

Agenda

General Scrutiny committee

Date: **Tuesday 14 December 2021**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford
HR4 0LE**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Ben Baugh, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 261882 or e-mail ben.baugh2@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting of the General scrutiny committee

Membership

Chairperson
Vice-Chairperson

Councillor Jonathan Lester
Councillor Tracy Bowes

Councillor Sebastian Bowen
Councillor Barry Durkin
Councillor Louis Stark
Councillor David Summers
Councillor William Wilding

Agenda

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES To receive details of any Member nominated to attend the meeting in place of a member of the Committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interests in respect of Schedule 1, Schedule 2 or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.	
4. MINUTES To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021.	11 - 16
HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS The deadline for the submission of questions for this meeting is 5.00 pm on Wednesday 8 December 2021. Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk . Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted. Accepted questions and the responses will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved	
5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive any written questions from members of the public.	
6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL To receive any written questions from members of the Council.	
7. 2022/23 BUDGET SETTING To seek the views of the General Scrutiny Committee on the draft budget proposals for 2022/23, both capital and revenue items.	17 - 74
8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next scheduled meeting is 14 January 2022.	

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We will review and update this guidance in line with Government advice and restrictions.

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You have a right to:

- Attend all council, cabinet, committee and sub-committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting. Agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) are available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/meetings
- Inspect minutes of the council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the cabinet or individual cabinet members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting (a list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public register stating the names, addresses and wards of all councillors with details of the membership of cabinet and of all committees and sub-committees. Information about councillors is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. The council's constitution is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution
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The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:
www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/herford-city-bus-map-local-services-

The seven principles of public life

(Nolan principles)

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Guide to general scrutiny committee

Scrutiny is a statutory role fulfilled by councillors who are not members of the cabinet.

The role of the scrutiny committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.

Council has decided that there will be three scrutiny committees. The committees reflect the balance of political groups on the council.

The general scrutiny committee consists of 7 councillors.

Councillor Sebastian Bowen	True Independents
Councillor Tracy Bowes (vice-chairperson)	Independents for Herefordshire
Councillor Barry Durkin	Conservatives
Councillor Jonathan Lester (Chairperson)	Conservatives
Councillor Louis Stark	Liberal Democrats
Councillor David Summers	Independents for Herefordshire
Councillor William Wilding	Independents for Herefordshire

The committees have the power:

- (a) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (d) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area
- (f) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendations to the council with respect to the discharge of those functions. In this regard crime and disorder functions means:

- (i) a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
 - (ii) a strategy for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
 - (iii) a strategy for the reduction of re-offending in the area
- (g) to review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in its area and make reports and recommendations to a responsible person on any matter it has reviewed or scrutinised or to be consulted by a relevant NHS body or health service provider in accordance with the Regulations (2013/218) as amended. In this regard *health service* includes services designed to secure improvement—
- (i) in the physical and mental health of the people of England, and
 - (ii) in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental illness
 - (iii) and any services provided in pursuance of arrangements under section 75 in relation to the exercise of health-related functions of a local authority.
- (h) to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management functions or coastal erosion risk management functions which may affect the local authority's area.

The specific remit of the general scrutiny committee includes:

- services within the economy and place directorate and corporate centre
- corporate performance
- budget and policy framework matters
- statutory flood risk management scrutiny powers
- statutory community safety and policing scrutiny powers

Who attends general scrutiny committee meetings?

The following attend the committee:

- Members of the committee, including the chairperson and vice-chairperson.
- Cabinet members, they are not members of the committee but attend principally to answer any questions the committee may have and inform the debate.
- Officers of the council to present reports and give technical advice to the committee.
- People external to the Council invited to provide information to the committee.

(Other councillors may attend as observers but are only entitled to speak at the discretion of the chairman.)



Minutes of the meeting of General Scrutiny Committee held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Monday 15 November 2021 at 10.15 am

Committee Members:

Councillor Jonathan Lester (Chairperson)
Councillor Tracy Bowes (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors Sebastian Bowen, Barry Durkin, Louis Stark, David Summers and William Wilding.

Officers:

Neil Taylor* (Interim Director for Economy and Place), Kate Charlton* (Interim Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Phil Crossland* (Interim Service Director Environment, Highways and Waste), Sharon Bennett-Matthews* (Head of Law and Legal Business Partner Economy and Place), Bruce Evans (Engineering Manager), Simon Hobbs (Senior Accident Investigation Engineer), Ben Baugh (Democratic Services Officer) Jen Preece (Democratic Services Technical Support)

In Attendance:

John Campion, Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia
Superintendent Edd Williams, West Mercia Police

Councillor Ange Tyler*, Cabinet Member – Housing, Regulatory Services, and Community Safety

*denotes virtual attendee

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hitchiner, Leader of the Council.

39 NAMED SUBSTITUTES

No named substitutes were present.

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Durkin and Councillor Bowen both declared a non-pecuniary interest as members of the Police and Crime Panel. The Clerk confirmed that as Council appointments these were not schedule 2 interests and therefore the councillors could still take part in the discussion.

41 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2021. Councillor Stark identified a typographical error in the minutes of the Maylord Orchard item where the word 'costs' had been used instead of 'rental incomes'. The sentence should have read:

“Maylord was cash positive and it was confirmed that *rental incomes* more than covered the running costs.”

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2021, subject to the amendment as outlined above, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

42 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public.

43 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No questions had been received from councillors.

44 AN UPDATE FROM THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The Chair welcomed John Campion, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Superintendent Edd Williams to the meeting.

The Commissioner introduced himself and gave an overview of the strategic elements of his role. Key points from his presentation included:

- The Commissioner had a non-operational role but was responsible for the Governance of West Mercia Police and how resources of £245 million were spent. The appointment of the Chief Constable was the responsibility of the Commissioner and, acting as the voice of the Public, it was he who held the Chief Constable to account.
- The Police and Crime Plan would soon be presented to the Police and Crime Panel for approval and would be confirmed by the end of the year.
- There were four strands to the Police and Crime Plan:
 1. **Victims and Survivors First.**
Ensuring the needs of victims and survivors were understood and they were supported in their recovery. There had already been a large investment in victim services but there was still much more to do.
 2. **Secure West Mercia.**
The policing precept was given to keep residents safe and although Herefordshire was a low crime area, this must never be taken for granted.
 3. **Reform.**
The number of officers had been increased and more of the budget was being spent on policing hours. Resources, whether technological or physical were being reformed to ensure that they met needs and were ‘match fit’
 4. **Reassurance.**
Although Herefordshire did experience the most serious sorts of crimes it was not in any volume and as such the County was a very safe area. However communities needed to be reassured and made to *feel* safe by the Police being active and visible in their areas.
- In response to a high volume of correspondence from the public on the issue of speeding, the Commissioner wanted to develop with the Council, as the highways authority, a joined-up approach as to how this anti-social type of speeding that caused so much detriment to the Community, could be addressed.

- Fly tipping was another area of concern for residents and although enforcement was not a statutory duty for the Police, the Commissioner was offering a grant to Councils and welcomed innovative suggestions from Councillors on what could be done to augment existing practices.

The Commissioner handed over to Superintendent Williams who spoke about the Local Policing Charter. Key points from his presentation included:

- The Police recognised that their work started in the community and looked to work in partnership with residents and businesses.
- Part of the Community Charter's remit was to work with over 120 parish councils to agree a Contact Contract which agreed how regular the contact would be with the local policing team and which would also agree 3 priorities and a realistic plan to tackle them.
- There were 6 strands to the Community Charter;
 1. Visibility and accessibility
 2. Responding to our communities
 3. Prevention
 4. Vulnerability
 5. Relationships
 6. Partnerships
- The force worked in partnership with licensees to ensure that the night time economy was supported.
- The County Lines approach taken by the force continued to be successful.

The Chair thanked the Commissioner and the Superintendent and asked for questions. During the discussion the following principal points were noted:

- The work of Community Speedwatch Teams helped with the 3 'E's' approach to speeding; education, engineering (the problem out) and enforcement
- Only a third of parish councils responded to a survey that was carried out each year by the Police Commissioner. The results of this survey were used to hold the force to account so the Commissioner encouraged Councillors to get more of their Parish Councils to respond.
- In the case of unlawful parking during school drop off and pick up hours, the Commissioner's expectation was that the force would deal with obstruction (of a highway or access point) and would work in conjunction with the Local Authority for any double yellow line parking infractions.
- Regular liaison with the Ward Member would be useful for the community safety officer as it could act as a conduit through to the Parish Councils.
- Neighbourhood Matters was the replacement service for the Community Messaging Service. To date there were 1400 people signed up to this but the Force was hoping to greatly expand this number as not only was it a way in which the Police could send out messages to the public but it was also an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and speak to their local policing team.
- Although the number of police officers had fluctuated in the past ten years it was important not to get too pre-occupied with numbers but to concentrate on having the right sort of resource to deal with the crimes being committed. In Herefordshire you were more likely to be the victim of a crime online rather than in person and therefore the Force needed to expand its online cyber presence.
- Operation Jetwing which involved days of high intensity activity in different locations across Herefordshire would help increase the Force's visibility. The operation was carried out once a month and involved executing local warrants, being visible outside of schools, listening to community concerns and knocking on doors to promote Neighbourhood Matters.
- The new Police and Crime Plan outlined the Commissioner's commitment to choosing the environmental conscious route, whether for vehicles or in the management of buildings or resources, wherever it was possible to do so.

- There had been recent publicity regarding the seizure of an electric scooter which was being used without the required insurance and in an area that was not part of a designated trial zone. The Superintendent encouraged members of the public to capture footage of any such incident on their smart phones.
- There was limited capacity in the Council's road safety team to deliver the changes the public wanted to see. The team was still struggling to implement the '20 is plenty' project that was approved by Council but were trying to deal with the backlog of Traffic Road Orders (TROs) that had built up. Budgetary pressures were a continuing concern.
- West Mercia Police would only provide funding for the purchase and installation of CCTV cameras but not the monitoring of them as it was very difficult to show the benefit of it when comparing the cost of monitoring versus the impact it had. Virtually everywhere else was at the stage where no Police Commissioner resources were used to fund monitoring. The Commissioner had given many notices that this was coming to an end and had highlighted other schemes in West Mercia where the monitoring was volunteer led.
- The Safer Streets Scheme had received bid funding of £500k which had gone towards an additional 40 CCTV cameras, increased street lighting coverage and an extension of the street pastor service.
- Elected members who felt any unease about their safety should contact the local policing team in the first instance and if still not satisfied, contact the Commissioner directly.
- Business and Rural Crime Officers had a 90% satisfaction rate for their response to burglaries. Smart water tagging had been taken out to rural locations to help prevent the theft of agricultural machinery.
- Leominster Police Station was one of the County's policing hubs and as such police officers, including the safer neighbourhood teams which were based there, were available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Counter service had been closed as in the main the public preferred to contact the police in different ways, but doorbells had been installed for members of the public to use if they walked into the station.
- Engagement vans, where the public had instant access to police officers, were also used in the community.
- The Commissioner clarified that although the fly-tipping grant of £100k was offered to 5 councils, Herefordshire Council was not constrained to apply for only a fifth of the monies. The application process was straightforward and although innovative solutions were welcomed it could also be used for strengthening existing practices. Councils had two years in which to spend the grant money.
- In response to concerns expressed by the Chairman the Superintendent reassured the Committee that the Police were supportive of community speed limit reductions, even though there were not the resources to regularly enforce them.
- The Superintendent had a road safety fund which parish councils could apply to and which could be used for, for example, the white gates going into villages. The deadline for applications to the fund was 31 March 2022.
- The relationship between the Council and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner worked well but there needed to be a shift towards more preventative work.
- In response to Councillors expressing concerns about the delays in implementing Traffic Road Orders (TROs), officers highlighted that although the process was managed by Balfour Beatty and that there were statutory requirements that needed to be adhered to they were looking at how it could be streamlined. A new map based system for TROs was being introduced and this could help expedite the process.
- A domestic abuse scrutiny panel had recently been set up which randomly selected 10 cases to review to make sure the response was right and that a consistent service was delivered.
- The Chief Constable had published internal guidance in the wake of the Sarah Everard case and had also released a statement in which he told members of the public not to be afraid to question police officers.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive be recommended to consider the following:

1. The West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable be invited to the next appropriate meeting of Full Council to provide an update on the work of the force;
2. Local guidance on the personal security of councillors and how to highlight safety concerns be provided to all councillors;
3. The Neighbourhood Matters messaging service and the Local Policing Charter be brought to the attention of all councillors;
4. Consideration be given to joint communication protocol between the Council and the Police to ensure that local community safety messages are shared as widely as possible;
5. A bid be made to the Police and Crime Commissioner's initiative to support innovative projects and augment existing activity to reduce fly-tipping;
6. The Herefordshire Superintendent's road safety fund be promoted to all town and parish councils, with attention drawn to the relevant deadline;
7. Consideration be given to the establishment of a local forum for road safety, involving the Council, the Police, and other relevant partners;
8. The process for making Traffic Regulation Orders be reviewed to ensure that it is as efficient and effective as possible, including the approach to consultation and messaging with communities and road users, and with discussions with relevant agencies to remove potential barriers to implementation;
9. Consideration be given to guidance (including relevant templates) for town and parish councils to support them to develop road safety action plans and related measures, including how to access external funding streams.

45 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme and proposed the following items for the remaining scheduled meetings of the municipal year.

- **14 January 2022:** - Scrutiny of the Budget and MTFP
- **21 January 2022:** - Planning

A single item agenda on Planning, the scope of which was to include consideration of the use to which S106 monies and Community Infrastructure Levy were put, scrutiny of the planning service including enforcement, how environmental concerns were being addressed through the planning process and the role and scope of the planning inspectorate.

- **21 March 2022:** - Management of Capital Assets and Contract Management

Estate Management was added to the work plan for a future meeting agenda.

The Committee also discussed whether to call-in, or have as an agenda item on their work plan, the decision on the Herefordshire BID Business Improvement District. The Cabinet Member decision that was being taken was on how the Council would vote in the County led bid (excluding Hereford) as it had 23 properties that would be affected. Officers clarified that the communication had been sent out by a third party agency to all of the businesses that would be affected by this decision and that it had outlined the implications of the bid and their vote. Members were in agreement that, as a Committee, they were not minded to call in the decision but noted their right to trigger the call-in process.

46 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14 January 2022.

The meeting ended at 1.45pm

Chairperson



Title of report: 2022/23 budget setting

Meeting: General scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Tuesday 14 December 2021

Report by: Chief Finance Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To seek the views of the General Scrutiny Committee on the draft budget proposals for 2022/23, both capital and revenue items.

The draft proposals show an overall increase in the proposed base revenue budget funded through a 2.99% increase in council tax and grant funding expected to be confirmed in the provisional financial settlement.

The Committee is invited to make recommendations to inform, constructively challenge and support the process for making Cabinet proposals to Council regarding the adoption of the budget.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) the Committee note the current budget setting assumptions, prior to the central government funding settlement, and consider its recommendations in relation to the 2022/23 budget proposals for revenue and capital.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternatives to the recommendations; Cabinet is responsible for developing budget proposals for council consideration and it is a function of this committee to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive. The Council's budget and policy framework rules require Cabinet to consult with scrutiny committees on budget proposals in order that the scrutiny committee members may inform and support the process for making Cabinet proposals to Council.

- It is open to the Committee to recommend alternative spending proposals or strategic priorities; however given the legal requirement to set a balanced budget should additional expenditure be proposed compensatory savings proposals must also be identified.

Key considerations

- Overall a balanced base budget for 2022/23 is proposed. The proposed 2022/23 revenue budget assumes a total council tax increase of 2.99%, 1.99% increase in core council tax and a 1% adult social care precept. This increases the band D equivalent charge to £1,701.70 representing an increase of £0.95 per week. This is expected to be confirmed as the maximum increase permitted, a higher increase would require the support of a referendum.
- The 1% adult social precept will generate additional income of approximately £1.5m. This income is ring-fenced to fund the adult and communities base budget pressures arising from demands for services.
- The council tax base for 2022/23 has grown by 3% (following a 2% decrease in the prior year) to 70,252.52 band D equivalent properties. This growth is welcomed and reflects no further increases in working age council tax reduction claimants.
- The working age council tax reduction scheme for 2022/23 is proposed to remain at 100% discount approved for 2021/22. Working age households in receipt of council tax reduction increased rapidly at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The caseload has remained at a consistent level of approximately 6,500 households during 2021/22, pre pandemic the caseload was 5,375 households.

Budget Setting Timetable

- Council will be asked to approve the 2022/23 budget on 11 February 2022. At the same meeting Council will also be asked to approve the updated medium term financial strategy (MTFS), treasury management strategy, value for money strategy, council tax reduction scheme and the capital strategy. The 2022/23 budget setting timetable is shown below:-

Action	When
Local consultation	31 August – 17 September 2021
Independently led focus group consultation	August and September 2021
Online survey	27 August – 4 October 2021
General scrutiny committee	14 December 2021
Adults and wellbeing scrutiny	10 January 2022
Children and young people scrutiny	11 January 2022
General scrutiny committee	14 January 2022
Cabinet	27 January 2022
Council – approval of budget, capital and MTFS	11 February 2022
Council – council tax setting	4 March 2022

Community impact

8. The budget proposals demonstrate how the council is using its financial resources to deliver the priorities within the County Plan 2020 - 2024.
9. The council is committed to delivering continued improvement, positive change and outcomes in delivering key priorities.
10. In accordance with the principles of the code of corporate governance, the council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development, and review.

Environmental Impact

11. The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
12. Whilst this overarching budget setting document will not detail specific environmental impacts, consideration is always made to minimising waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy. A specific environmental impact assessment for the service specific budget proposals will be considered as appropriate to seek to minimise any adverse environmental impact and actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

Equality duty

13. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 14 Service specific equality impact assessments will be completed for the service specific budget proposals to assess the impact on the protected characteristic as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The duty means that the potential impact of a decision on people with different protected characteristics is always taken into account when these assessments have been completed then we will consider mitigating against any adverse impact identified.

Resource implications

- 15 The financial implications are as set out in the report. The ongoing operational costs including, human resources, information technology and property resource requirements are included in the draft budget and will be detailed in separate governance decision reports as appropriate.

Legal implications

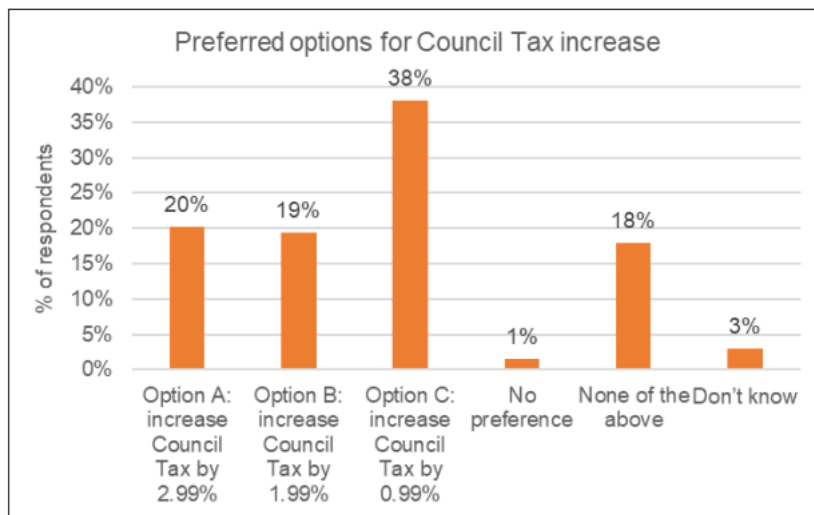
- 16 When setting the budget it is important that councillors are aware of the legal requirements and obligations. Councillors are required to act prudently when setting the budget and council tax so that they act in a way that considers local taxpayers. This also covers the impact on future taxpayers.
- 17 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires a council to set a balanced budget. To do this the council must prepare a budget that covers not only the expenditure but also the funding to meet the proposed budget. The budget has to be fully funded and the income from all sources must meet the expenditure.
- 18 Best estimates have to be employed so that all anticipated expenditure and resources are identified. If the budget includes unallocated savings or unidentified income then these have to be carefully handled to demonstrate that these do not create a deficit budget. An intention to set a deficit budget is not permitted under local government legislation.
- 19 The Council must decide every year how much they are going to raise from council tax. The decision is based on a budget that sets out estimates of what is planned to be spent on services. Because the level of council tax is set before the year begins and cannot be increased during the year, risks and uncertainties have to be considered, that might force higher spending more on the services than planned. Allowance is made for these risks by: making prudent allowance in the estimates for services; and ensuring that there are adequate reserves to draw on if the service estimates turn out to be insufficient.
- 20 The Council's budget and policy framework rules require that the chair of a scrutiny committee shall take steps to ensure that the relevant committee work programmes include any budget and policy framework plan or strategy, to enable scrutiny members to inform and support the process for making cabinet proposals to Council.
- 21 The Council is required to consult on its budgetary proposals at an early stage. Consultation on the budget setting was carried out during September and October 2021. The consultation met the "Sedley Criteria" as endorsed by the Supreme Court.
- 22 Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 restricting councillors voting on certain matters where they are in arrears of council tax, does not apply to scrutiny function as the views from scrutiny on the budget are not a recommendation for approval, a resolution or any other type of decision. As a result a s106 check of councillors arrears has not been undertaken.

Risk management

- 23 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the S151 officer to report to Council when it is setting the budget and precept (council tax). Council is required to take this report into account when making its budget and precept decision. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of reserves.
- 24 The budget has been updated using the best available information; current spending, anticipated pressures and the provisional settlement. This draft will be updated through the budget setting timetable.
- 25 The most substantial risks have been assessed as part of the budget process and reasonable mitigation has been made. Risks will be monitored through the year and reported to cabinet as part of the budget monitoring process.
- 26 There are additional risks to delivery of budgets including unplanned pressures. We are maintaining a general fund reserve balance above the minimum requirement and an annual contingency budget to manage these risks.

Consultees

- 27 Attached as appendices B to D are the results of public consultation, the webpage was visited 442 times during the consultation period.
- 28 Appendix B is a report into local budget consultation zoom events held. 14 consultation events were held between 1st and 30th September with Parish Councils and other key stakeholders. The aim of the sessions was to ask key questions specifically related to the 2022/23 budget but also to have more in-depth discussion about ideas that were introduced in last year's budget consultation sessions. There was support to increase the Council Tax by 1.99% slightly more than increasing the Council Tax by 0.99%.
- 29 Appendix C shares the key findings from the online consultation and Appendix D provides the statistical data. A total of 134 responses were received to the online questionnaire, in relation to council tax increase the responses were;-



Appendices

- Appendix A Presentation
- Appendix B Public consultation – events
- Appendix C Public consultation – key findings
- Appendix D Public consultation – statistics

Background papers

None identified

2022/2023 budget proposals

**General Scrutiny Committee
14 December 2021**

Appendix A

MTFS 2022/23

Draft MTFS - Overview

MTFS 2022/23

Forecast Income 2022/23*

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	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000
Council tax	112,944	119,549
Retained business rates	36,753	37,488
Collection fund (deficit)	(200)	-
Revenue support grant	638	638
Rural sparsity delivery grant	5,353	5,353
Social care support grant	5,508	5,508
NEW – estimated social care funding		200
NEW – estimated supporting families		200
NEW – estimated unallocated funding		500
Total	160,996	169,436
<i>Overall increase</i>		8,440

* Assumes general council tax increase 1.99% plus ASC precept 1.00%

MTFS 2022/2023

Forecast Budget Position 2022/2023

Summary – Budget Status (Draft)

	£000
Council-wide Forecast pressures and budget bids 2022/2023 (adjusted for Children & Families savings waived during Improvement Programme £490k and Corporate savings target not achievable due to additional pressures in Legal and PMO £210k)	8,432
Forecast council income increase 2022/2023	(8,440)
Forecast MTFS 2022/2023 Draft Surplus	(8)

26

MTFS 2022/2023

Capital

Capital Funding Requests

No	Scheme	Total 22/23 £000	Total 23/24 £000	Total 24/25 £000	Total Future Years £000	Capital Grant funding £000	Redirected funding £000	Capital receipt funding £000	Funded by ROI £000	Corporate Funded PB £000	Total Request £000
1	Residual property works identified in the 2019 condition reports	1,291.6	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,391.6	1,391.6
2	Estates Building Improvement Programme 22-25	1,454.0	1,289.0	264.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,007.0	3,007.0
3	Key Network Infrastructure (Core Data Centre Switches & Corporate Wi-Fi)	490.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	490.0	490.0
4	Primary Data Storage Area Network (Plough Lane)	335.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	335.0	335.0
5	Public Realm Maintenance - Mitigating Risk on the Network	3,685.0	1,265.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4,950.0	4,950.0
6	Winter Resilience	532.0	145.0	290.0	435.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,402.0	1,402.0
7	My Account	313.0	130.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	443.0	443.0
8	Stronger Towns Fund - Hereford Museum & Art Gallery Redevelopment	1,000.0	6,700.0	7,300.0	0.0	10,000.0	0.0	0.0	5,000.0	0.0	15,000.0
9	Stronger Towns Fund - Greening the City	229.9	180.0	0.0	0.0	409.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	409.9
10	Stronger Towns Fund - Maylord Orchard Redevelopment and Learning Resource Centre	770.0	2,230.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0
	Total	10,100.5	12,039.0	7,854.0	435.0	13,409.9	0.0	0.0	5,000.0	12,018.6	30,428.5

NB. Excludes provision for Flexible Futures

MTFS 2022/2023

Capital

Corporate Borrowing Position

Funding Position	22/23 £000	23/24 £000	24/25 £000	Future Years £000	Total £000
Total Corporate Borrowing Required	8,100.6	2,929.0	554.0	435.0	12,018.6
Annual Funding Limit	6,700.0	6,700.0	6,700.0	-	20,100.0
Unspent 20/21 borrowing to reallocate	503.3	-	-	-	503.3
Unspent 21/22 borrowing estimated	1,500.0	-	-	-	1,500.0
Hereford Transport Package	3,750.0	-	-	-	3,750.0
Allocated Previously	(6,826.6)	66.0	10.0	-	(6,902.6)
Total Funding Available	5,626.7	6,634.0	6,690.0	-	18,950.7
Funding Variance	(2,473.8)	3,705.0	6,136.0	(435.0)	6,932.2

The addition of £6.7m corporate borrowing is allowed for each year in the revenue budget. For all requests to go forward this can either be funded from advance borrowing of 23/24 as there is often slippage (to cover the borrowing costs) or use of reserves if none are removed.

MTFS 2022/2023

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

MTFS 2022/2023

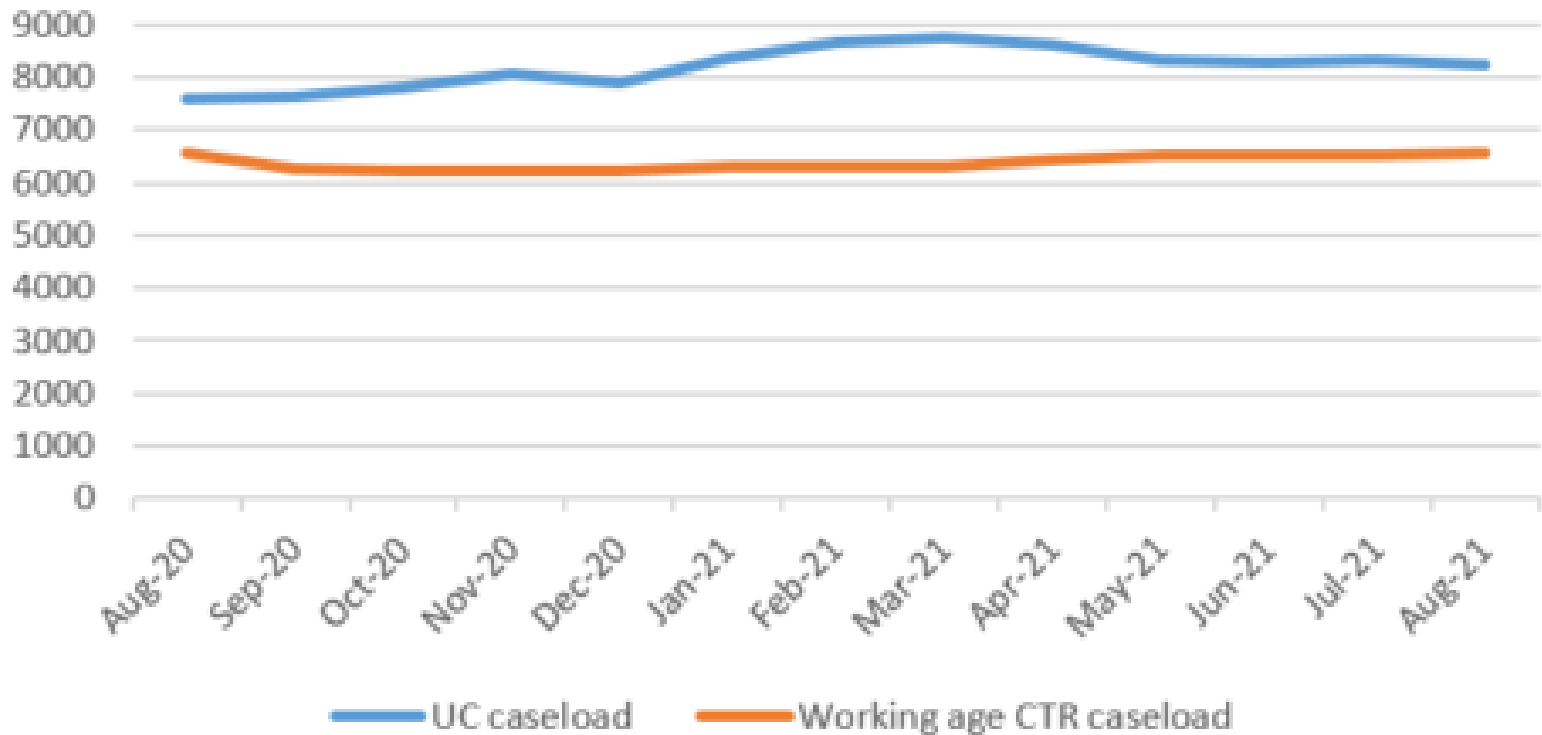
2022/2023 Base budget assumptions

Working age council tax reduction (CTR)

1. Proposed to continue with maximum 100% discount scheme approved for 2021/2022.
2. The current working age caseload is 6,457 with council tax discount of £7.7m. Pre Covid-19, when discount was capped at a maximum of 84%, approximately 5,375 households received £4.9m in council tax discount.
3. In 2020/21 the central government hardship fund allocated an additional £150 reduction in working age CTR council tax bills, this totaled £1,076,354 and was awarded to 7,576 bills.

Households in receipt of UC and working age CTR

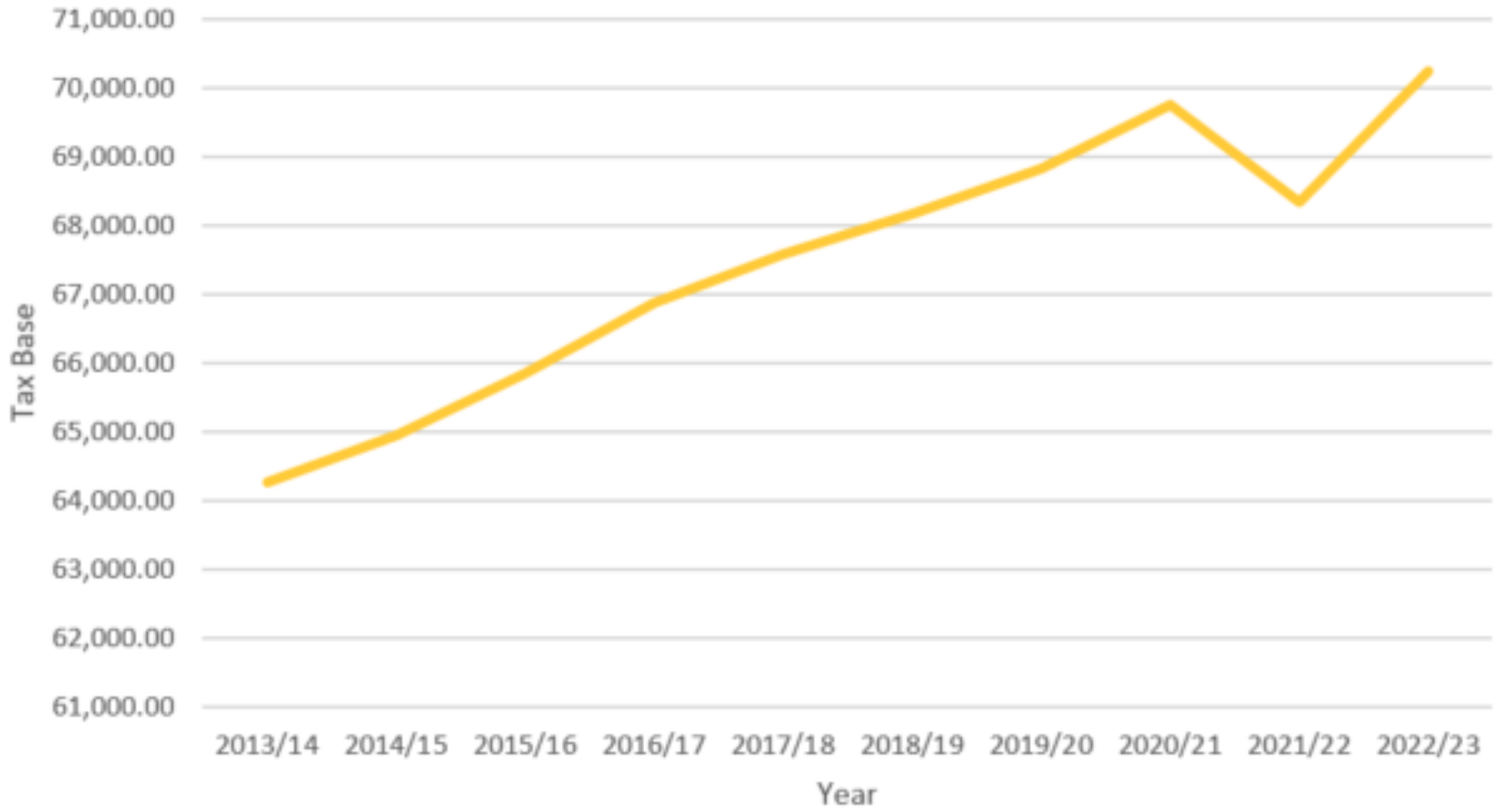
Chart Area



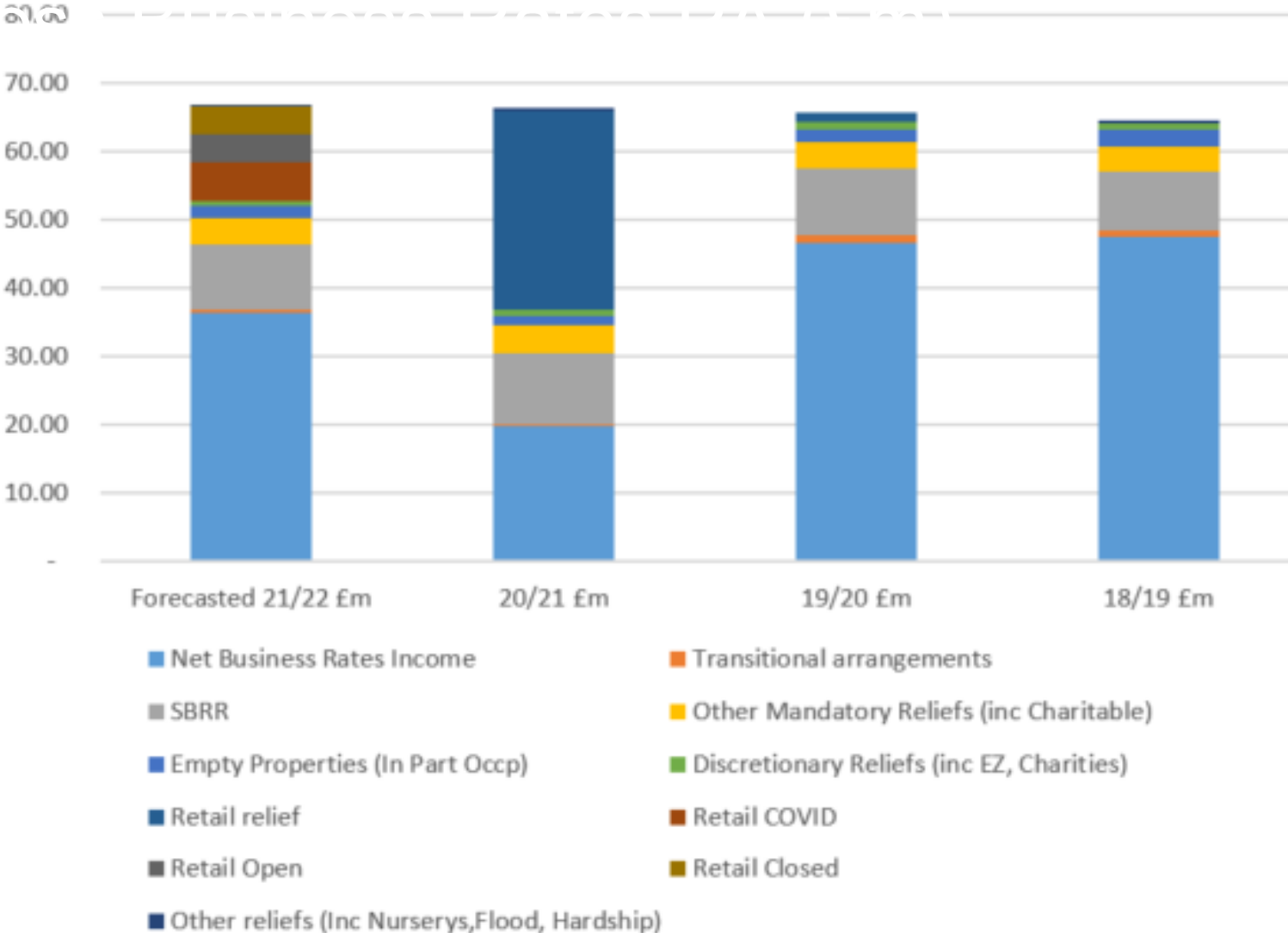
Council tax and business rates collection rates

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Council tax	97.6%	98.0%	98.2%	98.6%	98.5%
Business rates	94.1%	97.8%	98.2%	98.2%	98.0%

Council Tax Base



Gross Business Rates per annum (£m)



Summary of Herefordshire Council's 2022/23 Budget consultation events

1. Introduction to the consultation

As part of the budget setting exercise for 2022/23 a series of 14 consultation events were held between 1st – 30th September with Parish Councils and other key stakeholders. Due to the on-going restrictions of Covid-19 the consultation events were held using Zoom. Fifty-one people participated in the events which were held concurrently with the annual budget-setting on-line survey which went live on 27 August 2021.

The aim of the sessions was to ask key questions specifically related to the 2022/23 budget but also to have more in-depth discussion about ideas that were introduced in last year's budget consultation sessions. This included exploration of the following areas:

- Alternative options for income generation
- What people's view were about what needed doing to help reach Herefordshire's target of a Net Zero and nature rich county by 2030
- How communities were fairing after the pandemic
- How Parish and Town Councils feel about their public realm and what, if any, areas of the public realm they could take more control of

A list of the questions explored in the Zoom consultation session is included as Appendix A.

The sessions were undertaken with the following groups (numbers booking and attending is in Appendix B):

Parish and Town Councils (P&TCs) in each of the Primary Care Networks (PCNs): Hereford City, East, South West and North.

Community Champion areas (CC): South and West, City, East, North and West.

Additional groups¹: Connexus Housing Tenants and Care leavers. Views were included throughout the report, however the discussion with Care Leavers particularly focused on Preventative Services.

¹ A session with Hereford Sixth Form College students was arranged but none of the participants booked onto the session attended. Similarly several attempts were made to set up a session with Hereford Disability United however within the timescales it did not come to fruition.

Consultation engagement

Levels of engagement were lower than anticipated (based on last year's figures). This can possibly be attributed to the following:

- The consultation events were advertised during August in holiday season
- The sessions were held before most Parish Council's had been able to convene post Summer break to enable a Parish Council wide perspective to be reflected.
- The non-contentious nature of this year's questions, compared to last year's large scale savings, meant that there appeared to be less appetite for engagement.

Approach to consultation sessions

Participants were asked to vote via a series of polls that covered 6 questions as well as three additional open discussion questions (an additional question for Parish and Town Councils about the public realm was included). Responses to each question is considered below. Following the polls there was an open discussion which focused on some key areas but also gave participants the opportunity to highlight their own concerns or issues.

Throughout this report we refer to comments made by, for example, 'a few' or 'many' participants. This reflects comments that were made in the facilitated discussions. As with other qualitative research it is not possible to specifically quantify the participants making these comments but points referred to in the report reflect areas where there were outlying opinions or strong consensus or divergence of opinion.

2. Poll results and discussions

Council Tax options for 2022/23 Proposed Council Tax increase

Question 1

In this section, residents were asked about their preference on the level of Council Tax increase that the council should consider for 2022/23: increase Council Tax by 2.99%, 1.99% or by 0.99%.

Which of the following options would you prefer?

Option A: increase Council Tax by 2.99%	9
Option B: increase Council Tax by 1.99%	14
Option C: increase Council Tax by 0.99%	12
No preference	3
None of the above	2
Don't know	3

There was support to increase the **Council Tax by 1.99%** (Option B) slightly more than Option C (increase the Council Tax by 0.99%). This response likely reflects an acknowledgement of the challenge of providing services but also that not everyone has financially recovered from the pandemic. Comments made in relation to this question included:

- Concerns for those families on low-income
- Council tax should continue to be subsidised for those that can't afford it
- Council tax charges should relate to income levels rather than the size of the property

Participants want to know more information about what additional revenue generated from Council Tax would be spent on; and more information about cost savings i.e., is this being looked at alongside increasing revenue.

Question 2

Families on low incomes currently receive a discount on Council Tax (the council tax reduction scheme), however, due to the pandemic low-income families currently receive an additional discount on their Council Tax.

Do you think the Council should remove this additional discount?

Yes	15
No	17
Not yet	24
No opinion	1

There was strong support that now (or a simple No in general) was not the right time to remove this additional discount. (41 saying no or not yet, as opposed to 15 yes).

The most significant concern raised was the timing of any potential withdrawal of additional discount, particularly for those in receipt of Universal Credit who have now had the additional £20 uplift payment withdrawn. Therefore, if these same families were also to lose the additional Council Tax discount then this could lead to very challenging financial difficulties.

Raising additional finance

Question 3

In last year's consultation there was support for raising money to help support vulnerable residents through a Voluntary Contribution Scheme. Building on that, this year respondents were asked how they would like to see any money raised through a Herefordshire Lottery Scheme or Voluntary Contribution Scheme spent.

Geographical priority areas	17
Thematic areas such as children, vulnerable adults, climate emergency	29
Specific charities or local groups	20
Allocated to Parish and Town Councils to decide with local residents for their area	40
Other	18

There was a lot of support for additional income generated to be 'Allocated to Parish and Town Councils to decide with local residents for their area', however this result is unsurprising given the majority of the consultees were from Parish and Town Councils. There was also support for funding to be allocated based on 'thematic areas such as children, vulnerable adults and the climate emergency', however there were not strong views about which specific thematic area should be prioritised.

Comments received in relation to this question included:

"Thematic policy areas may be fairer in terms of allocating funds. Also, would be motivational for those participating in the lottery."

"Lottery - What will the scheme cost to run and do you have enough interest to ensure it is sustainable."

"All areas are important - i.e. in terms of prioritising for additional income. Also, geographical areas are important."

"Need a clear purpose for both schemes to boost engagement"

"Could do different thematic areas in different bidding rounds"

Question 4

Local authorities have the opportunity to borrow money from central government and other sources, and currently Herefordshire Council has not borrowed as much as it is able to.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed that the council should borrow more money to achieve its wider aims?

Yes	22
No	8
Don't know	9

Overall, there was support for this, especially with current interest rates being so low, and especially if the spend was targeted. However, there were concerns about future generations having to pay it back. Participants who answered 'don't know' felt they would require more specific information about the purpose of borrowing money before they could make a decision. See examples of the comments below:

"If money is borrowed to boost the economy, it may pay for itself. If not then how repayment is to be made needs careful consideration."

"If going to borrow money then needs to be evidence based i.e. what is the areas of greatest need and what are the benefits - clarify the business case WITH the Voluntary and Community Sector."

Question 5

If additional money was borrowed in which areas would you like to see it spent?

I don't support borrowing	1
Measures to address the climate emergency	21
Road maintenance	25
Adult social care e.g. care homes, day care services, mental health support	27
Children's services (not education) e.g. children in care, respite care, support for children with disabilities	23
Providing affordable housing	20
Other	4

Views were fairly evenly split with most of the suggested areas of spend receiving support, with no one theme particularly standing out.

Most of the comments received were about the condition of the roads and concern if any additional money was generated through borrowing whether this could be used on potholes

on existing roads, or more widespread resurfacing or whether it was only to be used for new roads. Many participants felt that additional information was required in order for them to give an informed view.

Environmental measures - Net Zero & Nature Rich Herefordshire

Question 6

The questions in this section were about the council's carbon management plan and the corresponding action plan.

Do you agree that Herefordshire Council is doing enough towards achieving its ambition of a net zero and nature rich county by 2030?

Yes, enough	17
No, not enough	24
Don't know	17
I don't agree with Herefordshire Council working towards this ambition	3

The overwhelming response to this question is that many participants did not feel they could answer without additional information on what Herefordshire Council is doing already.

There was slightly more consensus for the view that Herefordshire Council is not doing enough to achieve its ambition of a net zero and nature rich county by 2030.

Question 7

What are the key things you would like to see done differently in the county to help mitigate the climate emergency?

Discussion relating to this question was dominated by a lack of knowledge amongst participants of what Herefordshire Council is currently doing to address the climate emergency. Participants expressed that they wanted more information on what Herefordshire Council are doing, specifically:

- What are the biggest causes of carbon emissions?
- Guidance on recycling and planning to pass on to residents.
- More information on the cost saving benefits and wider economic benefits of some of the environmental schemes / projects / proposals e.g. investment of low energy street lighting cost 'v' cost saving over x years. People want to know what the biggest issues are and what actions will have the biggest impacts.

Additional comments raised:

- Stronger links between the waste strategy, planning policy and the climate emergency.
- A need for sustainable travel was mentioned (although this could have been stimulated by Herefordshire Councils launch of the free bus travel on weekends initiative)
- Free buses at the weekend were thought to be a good idea, although many participants highlighted they were eligible for free bus passes already.
- Younger care leavers identified that many buses were being cancelled with little alternative provision put in place.
- Further investigation into school transport is needed. However, road safety and cost were highlighted as barriers.
- How could residents be encouraged to not use their cars for short trips?
- Planning standards and policy were felt to be areas where some of these issues could be addressed, in terms of housing particularly, which will have a direct impact on the climate emergency in terms of sewage, river quality and phosphates, insulation and energy use. Additional themes related to planning mentioned were parking for bikes, and areas for recycling bins.
- Parish and Town Councils wanted guidance on planning standards and policy to be able to assess planning applications and advise their residents on best practice.
- There was a general consensus that climate change targets can only be met by Herefordshire Council working in partnership with others.
- Participants felt it was important to recognise the economic benefit of some of the environmental schemes, such as the better sustainable transport which might have a positive impact on tourism, easier access to walking routes, busier town centres.
- The waste strategy was also seen as contributing to addressing the climate emergency, particularly if it focused on reduction of use, an element of reduction of food waste (potentially linked to reduction in food poverty and intergenerational projects around learning about how to reduce food waste), better recycling information “what is recycled from the green bin”.
- Guidance on key actions that individuals can take would also be useful add full stop as full stops in bullet points above

Preventative Services

Question 8

In last year’s budget consultation preventative services were identified as an area in need of more prioritisation. What preventative measures would you like to see?

Health and well-being was a key point mentioned, there were examples of good practice such as the Falls Prevention work but on the whole, there were concerns around the gaps

particularly in mental health services for all age groups. Support for older people to remain in their own homes through timed appointments, Occupational Health assessments, offering assistance before acute services at the hospital are required. Also practical advice and support available to those who need it, such as ‘support for older people to sell their own homes and move into a more suitable property’.

Adult Social Care was felt to be an area where prevention services could be focused particularly in terms of *“Helping elderly stay healthy stay in their own homes”*. However this was also raised in terms of the cost of Adult Social Care (see next point) and how care homes are supported, particularly around support for staff; pay rates, career development and retention.

There was a general concern around value for money and specifically around Adult Social Care, making sure what is spent will have an impact; who this conversation needs to be had with i.e. a national conversation; and the investment that might be needed.

Comments made in relation to this question included:

“Would like to see more transparency on how money has been spent and reassurances regarding value for money”

“Useful to know per capita spend, also some benchmarking and how/what other options are being explored.”

“Concern about national focus on raising taxes to pay for social care. This needs to be a local debate, or with the Local Government Association (LGA).”

“Social Care is taking a lot of the budget, may need more for the rest of what is provided by general council tax.”

“Voluntary and Community Sector organisations are often active in preventative services BUT the length of time for funding prevents organisations from addressing issues properly, a longer term view is needed.”

“But this needs investment - longer term”

There were views from participants raising concern about the impact being in a rural area has; particularly around the lack on investment in rural areas; the lack of ability to access Section 106 monies from planning and building developments; and the lack of services and facilities, such as playgrounds for older children.

There was also support from participants for children and families to be an identified area of need, as well as those on lower incomes and at risk of homelessness. See examples of the comments below:

“Agree with spend on children's services - assisting families, keeping families together. “

“Support for families - early help has been cut back significantly over the years. This did help, more investment needed. Schools can't support this within their funds.”

“Preventive = enabling people to access services that help get them out of rural poverty and poor housing ... not investing at the symptoms of children safeguarding/looked after. We are looking in the wrong direction.”

In terms of prevention work, whilst there was a will from Parish and Town Councils to help with this area of work there was an acknowledgement that specific skills were missing. There was potential to work better with Talk Communities within this theme to help with the professional support and information to signpost.

Talk Communities were also felt to be a good opportunity for some joined up working and support for local areas. See examples of the comments below:

“I agree there needs to be a level of coordination in developing preventative services. Stepping back and hoping the third sector will fill the gap can't work without resourcing and a level of coordination. I hope that Talk Community can help facilitate and support this process in the future.”

“Support to get involved but safeguarding issue: need a central management system, potentially Talk Communities.”

Care leavers had a number of points to raise about preventative services:

- Providing respite care to families early on may prevent children needing to be moved into care.
- A support service along the lines of Reese Foundation, which provided funds for various items, beds, white goods, or paid rent arrears.
- Money for transport for going for interviews.
- Better emergency accommodation that doesn't place vulnerable young people in overnight accommodation with active drug/alcohol mis-users.
- Practical support – as well as providing cooking, laundry, and a general safe place, the young people felt that they needed to learn how to do some of these practical tasks.
- Option to get a free hot meal when times are difficult.
- More counsellors available for children of all ages.
- Need all options available to access services, face to face personal support and over the telephone talking to strangers.
- Services are particularly needed for single parents.
- Children's views need to be taken into account.
- Still a trust issue with Social Care, worried won't get support; accused of not coping.

Question 9**Pandemic Recovery**

When asked 'What would be the most effective way to help your community recovery from the pandemic?' some positives highlighted were:

- That fact that not many smaller businesses have closed suggesting they are resilient,
- Community and voluntary organisations have adapted to continue providing much needed services, such as befriending services by phone,
- Agricultural businesses have been less affected,
- Tourism has had a bit of a boost with the influx of staycations,
- Community events have been adapted and run to promote local traders,
- Government grants have supported village halls.

However, there were some real concerns about the impact the pandemic has had on people's mental health and loneliness, particularly for older people, as well as children and young people. It was also recognised that there is still a fear to 'get back out there', particularly from older people. It was felt there was an opportunity to help support the smaller groups and community events with reopening and helping engage with these people less willing to go out.

It was felt that central support for Talk Communities or organisations that run this type of community intervention (such as Venture) from Herefordshire Council would help to support the wider recovery of the community.

Despite an appreciation for the efficiency of online shopping there was a recognition of the impact this was having on Town Centres. It was felt Town Centres needed to 'up their game' and provide more of an 'experience' rather than just an opportunity to buy shopping.

It was also recognised that there were some families who were really struggling financially and emotionally as a result of the pandemic and that face to face support or case workers could provide 'hand-holding' support were critical at times like this.

There were also concerns that as life starts to return to 'more normal', that the host of volunteers and helpers available during the pandemic are no longer available returning to work etc. Therefore support was wanted to try to stop this decline in numbers of volunteers post covid, there were discussions about how to help community and voluntary organisations with their volunteer base and what Herefordshire Council and HVOSS could do to support this in terms of marketing, advertising, recruitment, and promotion of volunteering.

Question 10**Public Realm (For Parish and Town Councils only)**

The public realm is commonly defined as any space that is free and open to everyone.

Parish and Town Councils focused on the following areas when talking about having greater control / influence over the public realm in their local area:

- The relationship with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP)
- Drainage and flooding
- The lengthsman scheme (drainage and verge maintenance)
- Footpaths

On the whole, the comments about the relationship between parishes and BBLP were that there was still significant room for improvement. Although there was some recognition that improvements had been made, many parishes reported still not being listened to, issues with maintenance and routine improvements not happening, and difficulties using the reporting app.

Routine clearing of roads, pathways and drains were concerns raised often in relation to having to make use of volunteers to maintain this work, and the knock-on effect of this not being done was flooding. Drainage grants were mentioned as an option.

Similar stories were given about the footpaths, with these also not being routinely maintained and were not in a good state of repair. The use of volunteers for maintenance and inspection was again mentioned.

There was strong support for any reintroduction of the Lengthsman scheme, particularly if this came with funding and training for any personnel. It was felt to be a good opportunity if the Parish Paths Partnership could also be included as part of this scheme.

Appendix A - Questions asked during the Zoom Consultations.

1. In last year's budget consultation preventative services were identified as an area in need of more prioritisation. What preventative measures would you like to see in any of the following service areas? Or another service area? (Open discussion)
 - a. Children's services
 - b. Adult social care
 - c. Support for vulnerable people
2. Do you agree that Herefordshire Council is doing enough towards achieving its ambition of a net zero and nature rich county? (Poll)
3. What are the key things you would like to see done differently in the county to help mitigate the climate emergency? (Open discussion)
4. Families on low incomes receive a discount on Council Tax (the council tax reduction scheme), however due to the pandemic low-income families currently receive an additional discount on their Council Tax. Do you think the Council should remove this additional discount? (Poll)
5. What would be the most effective way to help your community recovery from the pandemic? (Open discussion)
6. Which of the following options would you prefer?

Option A: To increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 2.99% general Council Tax This would be an increase of £49.40 per year (or £4.12 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £3.4 million.

Option B: To increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 1.99% general Council Tax This would be an increase of £32.88 per year (or £2.74 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £2.2 million.

Option C: To increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 0.99% general Council Tax This would be an increase of £16.36 per year (or £1.36 per month) for a band D household. This would raise an additional £1.1 million.
7. If a Herefordshire Lottery Scheme or Herefordshire Voluntary Contribution Scheme was to go ahead, how would you like to see the money spent? (Poll followed by discussion)
8. Local authorities have the opportunity to borrow money from central government and other sources, and currently Herefordshire Council has not borrowed as much as it is able to. Do you agree that Herefordshire Council should in principle borrow more money to achieve the wider aims of the Council? (Poll)
9. If additional money was borrowed in which area/s would you like to see it spent? (Poll)
10. Where would you like greater control / influence over the public realm in your local area? (Open discussion question only Parish and Town Councils).

Appendix B - Engagement - A breakdown of the numbers participating in each session is provided below.

Session no.	Time/Date	Area	Number booked on	Number attended on the day
1	Wed 1 st September, 7-8.30pm	Hereford City PCN area Parish and Town Councils	2	Cancelled due to low numbers
2	Thursday 2 nd September, 7-8.30pm	East PCN area Parish and Town Councils	13	8
3	Monday 6 th September, 7-8.30pm	South West PCN area Parish and Town Councils	14	8
4	Tuesday 7 th September, 7-8.30pm	North PCN area Parish and Town Councils	11	10
5	Wednesday 8 th September, 7-8.30pm	Hereford City community groups	2	Cancelled due to low numbers
6	Thursday 9 th September, 7-8.30pm	East community Groups	3	4
7	Tuesday 14 th September, 12.30pm-2pm	Hereford City community groups	6	3
8	Tuesday 14 th September, 7 – 8.30pm	South West community groups	6	3
9	Wednesday 15 th September, 7 – 8.30pm	North West community groups	1	Cancelled due to low numbers
10	Thursday 16 th September, 5.30 - 6.30	Hereford 6 th form students		No attendance
11	30 th September 1:30-2:30 Face to Face at Plough Lane	Care leavers	7	7
12	Thursday 16 th September, 7-8.30pm	Connexus Housing		2
13	Wednesday 22nd	Hereford City PCN area Parish and Town Councils		4
14	Wednesday 29th Sept	Leominster PCN area Parish and Town Councils		1

YOUR SAY ON HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 2022/2023: KEY FINDINGS

Version 1.0

Herefordshire Council Intelligence Unit

November 2021

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If you need help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please contact us on 01432 261944 or e-mail researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

The consultation

The formal public consultation on Herefordshire Council's budget for 2022/23 was carried out using an online questionnaire published on the council's website from 27 August 2021 to 04 October 2021. The consultation was also promoted via the council's social media channels.

A total of 134 responses were received to the online questionnaire, including one response on behalf of an organisation 'Echo of Hereford'. Responses to this year's consultation were relatively low, half the number of responses received to last year's consultation. It's important to be aware of this low response when considering the results; in particular the percentages: an apparently large percentage difference can equate to just a few individual responses.

There was an equal split of male and female respondents. The age profile shows a fair representation of working age (16-64 years) respondents and a marked bias from residents from the upper Council Tax bands (D to H) was also observed.

The following summary presents responses to this year's questionnaire, along with comparison to last year's responses where similar questions were asked. They are marked with this symbol:



Results

Satisfaction with council services (Q1)

The first section of the questionnaire asked about satisfaction with services that Herefordshire Council provides. Different services were listed for residents and for businesses/organisations, and respondents were asked to consider services that they have used themselves in the last year.

The graph (figure 1) below is ordered by the number of people who gave an opinion^[1] on the service, with the most used services at the top. It shows three broad groupings of services in terms of usage.

Note that the percentages quoted in the text below are calculated out of only those people who had used the service, so don't match those on the chart (which shows the proportions of all respondents, to illustrate the wide variation in usage).

- Overall, there were three services which at least half of users who gave an opinion¹ said they were satisfied with: 'waste and recycling' (62%), 'parks and open spaces' (54%), and 'schools' (54%).
- There was a clear distinction in satisfaction levels among the most used services, with higher level of satisfaction for 'waste and recycling' (62% of users satisfied/very satisfied) and 'parks and open space' (54%), while 'highways and roads' has the lowest satisfaction (12%).
- In fact, 'highways and roads' is the service that the users are mostly dissatisfied with (83% of users dissatisfied/very dissatisfied).

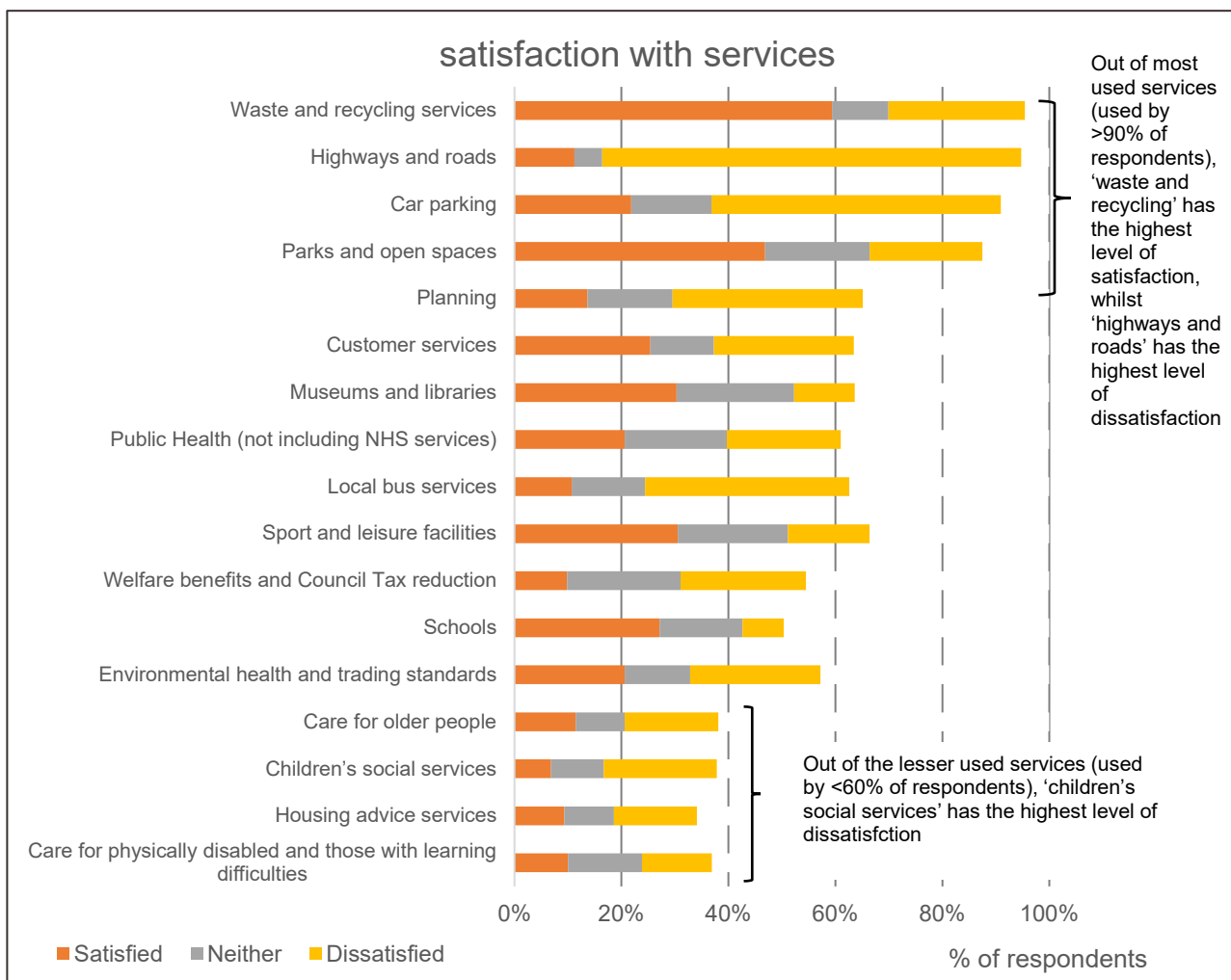
^[1] i.e. respondents who said that they used the services, and excluding those who answered 'don't know'.

- Amongst the lesser used services, satisfaction with services for older people is high (30% of users) – but less so for ‘children’s social services’ (18%).
- Other than ‘highways and roads’, there are four other services where dissatisfaction was higher than 50%: ‘local bus services’ (61%), ‘car parking’ (60%), ‘children’s social services’ (56%) and ‘planning’ (55%).



There appeared to be a broadly similar pattern in terms of the usage of services, although respondents this year were more likely to say they had used the services compared to last year’s response. Overall, respondents to this year’s consultation were less satisfied or more dissatisfied with most of the services than last year. The largest drop in satisfaction is with ‘care for older people’ (by 28 percentage points) which also has the largest rise in dissatisfaction (by 24 percentage points), however this is one of the least used services. There are clear variations in the levels of satisfaction with ‘car parking’, ‘local bus services’, ‘public health’ and ‘children’s social services’ with fewer users been satisfied and more users been dissatisfied with than last year.

Figure 1: Residents’ satisfaction with council services (ordered by usage)



Making services more affordable to run (Q2-Q4)

Q2. This question asked respondents to specify their views on how to make the following services more affordable. The common themes from the comments received are listed below each service:

- a. Making more efficient use of council assets such as land and buildings (69 comments)
 - Use council assets to generate income
 - Diversify the usage of assets e.g. establish community hubs in council buildings
 - Convert council buildings to affordable housing

- b. Changing working practices to make better use of technology and more efficient ways of working (62 comments)
 - Enhance remote/flexible working for council staff where possible
 - Invest in fit for purpose technology e.g. Single data management hubs across agencies to manage interventions with complex clients and case workers, WiFi enabling village halls.

- c. Working in partnership and sharing services with other councils and public sector agencies (63 comments)
 - Make internal and local partnerships rather than sharing services with other authorities
 - Make partnerships only if it provides better services, cut down costs
 - Do not make partnerships as a cost cutting exercise/not with the expense of reduction in resources.

- d. Using digital technology more widely to support the delivery of services (58 comments)
 - Combination of methods need to be used including face to face meetings
 - Make services accessible for all – vulnerable, elderly, people with learning disability, people who are not computer literate, and already disadvantaged groups.
 - Place better infrastructure, more mobile signal coverage first

- e. Making more services available online (53 comments)
 - Do not make services fully automated, make services accessible for people who are not capable of using automated services
 - Not all services are suitable for online provision

Q3. This question asked respondents to provide preventative measures that they would like to see in any of the following service areas.

a. Children's services (48 comments)

- Early identification of needs
- More robust, effective and timely early intervention process
- More competent, committed, qualified, permanent social workers
- Reduce workload of social workers to spend more time on cases
- Provide more resources to early help

b. Adult social care (54 comments)

- Collaborative working with all agencies e.g. NHS, council, care agencies
- Provide care in the community instead of institutional care and improve provision of home care to prevent unnecessary and unwanted residential placements
- More days centres, support hubs to provide leisure facilities, activities and clubs

c. Support for vulnerable people (45 comments)

- Develop community based support e.g. mentoring for young and vulnerable people, more day centres, activities/clubs and meals provided for them
- Improve support for independent living
- Provide a single point of contact for all sectors, collaborative work between all agencies involved and a charter of what is to be offered and where it can be found
- Improve access to mental health services, training in coping strategies

d. Specific prevention measures for any other service area (27 comments)

- Improve access to services and more services to refer to e.g. mental health services, financial help, bereavement
- Improve council practices and standards
- Take actions to protect environment and promote recycling

Q4. Local authorities have the opportunity to borrow money from central government and other sources, and currently Herefordshire Council has not borrowed as much as it is able to.

Respondents were asked whether they agree that the council should borrow more money to achieve its wider aims.

- 58% of respondents agreed for the council to borrow more money to achieve its wider aims while 26% did not agree and further 17% chose to select 'don't know'.

Q5. Only the respondents who agreed that the council should borrow money were then asked to rank areas in order of priority to spend the additional money on.

The results presented in Figure 2 are based on a weighted average of those responses.

There were no stark differences seen in the order of priority for these areas, however, 'children's services (not education) e.g. children in care, respite care, support for children with disabilities' was ranked slightly higher overall. 'Road maintenance' and 'measures to address the climate emergency' have polarised views – Table 1.

Figure 2: priority spending areas ordered by weighted score

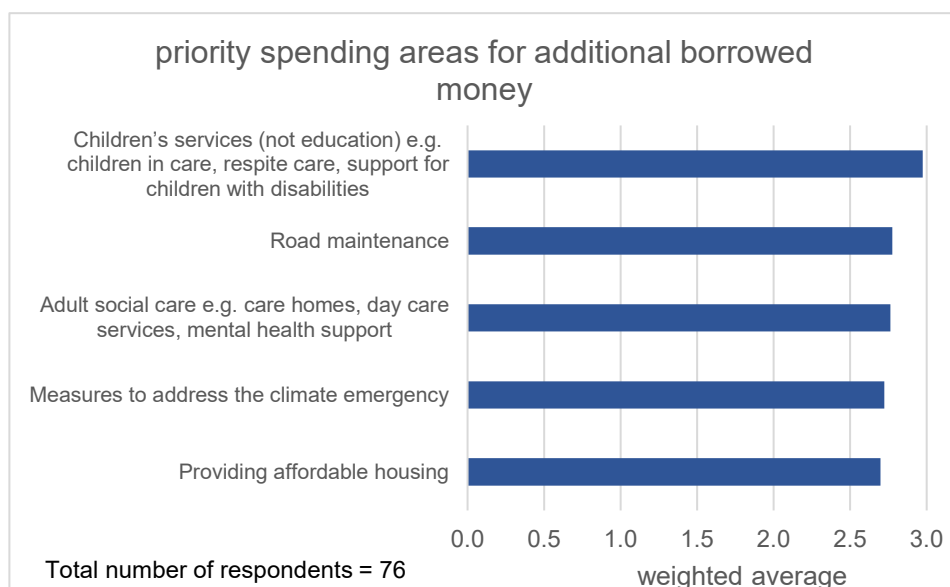


Table 1: proportion of responses to Q5 based on total respondents who ranked at least one option.

	Rank (1= highest and 5 = lowest)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Measures to address the climate emergency	30%	9%	8%	17%	26%
Road maintenance	29%	13%	12%	8%	29%
Adult social care e.g. care homes, day care services, mental health support	8%	25%	25%	29%	4%
Children's services (not education) e.g. children in care, respite care, support for children with disabilities	12%	28%	29%	17%	7%
Providing affordable housing	17%	17%	17%	18%	28%

Respondents were invited to provide other suggestions too. The most common areas suggested to spend the additional borrowings on were: road infrastructure, preventative services, housing, employment opportunities, and public transport.

Tackling climate change and protecting nature (Q6-Q8)

The questions in this section were about the council's carbon management plan and the corresponding action plan.

Q6. 40% of respondents said that Herefordshire Council is not doing enough towards achieving its ambition of a net zero and a nature rich county, compared to 20% who agreed that the council is doing enough. 13% said that they don't agree with the council working towards this ambition.

Sixty respondents commented on Herefordshire Council's work towards achieving its ambition of a net zero and nature rich county. The majority (57%) of comments indicated that the council is not doing enough to achieve its targets, 18% acknowledged that the council is doing enough and heading in the right direction and 12% represented respondents' view on they do not agree with Herefordshire Council working towards this ambition. Despite their varied opinions, respondents provided suggestions for improvement such as tougher planning regulations, more recycling facilities, better and safer cycle routes further afield than the centre of the city, and raising public awareness. Some comments also addressed concerns over other priorities that the council should focus on and some believed the work towards net zero ambition needs to be done by the public and not the council.

Q7. Figure 3 shows the level of support that respondents are prepared and able to do for mitigating climate change.

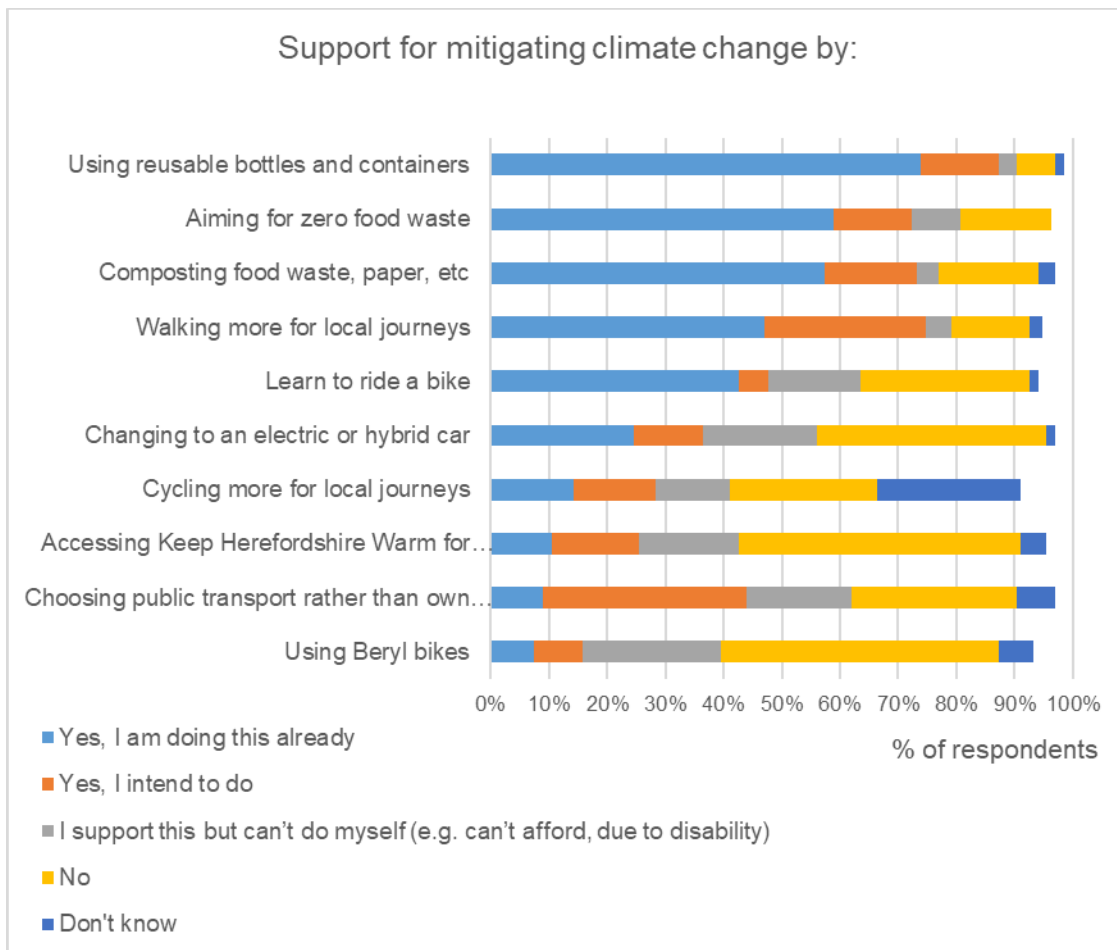
- The majority (60% or more) of respondents said they are already
 - using reusable bottles and containers (75%)
 - walking more for local journeys (61%) and
 - composting food waste, paper, etc (59%)
- The options with the largest proportion of respondents who 'are intending to do' were 'changing to an electric or hybrid car' (36% compared to fewer than 10% who already have) and 'aiming for zero food waste' (29%, in addition to the 50% who are already doing).
- 'Using Beryl bikes' and 'cycling more for local journeys' were the most common options for people to say they support but are unable to do themselves (26% and 20% respectively), but

- They were also the options that people were most likely to say ‘no’ they didn’t support (51% and 41% respectively): along with ‘choosing public transport rather than my own vehicle’ (51%).

Lack of safer and lengthier cycle lanes or lack of reliable public transport were mentioned as to why respondents are not prepared to give up their car journeys towards mitigating climate change.

Forty respondents commented on other activities that they already do or intend to do. Life style changes such as eating less or no meat, using sustainable clothing, choosing sustainable travel choices, making their homes energy efficient or using green energy by adapting to solar power and using energy saving bulbs were cited most frequently. A few respondents said they practice self-sufficient gardening or organic gardening and provide green waste for making bio fuel.

Figure 3: level of support for mitigating climate change (ordered by level of support – already do or intend to do)



Q8. There were 90 comments made when asked about the key things respondents would like to see done differently in the county to help mitigate the Climate Emergency.

Schemes to help support vulnerable residents (Q9)

In last year's consultation there was support for raising money to help support vulnerable residents through a Voluntary Contribution Scheme. Building on that, this year respondents were how they would like to see any money raised through a Herefordshire Lottery Scheme or Voluntary Contribution Scheme spent.

Respondents could select as many of the four options as they wanted, but areas that stand out as being most popular:

- Allocated to parish and town councils to decide with local residents for their area (48%)
- Thematic areas such as children, vulnerable adults, climate emergency (47%)

'Specific charities or local groups' and 'Geographical priority areas' were selected by 37% and 22% of respondents respectively.

Of those who provided details, some respondents thought parish/ town councils and local voluntary or charity organisations would be best placed in understanding their local needs and how these might be best supported. Social housing, young adults with limited capabilities or eligible children were also mentioned by respondents as to where the money should be spent.

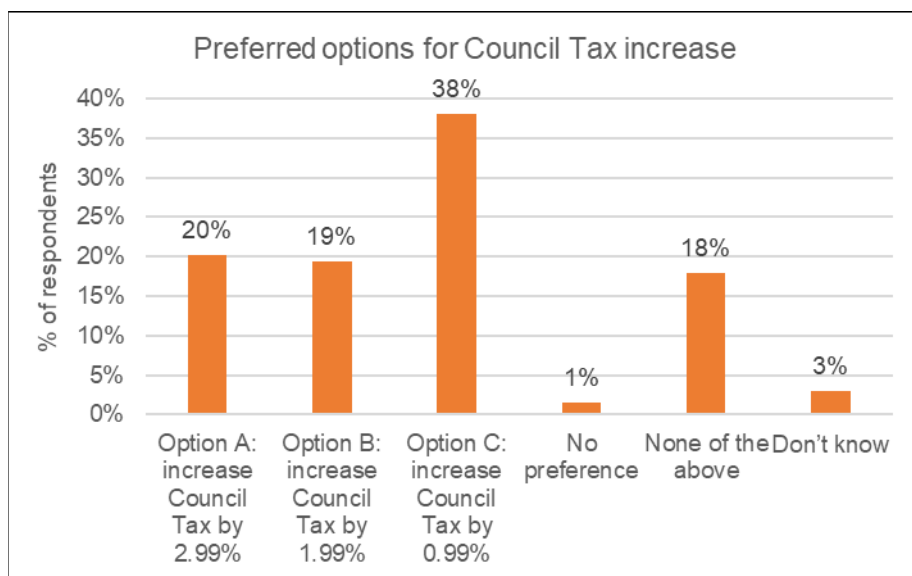
Council Tax options for 2022/23 (Q10 to Q12)

Q10. In this section, residents were asked about their preference on the level of Council Tax increase that the council should consider for 2022/23: increase Council Tax by 2.99%, 1.99% or by 0.99%.

Figure 4 shows the respondents preferred options.

- 38% of respondents supported an increase of 0.99%
- Around 20% supported an increase of either 2.99% or 1.99%. A similar proportion said that they preferred neither option.
- The other 20% preferred neither option; it is not possible to know if they would support less than 0.99% or more than 2.99%.

Figure 4: preference on increasing Council Tax



Q11. In last year’s consultation, residents were asked if they would be prepared to pay more Council Tax to help households on low incomes. Given the adverse consequences of Covid-19, the question was repeated in this year’s consultation in order to collect views again for the forthcoming year 2022/23.

- Whilst 28% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay more Council Tax if the increase was used to help households on low incomes, 56% said they wouldn’t and 16% were undecided.

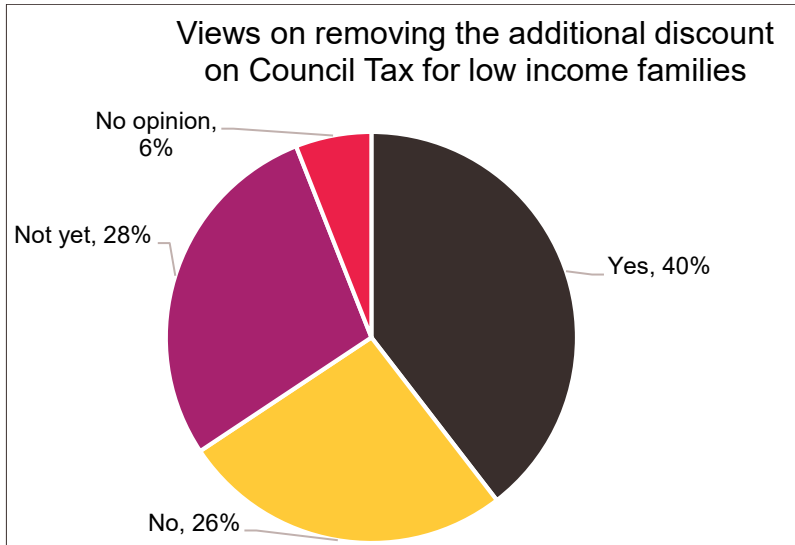


Notably fewer respondents supported this than last year: 41% (2020) compared to 28% (2021). Although fewer respondents also said they wouldn’t be willing to pay more (56% compared to 59% in 2020), a sixth of respondents (16%) selected ‘don’t know’ this year – an option that was not included in last year’s question.

Q12. Families on low incomes receive a discount on Council Tax, however, due to the pandemic low income families currently receive an additional discount on their Council Tax.

When asked about whether to remove this additional discount, the majority (54%) felt that it should not be removed this year – half of whom said it shouldn’t be removed at all, and half said ‘not yet’. 40% of respondents thought that the additional discount should be removed now and 6% chose not to express an opinion – Figure 5.

Figure 5: Views on removing the additional discount on Council Tax for low income families



Participation in other consultations (Q13 and Q14)

43% of those who responded to this year's budget consultation had also taken part in previous consultations. Most of them had completed Herefordshire Council's recent waste consultation. Amongst the other consultations mentioned, this year's bus consultation and local consultations such as parish surveys and neighbourhood development plan surveys were the most common.

Appendix 1: Top line report

Your say on Herefordshire Council's budget and tax for 2022/23

The following results are from 134 respondents for the online questionnaire.
The percentages are based on respondents to each question/statement.

The previous public consultation held last winter (2020-21) invited residents to have some tough conversations about what services they prioritised and where they felt savings could be made, as well as exploring the potential for generating income through alternative revenue streams.

While the world may have changed dramatically during the past eighteen months and the pandemic has brought new challenges, it has also brought with it opportunities and the chance to re-evaluate our actions, work programmes and budgets in partnership with residents, stakeholders, communities and businesses to lead Herefordshire into the future with confidence.

Unlike last year we are not facing a significant funding gap so the focus of this consultation is to build on some of the conversations we started last year and to look at how we might begin a journey of transformation, looking at the way we deliver our services in the most efficient and environmentally friendly way.

For your information this is how much the council was budgeted to spend in 2021/2022 and how the money has been allocated:

- Adults & Communities**
£101.6m / 27%
Wide range of services supporting communities including many of the most vulnerable individuals in the county
- Childrens & Families**
£159.2m / 42%
Responsible for education services, safeguarding and family support
- Economy & Place** **£53.7m / 14%**
Highways, regulatory services, waste and economic development
- Corporate** **£18.2m / 5%**
Finance, human resources, legal, communications and strategic transformation and delivery
- Central, treasury management, capital financing & reserves**
£48.7m / 12%
Pension and financing costs

In 2021/22 the council has a gross revenue budget of £381.4 million to invest in the community. This is the money we use to pay for your day to day services - such as educating children, caring for vulnerable people and recycling and waste.



What do you think of our services?

Q1 Thinking about services you have used in the last year, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following services provided or supported by Herefordshire Council?

	Not used	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Care for older people	56 (43%)	3 (2%)	12 (9%)	12 (9%)	11 (8%)	12 (9%)	25 (19%)
Care for physically disabled and those with learning difficulties	60 (46%)	4 (3%)	9 (7%)	18 (14%)	9 (7%)	8 (6%)	22 (17%)
Children's social services	58 (44%)	3 (2%)	6 (5%)	13 (10%)	9 (7%)	19 (14%)	24 (18%)
Customer services	30 (24%)	13 (10%)	19 (15%)	15 (12%)	13 (10%)	20 (16%)	16 (13%)
Environmental health and trading standards	44 (34%)	10 (8%)	17 (13%)	16 (12%)	16 (12%)	16 (12%)	12 (9%)
Housing advice services	57 (44%)	7 (5%)	5 (4%)	12 (9%)	6 (5%)	14 (11%)	28 (22%)
Highways and roads	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	14 (10%)	7 (5%)	29 (22%)	76 (57%)	3 (2%)
Museums and libraries	35 (27%)	16 (12%)	24 (18%)	29 (22%)	10 (8%)	5 (4%)	13 (10%)
Local bus services	38 (29%)	3 (2%)	11 (8%)	18 (14%)	21 (16%)	29 (22%)	11 (8%)
Parks and open spaces	12 (9%)	22 (17%)	38 (30%)	25 (20%)	14 (11%)	13 (10%)	4 (3%)
Planning	31 (23%)	5 (4%)	13 (10%)	21 (16%)	18 (14%)	29 (22%)	15 (11%)
Public Health (not including NHS services)	35 (27%)	14 (11%)	13 (10%)	25 (19%)	15 (11%)	13 (10%)	16 (12%)
Schools	43 (33%)	11 (9%)	24 (19%)	20 (16%)	4 (3%)	6 (5%)	21 (16%)
Sport and leisure facilities	40 (31%)	8 (6%)	32 (24%)	27 (21%)	8 (6%)	12 (9%)	4 (3%)
Waste and recycling services	3 (2%)	34 (26%)	45 (34%)	14 (11%)	18 (14%)	16 (12%)	3 (2%)
Welfare benefits and Council Tax reduction	43 (33%)	6 (5%)	7 (5%)	28 (21%)	7 (5%)	24 (18%)	17 (13%)
Car parking	7 (5%)	7 (5%)	22 (17%)	20 (15%)	26 (20%)	46 (35%)	5 (4%)

Making services more affordable to run

In last year's online budget consultation residents were asked how they felt services could be made more affordable to run in the next 5-10 years. These results showed there was most support for:

- a. Making more efficient use of council assets such as land and buildings
- b. Changing working practices to make better use of technology and more efficient ways of working
- c. Working in partnership and sharing services with other councils and public sector agencies
- d. Using digital technology more widely to support the delivery of services
- e. Making more services available online

Q2. Looking at each of the preferred options above, do you have any specific views about how this could be done?

- a. Making more efficient use of council assets such as land and buildings

69 comments

- b. Changing working practices to make better use of technology and more efficient ways of working

62 comments

- c. Working in partnership and sharing services with other councils and public sector agencies

63 comments

- d. Using digital technology more widely to support the delivery of services

58 comments

- e. Making more services available online

53 comments

Q3. In last year's budget consultation preventative services were identified as an area in need of more prioritisation. Examples of preventative services could be providing earlier intervention and help to children and their families to avoid children going into care, supporting adults to live independently and safely in their own homes, supporting people to be more active e.g. providing free leisure facilities, such as swimming, support for vulnerable people e.g. cross-service prevention work with health partners and local and voluntary organisations to prevent homelessness and drug/substance misuse.

What preventative measures would you like to see in any of the following service areas? Or another service area?

a. Children's services

48 comments

b. Adult social care

54 comments

c. Support for vulnerable people

45 comments

d. Specific prevention measures for any other service area

27 comments

Q4 Local authorities have the opportunity to borrow money from central government and other sources, and currently Herefordshire Council has not borrowed as much as it is able to. Do you agree that the council should borrow more money to achieve its wider aims? (Please see County Plan for aims).

77 (58%) Yes

34 (26%) No (go to Q6)

22 (17%) Don't know (go to Q6)

Q5. If you support borrowing and additional money was borrowed, in which areas would you like to see it spent? Please rank all five choices in order of the priority you would give each where one is the highest and five the lowest.

	1	2	3	4	5
Measures to address the climate emergency	23 (33%)	7 (10%)	6 (9%)	13 (19%)	20 (29%)
Road maintenance	22 (32%)	10 (14%)	9 (13%)	6 (9%)	22 (32%)
Adult social care e.g. care homes, day care services, mental health support	6 (9%)	19 (28%)	19 (28%)	22 (32%)	3 (4%)
Children's services (not education) e.g. children in care, respite care, support for children with disabilities	9 (13%)	21 (30%)	22 (31%)	13 (19%)	5 (7%)
Providing affordable housing	13 (18%)	13 (18%)	13 (18%)	14 (19%)	21 (28%)

Q5a If you have another area you would like to suggest please give details below, together with the priority you would give it.

21 comments

Tackling climate change and protecting nature

Since 2003, the council has been looking at ways to reduce its carbon footprint and also leading countywide carbon reduction efforts. In recognition of this it declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019. The council has set itself a target of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030 and is aiming for a 75% reduction by 2025/26. To achieve this the council is undertaking a number of energy efficiency projects e.g. installation of solar panels on some council owned buildings, hybrid and electric pool cars, use of renewable energy and initiatives to influence behaviour change.

Alongside these changes the council is also working with partners, businesses and residents on a journey to get the county to net zero and nature rich by 2030. Considerable funding will be required from a wide range of sources and some difficult decision will have to be made on this journey. To succeed it will need the support of local residents and communities.

More information are in the council's Carbon Management Plan and the corresponding Action Plan.

Q6 Do you agree that Herefordshire Council is doing enough towards achieving its ambition of a net zero and nature rich county?

36 (27%) Yes, enough

54 (40%) No, not enough

27 (20%) Don't know

17 (13%) I don't agree with Herefordshire Council working towards this ambition

Q6a Any other comments:

60 comments

Q7 Which, if any, of the following options for mitigating climate change would you be prepared and able to support?

	Yes, I am doing this already	Yes, I intend to do	I support this but can't do myself (e.g. can't afford, due to disability)	No	Don't know
Accessing Keep Herefordshire Warm for home energy advice	19 (16%)	19 (16%)	17 (14%)	34 (28%)	33 (27%)
Walking more for local journeys	79 (61%)	18 (14%)	11 (9%)	21 (16%)	0 (0%)
Learn to ride a bike	57 (45%)	7 (6%)	21 (17%)	39 (31%)	2 (2%)
Using Beryl bikes	10 (8%)	11 (9%)	32 (26%)	64 (51%)	8 (6%)
Cycling more for local journeys	33 (25%)	16 (12%)	26 (20%)	53 (41%)	2 (2%)
Choosing public transport rather than own vehicle	14 (11%)	20 (16%)	23 (18%)	65 (51%)	6 (5%)
Changing to an electric or hybrid car	12 (9%)	47 (36%)	24 (18%)	38 (29%)	9 (7%)
Aiming for zero food waste	63 (50%)	37 (29%)	6 (5%)	18 (14%)	3 (2%)
Composting food waste, paper, etc	77 (59%)	21 (16%)	5 (4%)	23 (18%)	4 (3%)
Using reusable bottles and containers	99 (75%)	18 (14%)	4 (3%)	9 (7%)	2 (2%)
Other	21 (42%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	18 (36%)

Q7a. Other, please give details below:

41 comments

Q8 What are the key things you would like to see done differently in the county to help mitigate the Climate Emergency?

90 comments

Schemes to help support vulnerable residents

Last year we consulted on two new ideas for raising money to help support vulnerable residents:
Looking into the establishment of a lottery scheme for the council for the purpose of raising funds to support good causes, benefitting the residents of Herefordshire (through local consultation)
Looking into the establishment of a voluntary contribution scheme for the council for the purpose of raising funds to support good causes, benefitting the residents of Herefordshire (through on-line consultation)

In general, participants were in support of the two schemes and officers have looked into the merits of each. If these were actioned it would be useful to understand how residents would like to see the money raised spent.

Q9 If a Herefordshire Lottery Scheme or Herefordshire Voluntary Contribution Scheme was to go ahead, how would you like to see the money spent? Tick all that apply

26 (22%) Geographical priority areas

56 (47%) Thematic areas such as children, vulnerable adults, climate emergency

44 (37%) Specific charities or local groups

57 (48%) Allocated to parish and town councils to decide with local residents for their area

7 (6%) Other

Q9a Other, please give details below:

16 comments

Council Tax options for 2022/23

Proposed Council Tax increase

Last year, for 2021/22, due to the large scale savings required amounting to £11.205million, Council Tax was increased by 4.99% (1.99% general Council Tax and 3.00% Social Care Precept) which raised only £3.2 million due to a tax base decrease.

For next year, 2022/2023 savings of this magnitude are not anticipated and the council would like your views on the level of Council Tax that it should consider for 2022/2023.

Please note: the council has no control over the Council Tax collected on behalf of the police, fire service, or parish and town councils. Each of these bodies will make their own independent decisions.

Option A: To increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 2.99% general Council Tax. This would be an increase of £49.40 per year (or £4.12 per month) for a band D household and would raise an additional £3.4 million.

Option B: To increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 1.99% general Council Tax This would be an increase of £32.88 per year (or £2.74 per month) for a band D household and would raise an additional £2.2 million.

Option C: To increase Council Tax in 2022/23 by 0.99% general Council Tax This would be an increase of £16.36 per year (or £1.36 per month) for a band D household and would raise an additional £1.1 million.

Q10 Which of the following options would you prefer?

- 27 (20%) Option A: increase Council Tax by 2.99%
- 26 (19%) Option B: increase Council Tax by 1.99%
- 51 (38%) Option C: increase Council Tax by 0.99%
- 2 (1%) No preference
- 24 (18%) None of the above
- 4 (3%) Don't know

Further information about Herefordshire Council Tax can be found using this link:
[Your Council Tax explained 2021/22](#)

Last year we asked if residents would be willing to pay more Council Tax if the increase was used to help households on low incomes. 41% of respondents supported this proposal and 59% did not. Given the adverse consequences of Covid-19, the council would like to ask for your views again on this issue for the forthcoming year 2022/2023.

Q11 In principle, would you be willing to pay more Council Tax if the increase was used to help households on low incomes?

- 37 (28%) Yes
- 75 (56%) No
- 22 (16%) Don't know

Q12 Families on low incomes receive a discount on Council Tax, however due to the pandemic low-income families currently receive an additional discount on their Council Tax. Do you think the council should remove this additional discount?

53 (40%) Yes

35 (26%) No

38 (28%) Not yet

8 (6%) No opinion

More information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Q13 Have you taken part in a budget consultation previously?

57 (43%) Yes

67 (50%) No

10 (7%) Don't know

Q14 What other local consultations have you taken part in over the last year? Please consider any parish consultations, or county wide consultations such as Herefordshire Council's Waste survey.

52 comments

About you

Q15 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group, or as an individual?

1 (1%) Organisation or group

132 (99%) Individual

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group please tell us the name of the organisation/group:

1 response

If you are responding as an individual please answer the following questions about yourself. This information helps us to understand the profile of respondents and whether views vary amongst different groups of people across the county. It will only be used for the purpose of statistical monitoring, treated as confidential and not used to identify you.

You do not have to answer these questions. If you do not wish to complete them please indicate this below:

34 (100%) I do not wish to complete this section

Which Council Tax band are you in? (if you are not sure a rough guess is fine)

6 (6%) A

9 (9%) B

13 (13%) C

25 (25%) D

15 (15%) E

9 (9%) F

8 (8%) G

1 (1%) H

13 (13%) Don't know

1 (1%) Prefer not to say

Your gender

46 (46%) Male

49 (49%) Female

1 (1%) Other

3 (3%) Prefer not to say

What is your age band?

- 0 (0%) 0-15 years
- 4 (4%) 16-24 years
- 30 (30%) 25-44 years
- 38 (38%) 45-64 years
- 20 (20%) 65-74 years
- 7 (7%) 75+ years
- 1 (1%) Prefer not to say

Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health problem (12 months or more) which limits daily activities or the work you can do?

- 23 (23%) Yes
- 68 (69%) No
- 7 (7%) Prefer not to say

How would you describe your ethnic group?

- 88 (88%) White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish
- 4 (4%) Other White (please specify below)
- 1 (1%) Any other ethnic group (please specify below)
- 7 (7%) Prefer not to say

6 responses

Please tell us the first part of your postcode:

91 responses

Thank you for telling us your views, please click on the SUBMIT button below to send us your response.