

An important DCC consultation has been launched which your councillors/council and wider community may well wish to respond to. It is the second phase of the [Consultation on updated proposals to balance the Council budget - Durham County Council](#), of which the first phase was carried out in the autumn and was seeking to identify areas to be targeted for further savings and the appetite for council tax increases.

This latest consultation is much the same theme. It follows on from last week's DCC Cabinet meeting on 4 December which considered some amended budget forecasts and proposed additional savings. Although there may well be some additional funding to DCC from central govt to be announced on 20th December, the commentary describes the continued financial impacts from the increases in Employer NI contributions and the national living wage and pressures on services including adult social care, home to school transport, capital financing costs and supporting people in temporary accommodation. The proposed total savings for 2025/26 are now £25.6 million, about £3.9 million more than previously forecast. [The attached letter from Paul Darby, DCC's Corporate Director of Resources to partners](#) describes the consultation and the four year projections in more detail. It is notable that the Govt has announced that councils such as DCC will be permitted to increase their council tax to 5% (currently 2.99%).

There are presentations about the consultations at AAP meetings this week and in mid January which you can find at [Consultation on updated proposals to balance the Council budget - Durham County Council](#) which also details the proposed additional areas in which savings are proposed and includes the link to the actual online consultation form.

Responses to the consultation can be submitted by Fri 17 Jan 2025 at 5pm. It will be considered by DCC's Cabinet on 12 Feb 2025 with a final decision on the council's budget by Full Council on 19 Feb 2025