



Big Oldham Conversation: Budget 2026/27

Responses to our Budget proposals

Last update: 20 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 ran until the end of day on Monday 16 February 2026.
- 1.2 This report summarises all responses we received to the budget consultation.
- 1.3 The report also details the communication and engagement activity carried out across channels to promote our budget consultation to as many residents, businesses, stakeholders and partners as possible across Oldham.

2. Summary

- 2.1 A total of **85 responses** have been received to the budget consultation via Engagement HQ.
- 2.2 The survey asked respondents two broad questions. The first question asked respondents where they feel that savings should be made. The second question asked respondents to outline the service areas where spending should be prioritised.
- 2.3 Comments from social media were turned off to encourage people to share their ideas and comments through our engagement platform.

3. Publicity

- 3.1. Our budget consultation was promoted using our established channels of communication on the Oldham Council website and across social media on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.
- 3.2 “Organic” (i.e. unpaid) social media posts ran on Oldham Council’s social media channels throughout the duration of the consultation period, signposting members of the public to the online consultation portal.
- 3.3 The consultation was also promoted via external and internal newsletters to residents, businesses and staff, 70% of which live in the borough.
- 3.4 A total of **88** views were made to the budget consultation page of the Oldham Council website during the consultation period.

4. Respondents

- 4.1. We received a total of 85 responses to our formal budget consultation.
- 4.2. Participants were not asked to provide any demographic information. This could be voluntarily provided via the engagement platform and the option to create an account however this was not a pre-requisite to taking part in the consultation. As the majority of participants opted not to disclose demographic information, this will not be part of the analysis.

5. Resident insight

- 5.1. As part of the formal budget consultation survey, 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.
- 5.2. This section of the report provides a summary of the feedback 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.
- 5.3. The report also considers the emerging themes for those who responded and social media.

5.1 Consultation Responses on Savings

Borough-wide

- 5.1.1. A common theme suggested by respondents was that the council should clamp down on benefits by tackling fraudulent claims and reducing social and child support costs, as some feel the current system is open to misuse.
- 5.1.2. Respondents highlighted that road maintenance should be addressed proactively to prevent deterioration and avoid costly repairs later. They also expressed concerns about roads being repeatedly dug up.
- 5.1.3. Respondents also referred to a perceived lack of enforcement across the borough, with requests for stronger sanctions against fly tipping and illegal parking.

Workforce

- 5.1.4. Removing duplicate roles and redeploying staff within the council workforce was one of the themes mentioned in the budget consultation. Many respondents feel that the council is hiring multiple staff into similar roles rather than distributing staff across different areas of the borough where they are also needed.
- 5.1.5. Many respondents felt strongly that large contracts should be renegotiated, as they believe this could deliver cost savings.

- 5.1.6 Respondents suggested that the council should reduce or stop the use of consultants, with many expressing concerns about the use of private sector companies when supporting vulnerable residents.
- 5.1.7 Another common suggestion was for senior management teams to be streamlined and management posts to be cut, with many respondents citing their belief that salaries for senior officers were inflated and could be reduced.
- 5.1.8 Respondents also referred to the number of councillors across the borough and their associated allowances, with many requested the number of councillors be cut per ward.

Town Centre

- 5.1.9 A common theme that emerged from feedback was a call to reduce spending on town centre events. Many respondents felt that the council should stop investing in building and regeneration projects which they believe provide little or no benefit to residents.

Digital

- 5.1.10 Many respondents felt strongly that the council could save money by making better use of digital systems. Suggestions included adopting a more digital-first approach to social care, including the use of telecare (remote monitoring for vulnerable adults).

5. 2 Consultation Responses on Spending

- 5.2.1 Responses to the question on where spending should be protected are set out below:

Borough-wide

- 5.2.2 A large number of survey respondents highlighted that the council should support local businesses by prioritising shops that provide essential goods and services. Some felt that not all businesses across the borough meet these needs, leaving those that do with less support.
- 5.2.3 Respondents felt strongly that working people and parents should be supported. They highlighted a desire to see benefits from the system they contribute to through taxation, including initiatives such as grants or interest-free loans to make homes more energy-efficient and reduce bills. Support for working parents to access children's clubs outside school hours was also seen as important to ensure children are not disadvantaged.
- 5.2.4 Respondents highlighted that the council should invest more in law enforcement and CCTV across the borough in response to concerns about safety, fly tipping and illegal parking.
- 5.2.5 Survey respondents noted that the council should spend more on bus services across the borough, referring to long waiting times and the impact this has on residents.
- 5.2.6 Respondents felt that the council should invest in attracting new businesses, residents and visitors by promoting what Oldham has to offer.

Children's Services

- 5.2.7 Many survey participants strongly felt that the council should prioritise education, opportunities and jobs for young people. Respondents agreed that investing in our youth is essential, and called for more funding for youth centres, education, grassroots projects and activities for young people.
- 5.2.8 Respondents also had strong views on early intervention and prevention, with feedback citing the need for more support services to be available earlier to avoid issues that would later result in crises situations.

Clean and Green

- 5.2.9 Respondents highlighted that spending should be prioritised on clean and green initiatives and the local environment. Many suggested investing in additional green spaces and creating more play facilities for children.
- 5.2.10 Ensuring clean, well-maintained roads and streets was another key theme. Residents specifically mentioned potholes, the need for more frequent waste collection, and the clearing of drains. Concerns about potholes reflect findings from previous consultations over the last two years, including last year's budget consultation, where this issue was repeatedly raised.
- 5.2.11 The upkeep of parks and other green spaces was also considered a key spending priority. This also reflects findings from previous consultations, including last year's budget consultation, where this issue was highlighted by respondents.

Adult social care

- 5.2.12 Adult social care was highlighted as a key spending priority for respondents, with calls to ensure essential services remain available for vulnerable adults and for further investment in the service. Some respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining adult social care, noting that families rely on it.
- 5.3.13 Finally, other comments related to the consultation process itself, suggesting that the council should provide more detailed information around their current spending and any future plans or potential service changes so respondents are able to reflect properly and provide commentary and insight from a more informed perspective.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Oldham's budget consultation 2026/27 has engaged with residents, staff, local businesses and partner organisations, to gather feedback on this year's proposals.
- 6.2 This report provides an overview of the responses received to our budget consultation following the interim report.
- 6.3 As has been outlined above, there are clear, emerging themes around residents' broad priorities, with a strong focus on protecting our vulnerable adults and children, tackling fraudulent benefit claims, increase of law enforcement, maintaining high quality key services such as road maintenance and waste management, as well as maximising and improving local parks and green space.
- 6.4 The feedback on the budget reduction proposals will also be used to help shape the council's spending plans, helping drive future strategic planning across the system.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 Elected members are asked to note the contents of the report and ensure that resident views and experiences are considered when making budget recommendations.