

Big Oldham Conversation: Budget 2026/27

Interim update: Budget proposals

Last update: 12 February 2026

1 Overview

- 1.1 The Big Oldham Conversation public consultation on our budget proposals for 2026/27 went live on Tuesday 20 January 2026 and will run until the end of day on Monday 16 February 2026.
- 1.2 This report summarises common themes received to the budget consultation to date. A fuller report will be prepared once the consultation has closed and will be submitted to Full Council.
- 1.3 The final report will also include full details of the publicity carried out to promote our budget consultation to as many residents, businesses, stakeholders and partners as possible across Oldham.

2. Summary

- 2.1 A total of **69 responses** have been received to the budget consultation to date.
- 2.2 The survey asks respondents two broad questions. The first question asks respondents where they feel that savings should be made. The second question asks respondents to outline the service areas where spending should be prioritised.

3. Consultation Responses

- 3.1. Respondents were asked two questions relating to the Budget. The first asked respondents where the council should seek to make savings and the second asked which services were most important to invest in.
- 3.1.1 This section of the report provides a summary of the themes on the specific budget proposals, gathered through the online consultation portal. The report looks at the two questions asked and analyses these by common themes.

3. 2 Consultation Responses on Savings

Common themes

- 3.2.1 Clamp down on benefits by tackling fraudulent claims. Reduce social support and child support costs.
- 3.2.2 Reduce town centre events, green projects, and new building projects that provide little or no benefit to residents.
- 3.2.3 Remove duplicated roles and redeploy staff where needed.
- 3.2.4 Focus less on high-visibility campaigns, including scrapping or fundamentally rethinking the “Don’t Trash Oldham” campaign.
- 3.2.5 Do a proper review of road maintenance works. Stop digging up the same roads.
- 3.2.6 Stop the use of consultants.
- 3.2.7 Reduce the number of councillors, their expenses and meetings.
- 3.2.8 Do more early intervention and prevention work.
- 3.2.9 Stop using private sector companies when supporting the vulnerable.
- 3.2.10 Reduce senior leadership team and bring down their wages.
- 3.2.11 Fine more people who fly tip and park illegally.
- 3.2.12 Renegotiating large contracts.
- 3.2.13 Embrace a digital-first approach to social care, including the use of telecare (remote monitoring for vulnerable adults).
- 3.2.14 Stop the production of Oldham Council Working For You.

3. 3 Consultation Responses on where we should be spending more

Common themes

- 3.3.1 Support local businesses and prioritise shops that provide essential goods and services.
- 3.3.2 Social Care investment.
- 3.3.3 Youth centres.
- 3.3.4 Use CCTV in response to fly-tipping and illegal parking.
- 3.3.5 Cleaning and clearing drains.
- 3.3.6 Law enforcement.

- 3.3.7 More bus services.
- 3.3.8 Renovating existing buildings.
- 3.3.9 Support for working people and parents.
- 3.3.10 Increase waste collection.
- 3.3.11 Green spaces and play facilities for children.
- 3.3.12 Roads, particularly potholes.
- 3.3.13 Prevention activities specifically around children and young people.
- 3.3.14 Getting the day-to-day basics right: environmental services, highways, etc.
- 3.3.15 More investment into vulnerable adults by keeping essential service open.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This report provides a basic overview of the responses received to our budget consultation to date; however, a full report will be provided to Council ahead of 4 March 2026.
- 4.3 As outlined above, there are clear, emerging themes around residents' broad priorities and although we will publish a full report once the consultation period has closed, it is not likely that the themes outlined above should change substantially. Many of the responses received to date corroborate what we already know about resident views through previous engagement and consultation activities and add weight to the sense we have of local sentiments.
- 4.4 The feedback on the budget reduction proposals will also be used to help shape the council's future spending plans, helping drive future strategic planning across the system.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Cabinet members are asked to note the contents of the report and ensure that resident views and experiences are considered when making budget recommendations.
- 5.2 Members of the communication team will prepare a full report to be included on the agenda at the Full Council meeting on 4 March 2026.