HAVE YOUR SAY

Please watch the short video available on www.scotborders.gov.uk/budget (http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/budget) before completing the following survey as this outlines why we're carrying out the survey and why we are asking questions about some areas and not others.

Key points

- The Council manages a five-year revenue budget of around £1.3billion and a 10-year capital budget of almost £300million.
- Our revenue budget is funded by a grant from the Scottish Government and around 20% from Council Tax. Every year this budget is squeezed by the effects of inflation, pay awards, reduction in grants, and new things we're asked to do by the Government as part of the budget grant.
- Like every council we face financial pressures, with a finite amount of resources. We need to balance the demands for increasing spending in some areas eg the care of older people, by making savings in other areas. We are also investing heavily in areas that are important to our communities, such as new schools and early learning and childcare facilities and roads.
- We continue to focus on modernising our approach to delivering all our services and ensuring that they are as efficient and effective as possible.

Have your say and play #yourpart in shaping the future of the Council.

* Required

1. There are a number of significant challenges facing the Council and the Scottish Borders generally, as set out in our recently refreshed Corporate Plan. Many of these are interconnected.
The Council, through its budget, services, projects and its influence and work with partners, has the opportunity to try and tackle these. But to help us prioritise action we want to know which are most important to you.
Please rank the following in order of your priority - highest priority at the top

Demography - we have a falling population, with young working age people leaving, and an increasingly aging population. This results in fewer workers and more older people to support. This has significant wider economic impacts and cost implications for the Council

Economy - the average wage is lower in the Borders than the Scottish average. Due to Covid-19 large parts of the economy have suffered unprecedented disruption and the region is heavily reliant on a small number of sectors, such as hospitality, visitor services and food and drink, which have been among the most severely affected.

Environment/Climate Change - Scotland as a whole has a 75% emissions reductions target for greenhouse gases by 2030, and a net zero target by 2045. The Scottish Borders must play its part in meeting these targets.

Health and Social Care - the number of over 75s is expected to increase by 33.5% in the Scottish Borders by 2026. This means more Borderers will be living with one or more complex health conditions and are likely to require more health and social care as they age. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on people's mental health, placing increased demand on support services for all ages.

Skills, Training, Employability and Transitions - unemployment more than doubled between February 2020 and April 2021. There are significant skill shortages which results in long term vacancies

Transport - around 10,000 people in the Borders are not connected to the public transport system at all, and for those that are the costs are high compared to urban Scotland. There are poor east/west links within the region and across the south of Scotland. There is a heavy reliance on private car use

Vulnerable Communities - the reliance on a small number of business sectors, a relative lack of business infrastructure and lower digital connectivity compared to urban areas makes the Borders more vulnerable than many other areas of the country.

2. As one of our biggest services, we spend around a third of Council resources on Education.
There are a number of legal requirements such as pupil/teacher ratios which impact on the flexibility of how the budget can be spent.
However you can help us prioritise the following education and skills areas, and associated budget allocations, by ranking in order of your priority - highest priority at the top.

   Access to high quality outdoor learning spaces

   Access to training for adults in line with current and future local job opportunities

   Closing the poverty-related attainment gap

   High quality, modern school buildings

   Supporting young people's mental health and wellbeing

   Widening digital learning skills and opportunities

3. Our Infrastructure and Environment section also receives a significant annual budget (around £44m/year of our revenue budget) to deliver a huge range of services including roads, property and asset management and maintenance, waste services, grass cutting, public transport and flood protection.
 A significant proportion of our capital budget is also connected to this area (almost £80m over three years).
Have your say on which of the following areas within this service you think we should prioritise by ranking them in order of your priority - highest at the top.

Increasing opportunities for food growing

Increasing biodiversity, including to support pollinators such as bees through planting and maintenance regimes

Improving the quality of play parks and recreational areas

Widening access and increasing choice around public/community transport

Retaining public toilets and improving the quality of the facilities

Investment into roads and active travel infrastructure

Enhanced street and footpath cleaning

Increasing recycling rates

4. An annual programme of works is developed each year to address priority road repairs and is based on our regular inspections of routes and other critical information/guidance. This has to be balanced with reactive repairs and short term fixes.

Due to the complexities involved in developing the programme it is not possible for the Council to open this up to public prioritisation. We do try to ensure that all localities benefit from the works.

There are a range of elements to our roads service however and we would like you to provide your feedback on how you would prioritise these different areas of the service. This will help us to review the current prioritisation of these different elements of the service and allocate available budget accordingly.

Please rank the following in order of your priority - highest priority at the top.

Drain/gully clearance to help reduce flooding risk

Proactive and longer lasting repairs to more substantial areas of road

Reactive and quick temporary pothole treatments

Road signage maintenance/cleaning to assist visitors and to enhance road safety

Verge grass cutting for aesthetic purposes

White line renewal to enhance road safety

5. Council Tax provides around 20% of all Council funding. For every 0.5% increase in Council Tax around £300,000 a year extra is available for the Council to spend. How likely or otherwise would you be to support the following actions:

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Maintaining Council Tax at current levels, leading to a reduction in service provision due to increasing costs and demand	○	○	○	○	○
Council Tax increase of up to 2% (extra £25/yr for a Band D) to enable current level of service provision to be maintained	○	○	○	○	○
Council Tax increase of over 2% to enable an increase in service provision	○	○	○	○	○

6. Would you be supportive of an increase in Council Tax if the money this raised was ringfenced for a specific purpose/project? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe, depending on the purpose/project

7. In light of your previous answer, what purpose/projects would you wish any Council Tax increase to support

8. The Council declared a 'Climate Emergency' in September last year and published a Climate Change Route Map in June this year aimed a setting the Scottish Borders on a path to net zero emissions by 2045.
Reflecting on the need to take action to tackle climate change, how likely or otherwise would you be to support the following measures:

	Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
Investment in public transport/walking/cycling, including relevant infrastructure, with the aim of encouraging a reduction in car use	○	○	○	○	○
Increasing biodiversity by less intensive grass maintenance, allowing natural growth/creating more attractive areas through the introduction of hardy annuals/wildflowers	○	○	○	○	○
Rationalisation of Council services into fewer, but better and more energy efficient buildings. This could include co-location of services or with community organisations/other partners	○	○	○	○	○
Taking further steps to increase household recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions throughout our waste and recycling service	○	○	○	○	○
Prioritising further investment into addressing the impacts of climate change, such as flood protection	○	○	○	○	○

9. At the heart of what the Council is aiming to achieve is improving the wellbeing, in its widest possible sense, of everyone living in the Scottish Borders. What could the Council do to help increase your wellbeing and that of your family?

10. As part of the drive towards net zero emissions there is a national target of recycling 70% of household waste by 2025.
We have already achieved a huge reduction in the amount of household waste sent to landfill and no longer send any waste to landfill in the Scottish Borders. There has been an associated increase in the recycling rate and in the year to December 2020 over 56% of household waste was recycled.
We're obviously keen to maximise the recycling rate, so how could the Council help you to reduce your waste and increase the amount recycled in your household?

11. The Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the way in which customers have interacted with the Council.
To help us to further develop and enhance our customer services and prioritise investment please rank the following range of current and potential means of communicating/dealing with the Council in your order of preference - highest at the top.

Email

Face-to-Face in suitable locations, such as Contact Centres, Community Centres etc

Online - website, including your own secure account

Online - social media

Telephone

Video call

12. The Council is continuing to develop new digital ways for customers to deal with us. What Council services would you like to be available online 24/7 to help you do more at a time that suits you?

13. The Council is committed to increasing the opportunities for people and communities to have a say in how we invest and support jointly agreed priorities within their community.
What would be your top priority for improving the community in which you live?

> [   ]

14. We want to involve local people and communities more in local decision-making, from helping to determine the shape of our frontline services to setting local priorities in your area and deciding how budgets can be spent.
How would you like to discuss this with us? Please select all that apply

- [ ] At town hall style events/meeting/workshop

- [ ] Surveys and consultations such as this

- [ ] Online polls via social media or similar

- [ ] Online workshops

- [ ] Through your local Area Partnership

- [ ] Through your local Community Council

- [ ] Through another community group/organisation

- [ ] [   ]

  Other

15. We also have a People's Panel that we discuss ideas with that help shape our decisions and policies – would you be interested in being part of this Panel?   *

- ◯ Yes

- ◯ No

16. Please provide a contact email address so our Communities and Engagement Team can get in touch with more information about our People's Panel *

> [   ]

17. Do you have suggestions on things the Council could do differently, or potential savings we could make?

18. Locality
    If unsure please select other and put in your postcode

    ○ Berwickshire

    ○ Cheviot

    ○ Eildon

    ○ Teviot & Liddesdale

    ○ Tweeddale

    ○
      Other

19. Your age group

    ○ under 18

    ○ 18-34

    ○ 35-50

    ○ 51-65

    ○ 65+

Microsoft Forms

Microsoft Forms

1/19/2022