



Budget 2026-27

Community Consultation

Introduction

Each year Council must prepare an Annual Budget which outlines the financial and non-financial resources that Council requires to achieve the strategic objectives as described in the Council Plan.

In 2026-27 the projected budget is:

\$79.53m Capital Works	\$27.58m Parks, community facilities, sport and recreation	\$17.70m Libraries, arts, and cultural services.
\$33.94m Buildings, roads, traffic management and drainage maintenance	\$23.85m Planning, building and regulatory services	\$15.38m Health, aged and community services
\$31.41m Waste collection, street and public facilities cleaning	\$18.92m Families, children and youth	\$3.58m Economic development and revitalising activity centres

As part of this process Council undergoes a community consultation phase in line with the Community Engagement Policy. The feedback received from the community is then used to inform Councillors and Council Officers and assist with the allocation of resources throughout the budget process.

This report outlines the feedback received during the 2026-27 consultation phase.

Consultation Process

Activities

The consultation process was conducted from 22 October until 19 November 2025 and incorporated both online and hard copy activities to ensure a range of opportunities were offered to the community.

The process for 2026-27 included broad survey questions on what services the community values the most as well as providing an opportunity for community members and/or organisations to submit requests for additional project funding. The submission process has previously been conducted in May after the draft Budget has been released, however this year it has been brought forward to feed into the budget process at the same time as other projects are assessed.

43 people participated over the 28-day period, 39 people used the online Social Pinpoint tool, two respondents emailed their community submissions, and two community members submitted a hard copy form. Some participants completed more than one activity.

Activities	Details	Engagement
Hard copy form and email	A hard copy survey form, reflective of the online activity, was placed in customer service centres for completion. An email address was also provided for feedback.	Two people submitted a hard copy form.
Social Pinpoint – Community Survey	This activity asked participants to choose the five services they would prioritise in the budget from a list of 14 services Council provides. It also provided an opportunity for additional comments on any services not listed which were important to the community.	20 people completed the Fund It activity. 14 people provided additional comments on what areas they believe Council should focus its spending on.
Community Submissions	This activity provided an opportunity for individuals, organisations or community groups to submit ideas for funding in the next budget.	Eight submissions were received

Promotion

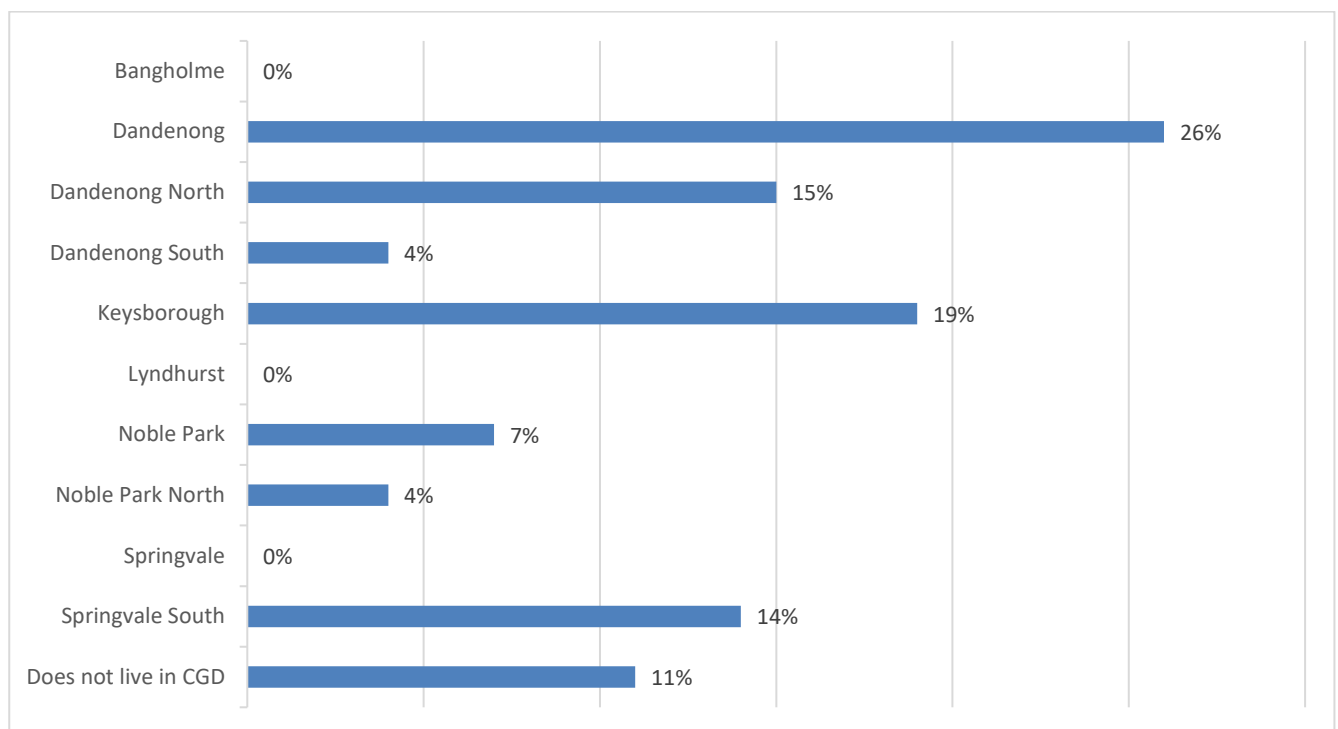
A number of methods were used to promote the consultation to the community including:

- Website and social media
- Posters and hard copy forms in Customer Service
- E-newsletters, stakeholder lists
- Social pinpoint subscriber lists
- Media release

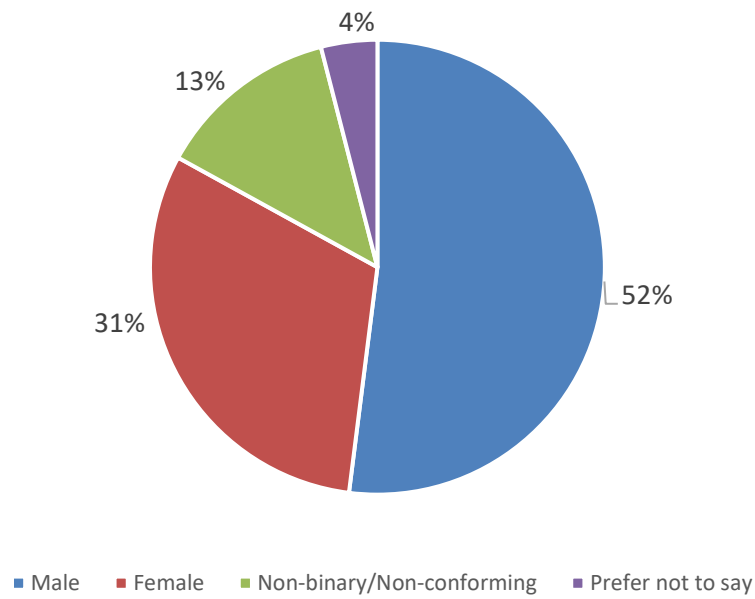
Who participated?

Demographic data was requested for people who participated in the community survey and provided additional comments. The following demographics applied to participants:

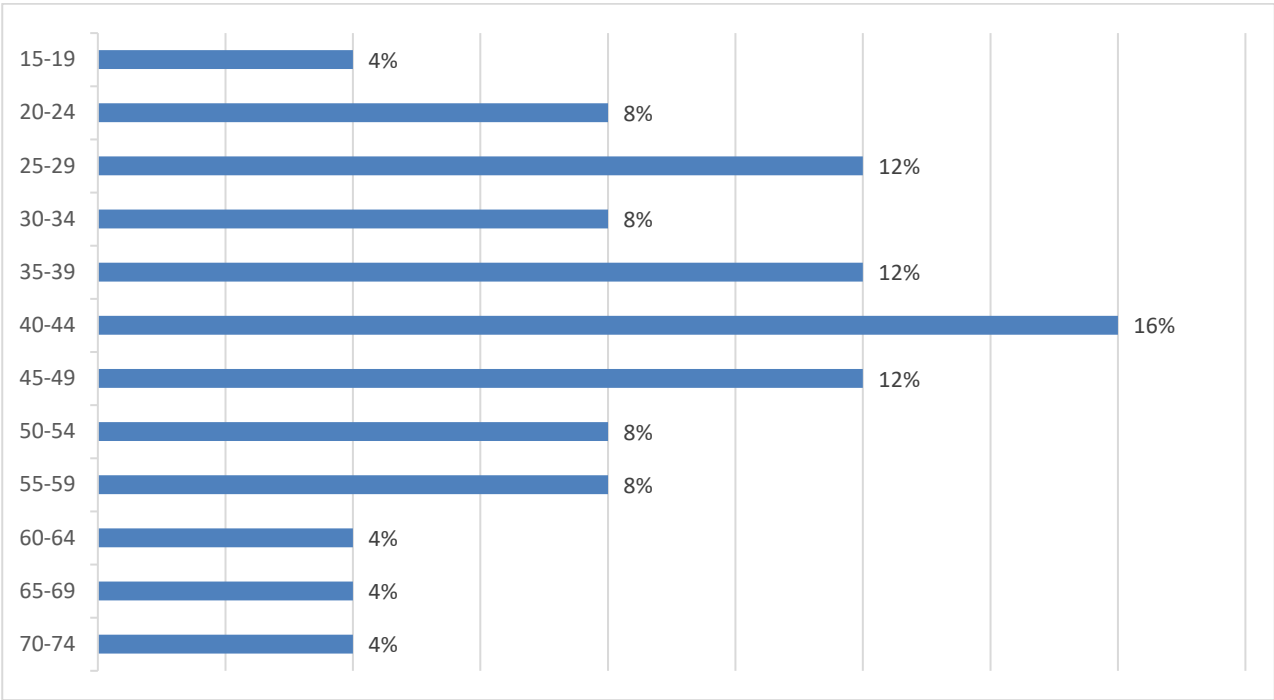
Suburb



Gender



Age Group



Consultation Activities

Fund It Tool

The Fund It activity was designed as a prioritisation tool to show that Council has to make decisions about the level of funding for services whilst ensuring financial sustainability.

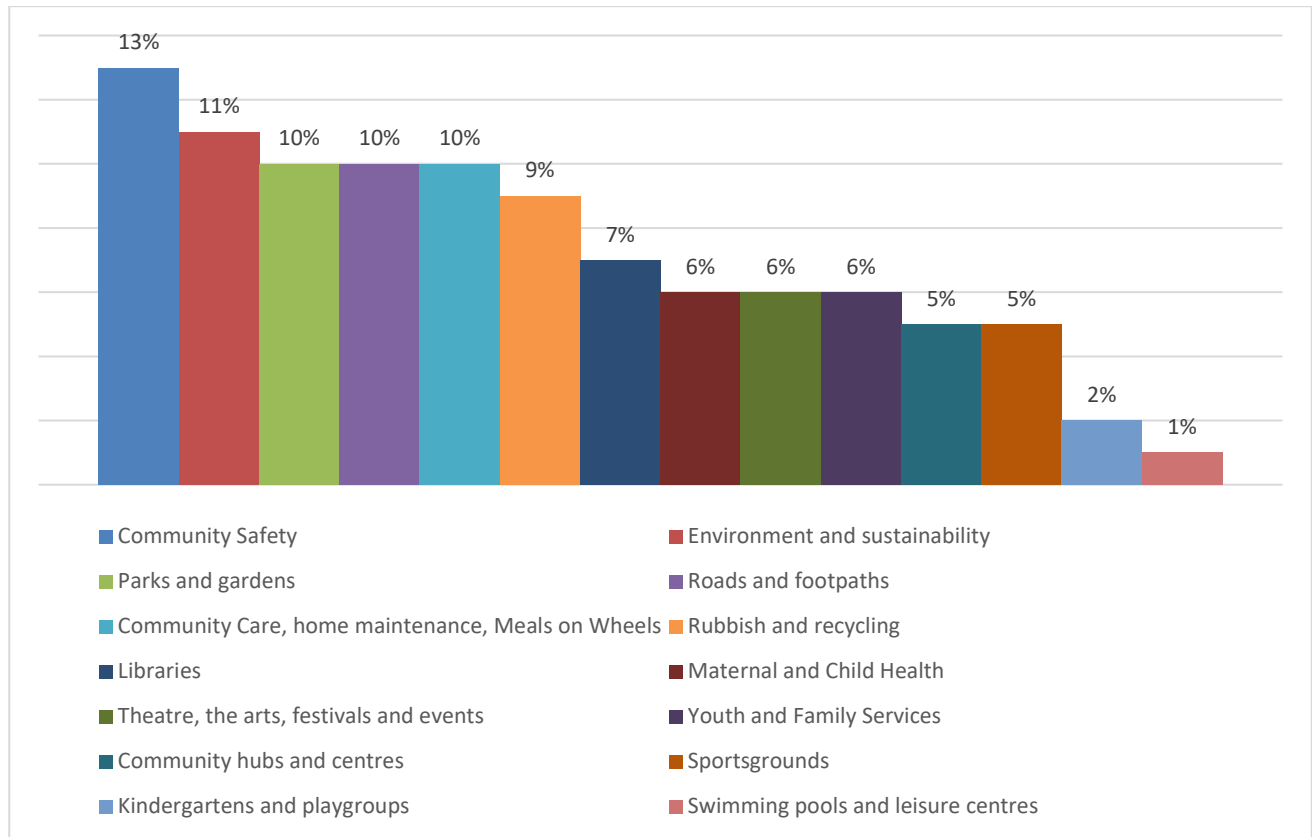
Community members were asked to choose which five of the following services they would like to see Council focus spending on:

- Libraries
- Community Care
- Parks and Gardens
- Swimming pools and leisure centres
- Sportsgrounds
- Community hubs and centres
- Maternal and Child Health
- Youth and Family Services
- Environment and sustainability
- Kindergartens and playgroups
- Community safety
- Roads and footpaths
- Rubbish and recycling
- Theatre, the arts, festivals and events

The top five highest priorities from participants were:

- Community safety
- Environment and sustainability
- Parks and gardens
- Roads and footpaths
- Community care, home maintenance, meals on wheels.

The following graph outlines the ranking of service areas:



Survey Comments

Participants were also asked if there were any services not listed above that the community thought should be a focus of Council's spending. Key topics included:

- Environmental initiatives – education, conservation
- Transport
- Aged and Disability services – community transport, assistance with waste services
- Sporting facilities
- Parks and street trees

Community Submissions

Individuals, organisations and community groups were given the opportunity to submit ideas for additional projects to be funded in the budget.

Seven community submissions were received. The submissions related to the following:

- Shepley Oval net training area
- Keysborough Maintenance Levy
- Sustainability initiatives
- Library operating hours
- Aquatic facilities

All submissions made will receive a response from Council to close the loop on feedback.

Next Steps

The results of the community consultation will be considered by Council and the Executive Team in preparation for the development of the Budget 2026-27.

A Community Feedback Session was held on Tuesday 9 December to hear from those community members who identified that they would like to speak to their submission.

Community members who provided written submissions will be provided with a response from Council prior to the draft budget being made publicly available for comment in May 2026.