- People First Tameside
- Poverty Action Group
- Stroke Association
- Tameside & Glossop Partnership Engagement Network
- Tameside and Glossop Mind
- Tameside Carers Association
- Tameside College
- Tameside Covid-19 Community Champions
- Tameside Youth Council
- The Bureau Glossop
- The Grafton Centre
- Voluntary Sector Influencing Group
- West African Development Group

4.12 A total of **20** dedicated engagement sessions were undertaken as part of the Budget Conversation. The key themes arising from each of these sessions are outlined in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Key Themes from Engagement Sessions

Group / Organisation	Key Themes
Independent Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that cost-effectiveness of service delivery is not impacted by social restrictions • Prioritise young and elderly • Spend effectively in the community • Engage the public as much as possible • Use third sector
Wider Public engagement session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and support to isolated people should be a priority • Digital provision of services not possible for everyone • Local economy and town centre regeneration important • Increased used of volunteers
Voluntary Sector Influencing Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support third sector in service delivery • Prioritise value for money • More investment and innovation in mental health services • Focus on preventative rather than recovery support

Tameside and Glossop Partnership Engagement Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health support • Use lived experience to guide where to make cuts if necessary • Make greater use of third sector providers • Repurpose buildings in the area • Identify savings in prescribing costs • Use input of the community
People First Tameside (Red, Blue & Green Bubbles across four separate sessions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs, Medicines & general healthcare • Caring for the most vulnerable • Better disabled access in parks, pavements • Mental health services • Education/activities for people with learning disabilities • Maintenance/cleanliness of buildings/parks • Mental health services
Ashton Sixth Form College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in local shops and facilities that would attract young people • Investment in getting young people to take part in exercise • Help older people/digitally excluded to develop skills • Mental health support for young people
Denton Community College (Session 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider raising money from charitable donations • Invest in youth services – leisure; sport for wellbeing and reduce exposure to antisocial behaviour • Support for homeless • Make use of empty buildings
Denton Community College (Session 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over impact on mental health provision • Focus on elderly, especially those with poor mental health • Facilities for young people needed – sports, leisure facilities, parks • Identify savings where there has been less use of services/change in delivery during lockdown
Tameside College politics year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health big concern for young people • Concerns about digital exclusion • The need to tackle poverty and deprivation • Support the local area to prevent unemployment
Tameside Youth Council	<p>Spending priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth service • Activities and sports • Mental health, including tailored support for specific issues • Young carers • Preserving green spaces • Digital access
Wider Public engagement session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to adopt more home working to save money on office space. • Focus on converting wasted retail space into housing to raise income and restore town centres. • Improve engagement with local communities. • Develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure • Focus on maternity services
Poverty Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be creative in partnership working with the third sector

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local welfare assistance schemes to catch people who fall through the gap • Welfare rights support • Remove barriers to accessing help – digital; language
Community champions session takeover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make savings through selling/repurposing buildings • Introduce charges for cultural services • Investment in preventative care • Early help in education • Investment in towns • Mutual aid approaches • Investment in green and outdoor spaces to attract people • Partner up with charitable sector • Maintain cleanliness of local area
Diversity Matters North West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in recreational activities/spaces to avoid spending more on poor health further down the line • Activities for young people – places for them to exercise/socialise • More mental health provision • Opportunities for people to train/upskills • Outreach support for older people/people isolated by the pandemic • Street cleaning • Clear, consistent messaging about Covid-19
Tameside College politics year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase revenue through council tax • Concerns about impact of new developments on finances • Attract investment into the area • Make better use of brownfield sites • Improve transport links in and out the area
Derbyshire Carers Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to invest in carers to prevent people resorting to local authority services • Need clarity on whether remote appointments are appropriate or not on a case-by-case basis. • Money could be saved by moving acute services into a community setting
Autism Reference Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training staff on Autism awareness • Support for employees to support people with Autism, including GP practices • Better transition from child to adult services

OTHER FEEDBACK METHODS

- 4.13 In addition to feedback received through the direct survey and via engagement sessions, there were other methods by which comments were received. These include social media (**85**) and e-mails (**1**).
- 4.14 In total **129** posts promoting the Budget Conversation were made across Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission social media channels (Twitter and Facebook) during the engagement period. Information detailing the reach of these posts is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Social Media – Number of Posts, Impressions and Performance

Social Media Platform	No. of posts	Impressions	Shares	Replies	Likes
Twitter	97	66,941	34	20	27
Facebook <i>(Post was pinned to top of Tameside Council page)</i>	32	24,188	22	13	34

4.15 It is important that this feedback is also collated and fed into the engagement process. Table 7 below details the key themes taken from social media across the Budget Conversation engagement period.

Table 7: Key Themes from Other Feedback Methods

Theme
General negative comments (Council don't listen, won't make a difference etc.)
Spend less money on Tameside One
More funding/services for special needs and vulnerable residents
Make more effort to tackle obesity
Request for a service – not related to the Budget Conversation specifically

5.0 THEMES FROM WIDER CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission regularly engage and consult with the public, patients, stakeholders, partners and the voluntary and community sector to understand their views on various issues.

5.2 Key engagement headlines for Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission from 2020 include:

- Facilitated **26** thematic Tameside and/or Glossop engagement projects
- Received over 3,000 engagement contacts (excluding attendance at events / drop-ins)
- Delivered two Partnership Engagement Network (PEN) conferences attended by approximately **140** delegates
- In addition, five PEN engagement sessions took place over summer 2020, with the overarching purpose of gaining insight into the impact of Covid-19 and ways to 'build back better'. This included a separate session to learn the views of children and young people. These were attended by over **55** participants.
- Promoted **48** regional or national consultations where the topic was of relevance to and/or could have an impact on Tameside and/or Glossop
- Achieved Green Star (with the highest possible score of 15 out of 15) in the 2019/20 patient and community engagement indicator CCG NHS Oversight Framework for the third year running.

5.3 Responses to all thematic engagement and consultation activity is thoroughly analysed and the outputs used to inform the specific project related to that piece of work. Clearly

common themes occur across the different thematic engagement activity. Similarly, the strategic engagement work through the Partnership Engagement Network (PEN) provides an insight into views and opinions outside of the topic specific thematic work. These cross-cutting themes help to provide a direction of travel and under-pinning understanding of needs and aspirations. The outputs from wider engagement that has taken place across the year is also important to take into account when setting our budget priorities – alongside the direct outputs from the Budget Conversation process.

5.4 Below is a summary of the key cross-cutting themes identified in 2020.

Economy/infrastructure:

- Parking availability and cost should be improved
- People were generally supportive of extending cycling and walking provision in Tameside to support social distancing
- Some residents expressed opposition to pop-up cycle lanes, citing concerns around impact on traffic, speeding and safety.
- Respondents were generally in favour of prioritising pedestrians and cyclists over cars, particularly in town centres.
- Justification for support was based on reducing speeding and traffic in residential areas and improving health through physical activity
- Some concerns that pedestrians did not have enough space to walk safely
- Residents have concerns about uncertainty connected with lockdown measures, particularly in the insecurity of employment, housing, financial support and debt.

Children & young people:

- Foster carers need greater support and incentives
- Families with children with SEND need better, more timely support
- Mental health of children requires much consideration and planning – children have missed key life events during lockdown, have anxiety relating to school and exams missed.

Mental health/social isolation

- Mental health issues and isolation were the most significant impact of covid-19
- Many respondents reported either through individual experiences or their experience of working with people that mental health has worsened significantly as a direct result of the lockdown restrictions. Particularly for those who have had to shield as a result, or those who were already socially isolated.
- Some services that have been delivered digitally will need to return to face-to-face, particularly if their remit is to combat social isolation – this cannot be done through screens. For example social groups at the Grafton Centre.
- Assessing and supporting mental health need must remain a priority. Concerns about avoidance of primary care during lockdown.

Building back better

- Consistent and clear communication with residents to support them through social restrictions throughout the pandemic
- The VCSE sector should be harnessed to continue to play a vital role in supporting residents in Tameside & Glossop. Volunteers have been essential.
- Following and enforcing social distancing guidelines was a priority for respondents with regard to getting services reopen
- Respondents' health – and their family's health – was the priority for most respondents. Both physical and mental wellbeing were the most commonly selected priorities for the future of covid-19

- Work is required to understand the impact on certain groups, for example Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people; older people and; young people.

Access to services

- Digitally accessing services such as GP appointments has been beneficial for some and should continue for some
- However efforts need to be made to ensure service users can access the same level of support, which means in-person services should continue in a safe manner
- The relationship between patients and the NHS must be 'repaired' to encourage people to begin to seek help for whatever their need is once again.
- Respondents generally had a good experience when accessing services online
- Some thought that face-to-face consultations were preferable to other forms of consultation

Digital services/digital exclusion

- Some reported personal experience of having better quality, more frequent contact with a doctor for example, and reported that as professionals there has been more time to deliver services because they have been able to do this virtually
- However many people raised the risk that being digitally delivered excludes some from these new methods, particularly older people, people with no access to digital methods (financial reasons or other), and people who require additional support in such services – such as people who require a chaperone to advocate or family member who can translate.
- Where digital methods have benefited a public service provider or charity, these methods should be retained where possible with learning from the pandemic to be incorporated.

Impact of the pandemic on people from Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority backgrounds

- Concerns raised over the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on people from ethnic minority background.
- For those whose first language is not English or who do not speak English, the impact of having to attend appointments (in hospital or elsewhere) has caused issue for those who would normally bring a family member or friend to translate on their behalf. This acts as a further barrier to accessing primary and secondary care, and other services.
- Utilise mosques as community hubs as they worked very well during the height of the first lockdown.

Role of the VCSE Sector

- Many charitable organisations continued throughout the pandemic to ensure that their vital support continued to those who needed it.
- There is a need for recognition of the impact that volunteers have had on people during the pandemic
- Volunteers and VCSE organisations must be harnessed as a vital resource in future

6.0 SCRUTINY PANEL ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 All Scrutiny Panel members were provided with an opportunity to attend one of two budget briefing sessions held on 18 January 2021. This follows on from a mid-year budget position update received on 22 September 2020. The independence of scrutiny enables members to seek assurances on budget planning, process and priorities for 2021/22 and beyond. It can also be considered appropriate for budget priorities to inform future scrutiny activity and work programmes.

- 6.2 Detail of the discussions has been drafted in a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to the Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth; and the Director of Finance – Section 151 Officer, and attached at **Appendix D**. Scrutiny chairs request that points raised by both Scrutiny Panels are considered in advance of the 2021/22 budget report being finalised. The scrutiny budget letter is also appended to a Scrutiny Update report tabled at the joint meeting of Executive Cabinet and Overview Panel on 10 February 2021.

7.0 STATUTORY RATE PAYERS CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to consult with businesses and other representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on its annual spending proposals for 2021/22. Our proposed plans for carrying out this consultation are detailed below.
- 7.2 Businesses along with the public have already had the opportunity to partake in the budget conversation exercise as detailed in this report.
- 7.3 Table 8 details the proposed timetable for activity. Due to the timings of Executive Cabinet and Full Council, the amount of time for consultation is limited. We therefore propose to send out an email pre-warning organisations of the impending consultation one week prior to commencement.

Table 8: Proposed Timetable for Rate Payers Consultation of the 2020/21 Budget

Task	Date
<u>Commencement</u> of statutory consultation with business ratepayers on the draft budget – i.e. when papers for Executive Cabinet (joint meeting with Overview Panel) and Strategic Commissioning Board are published.	To commence when Executive Cabinet / SCB papers are released
Statutory budget consultation with business rate payers	Date Executive Cabinet / SCB papers are released to Day prior to Full Council papers being released
Executive Cabinet	10 February 2021
<u>Close</u> of statutory consultation with business rate payers on the draft budget – i.e. day before papers issued for Full Council	Day prior to Full Council papers being released
Full Council	23 February 2021

- 7.4 The question for the 2021/22 budget is:

Tameside's business community is being invited to have its say on the council's draft budget proposals for the next financial year (2021/22). We are seeking your views on how we intend to use our resources. The budget includes the Council's saving proposals 2021/22 and these are set out in the budget report which is available to view at the following link

8.0 NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The findings from the Budget Conversation exercise will be used, in conjunction with other considerations, to inform the budget setting process. For the council the budget will be set at Full Council on 23 February 2021.
- 8.2 Feedback on the results will also be provided to the public, staff, partners and engaged groups and a summary infographic report produced and shared on Tameside Council's and NHS Tameside & Glossop CCG's websites.

9.0 APPENDICES

9.1 The following appendices are included as part of this report:

- Appendix A – Key Themes from Budget Conversation Survey
- Appendix B – Communications materials
- Appendix C – Achieved Survey Sample
- Appendix D – Scrutiny Panel Budget Letter

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 As set out on the front of the report.