

Budget consultation 2019/20

Outcome report

Version V1.0
Herefordshire Council Intelligence Unit

November 2018

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Key findings:

- 39 per cent of respondents thought the council's proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.9% is about right, while 49 per cent thought it is too much and 12 per cent thought it is too little.
- While 25 per cent of respondents agreed with the allocation of Council tax spend as set out in the budget till receipt, 56 per cent did not. There was a broad range of views about alternative ways of allocating resources.
- 37 per cent of respondents supported the council increasing its borrowing requirement by £22.3m to increase the level of investment in the county, 15 per cent supported borrowing more, and 48 per cent supported borrowing less.
- 49 per cent of respondents supported 'keeping the maximum discount of 84%' for the low income households Council Tax discount, 12 per cent supported increasing the discount and 39 per cent supported reducing the level of discount.
- With regard to the council's award of business rate discounts to small businesses, 44 per cent supported to 'continue to award the same level of business rate discount', compared to 32 per cent supported 'increasing the availability of business rates discount' and 24 per cent supported 'reducing the level of discount'.
- 78 per cent of respondents agreed with the proposal to use £1.6m to employ more children's social workers and to support more help for children, young people and families at an early stage.

Introduction

The consultation on Herefordshire Council's budget for 2019/20 ran Thursday 5 July 2018 to Friday 21 September 2018. This report presents the key points from the analysis of standard responses received to the consultation questionnaire.

Methodology

The budget consultation questionnaire was designed and quality assured by a project team. The questionnaire was published on the Herefordshire Council website and residents were invited to complete it online. A printable version was made available on the website for residents who preferred to download, print and complete the questionnaire. The consultation was promoted on the council's social media sites (Twitter and Facebook). And was also promoted to a wide range of key stakeholders and groups.

This report presents the results of the combined online and paper responses to the questionnaire. The sample base is the number of respondents to the question and is the base from which percentages are calculated. The sample base used is specified for each question. Percentages are presented rounded to the nearest whole number in the tables; however, the charts are based on unrounded percentages.

Note that if respondents could select more than one answer to a particular question, the percentages may add up to more than 100 per cent.

Where comments have been provided these are listed in full in appendix C but have been anonymised and corrected for spelling where appropriate.

There were a total of 225 responses to the questionnaire, of which 219 were submitted online and six were completed paper copies.

Results

The following analysis represents 225 responses received to the consultation questionnaire. Appendix A contains the responses received e-mails to the consultation. The analysis of free text comments and suggestions to the questionnaire are included in this report. The full list of comments and suggestions can be found in appendix C.

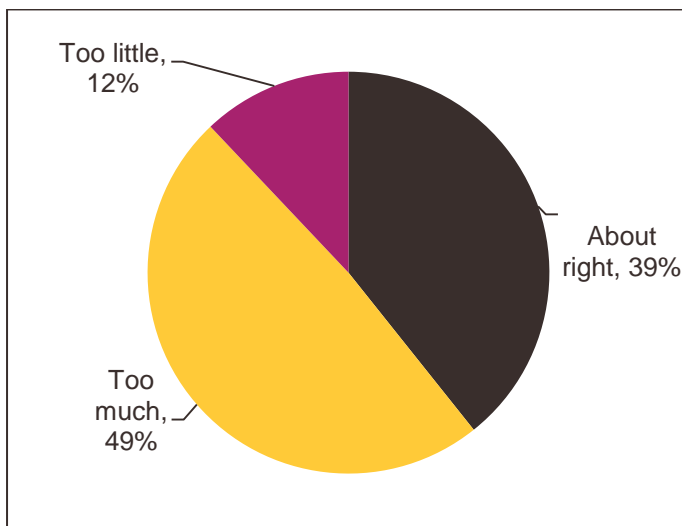
Q1. What do you think about our proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.9% in 2019/20?

39 per cent of respondents thought the council's proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.9% is about right, while 49 per cent thought it is too much and 12 per cent thought it is too little.

Table 1: Respondents to Q1

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
About right	88	39%
Too much	109	49%
Too little	27	12%
Total answered	224	100%
Not answered	1	

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents to Q1



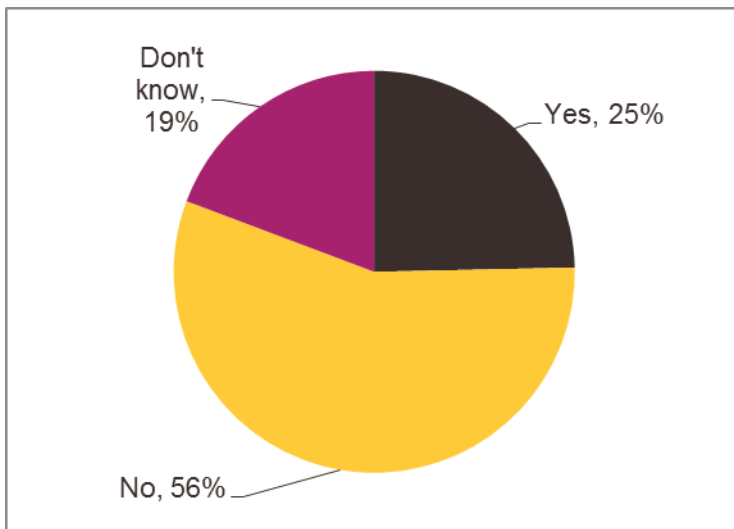
Q2. Do you agree with the allocation of Council Tax spend as set out in the budget till receipt? This includes a 4.9% increase for 2019/20.

While 25 per cent of respondents agreed with the allocation of Council tax spend as set out in the budget till receipt, 56 per cent of respondents did not. 19 per cent of respondents said they 'don't know'.

Table 2: Respondents to Q2

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	55	25%
No	125	56%
Don't know	43	19%
Total answered	223	100%
Not answered	2	

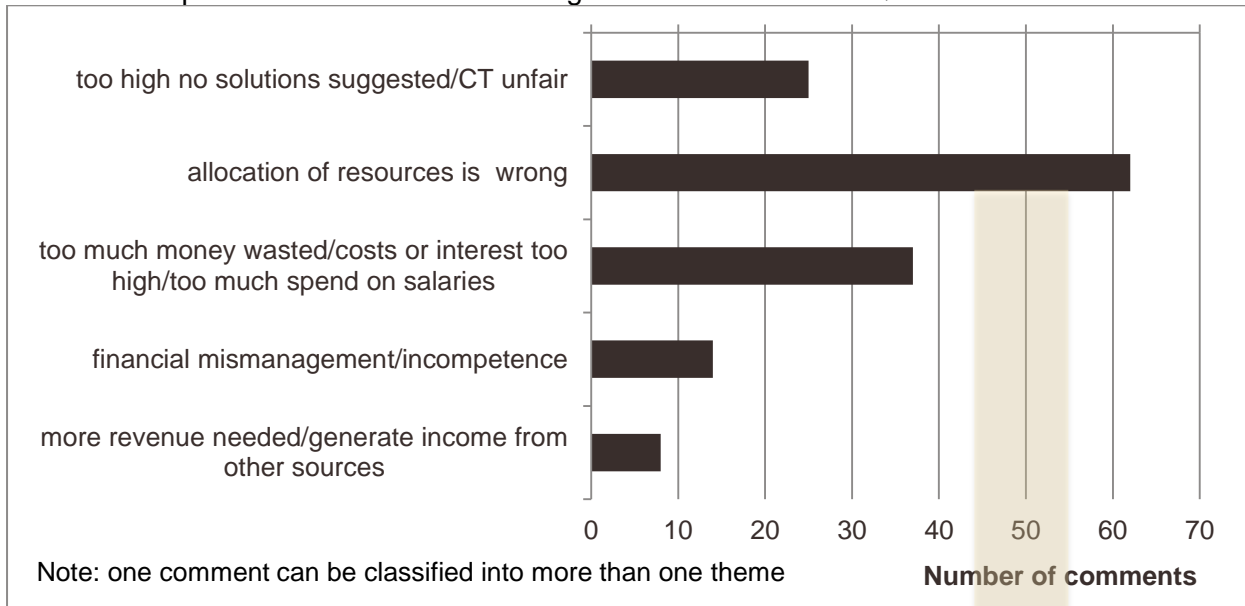
Chart 1: Percentage of respondents to Q2



If not, please explain why:

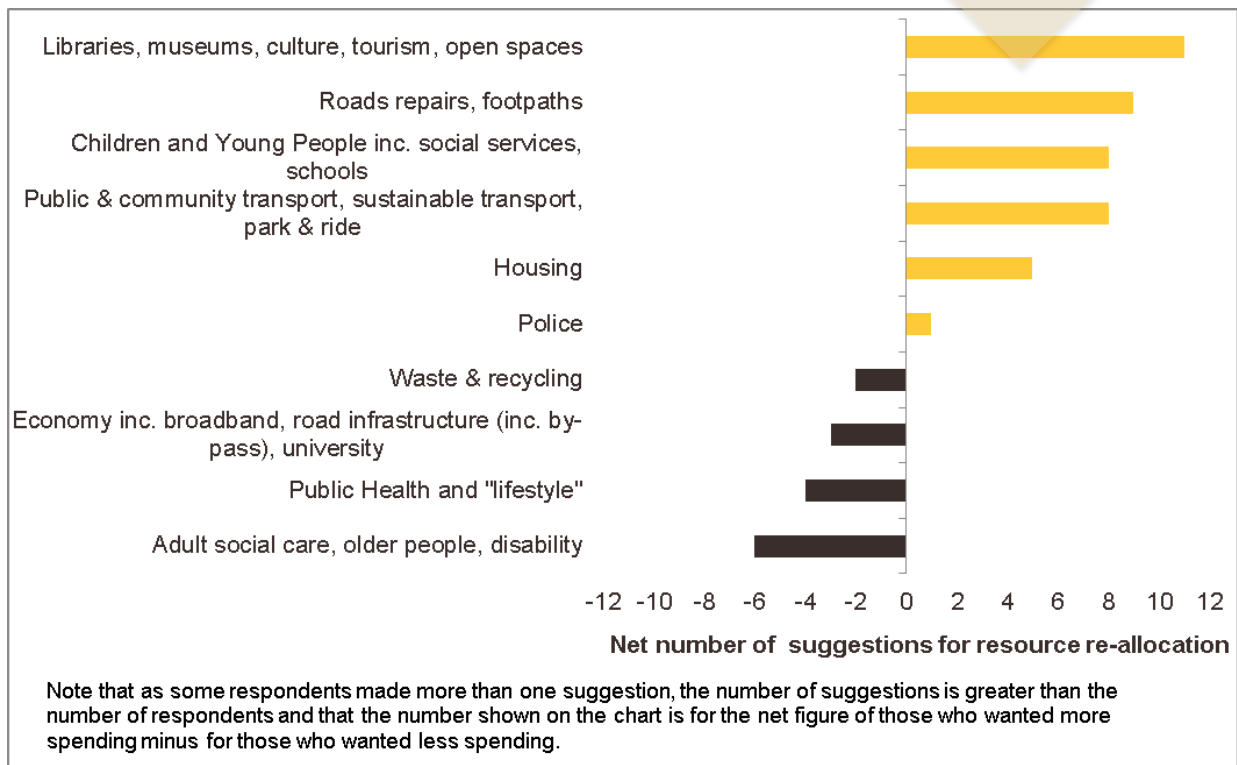
Respondents were asked to explain why they do not agree with the Council Tax allocation for 2019/20. There were 112 comments provided, the broad themes emerged from these comments as follows:

Chart 1a: Proportion of broad themes emerged from comments to Q2a



The comments of those respondents who indicated they felt the allocation of resources is wrong were analysed further to see which areas they felt should have more or less spent on them. The results were as follows:

Chart 1b: suggestions for resource reallocation



Please see appendix C for the full list of comments.

The council intends to invest over £48m in capital projects, such as improving Herefordshire’s roads and transport network, developing facilities for business to establish and grow in Hereford and Ross-on-Wye, improving schools and supporting delivery of housing.

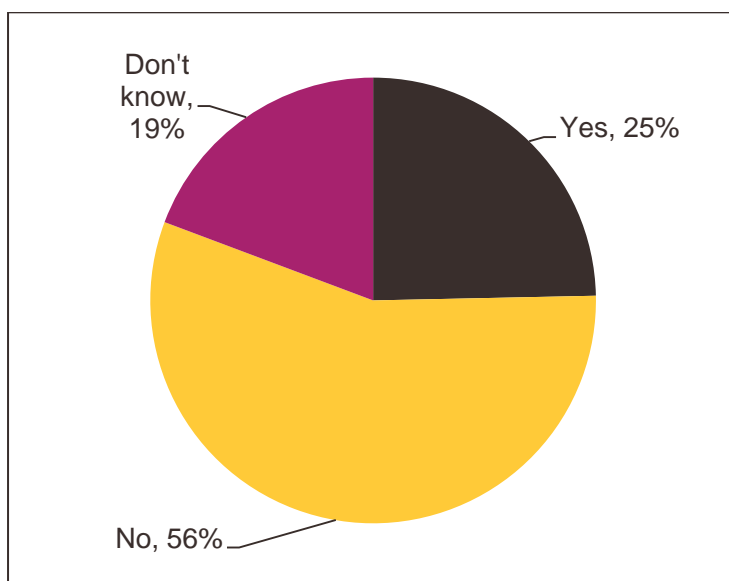
Q3. To support this investment we intend to borrow £22.3m, with repayment costs incorporated into household Council Tax. Do you:

37 per cent of respondents supported the council increasing its borrowing requirement by £22.3m to increase the level of investment in the county, and 15 per cent supported borrowing more. 48 per cent supported borrowing less.

Table 3: Respondents to Q3

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Support the council increasing its borrowing requirement by £22.3m as proposed?	82	37%
Think that the council should borrow more than proposed to increase the level of investment in the county?	33	15%
Think that the council should borrow less, and reduce its investment in the county?	105	48%
Total answered	220	100%
Not answered	5	

Chart 2: Percentage of respondents to Q3



If borrow more, what should the extra borrowed money be spent on?

Of the respondents who provided a meaningful suggestion, two fifths would support investing on 'infrastructure', a fifth would support investing on 'public transport', a sixth for 'library/museums/tourism' or 'children's services'. There were also suggestions for investing in 'affordable housing, 'new university' and 'health improvement services'.

If borrow less, what investment should be cut?

A third of respondents who provided a comment suggesting a 'cut' to investment have suggested that council should cut down investment on 'proposed bypass and/or on new roads and transport network', a fifth suggested reducing expenditure, a sixth suggested reducing investment in 'housing'. Cutting down investment on 'economy and businesses', 'schools' and overall investment in 'Hereford' were also suggested.

Please see appendix C for the full list of comments.

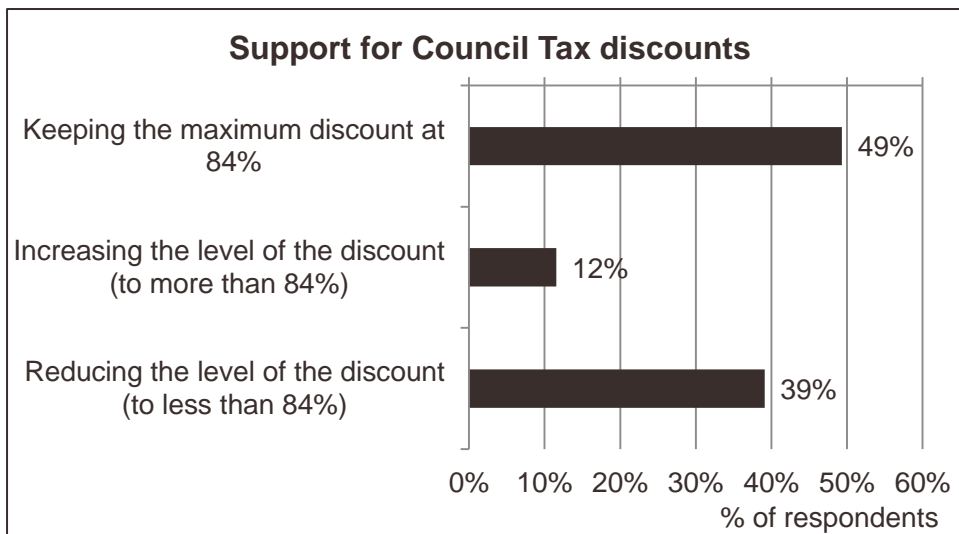
Q4. The Council Tax Reduction scheme currently allows for households on low income to have their Council Tax discounted by a maximum of 84% of the amount payable. Would you support:

'Keeping the maximum discount at 84%' is supported by 49 per cent of respondents, while 12 per cent would support 'increasing the level of discount' and 39 per cent would support 'reducing the level of discount'.

Table 4: Respondents to Q4

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Keeping the maximum discount at 84%	111	49%
Increasing the level of the discount (to more than 84%)	26	12%
Reducing the level of the discount (to less than 84%)	88	39%
Total answered	225	100%

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents to Q4



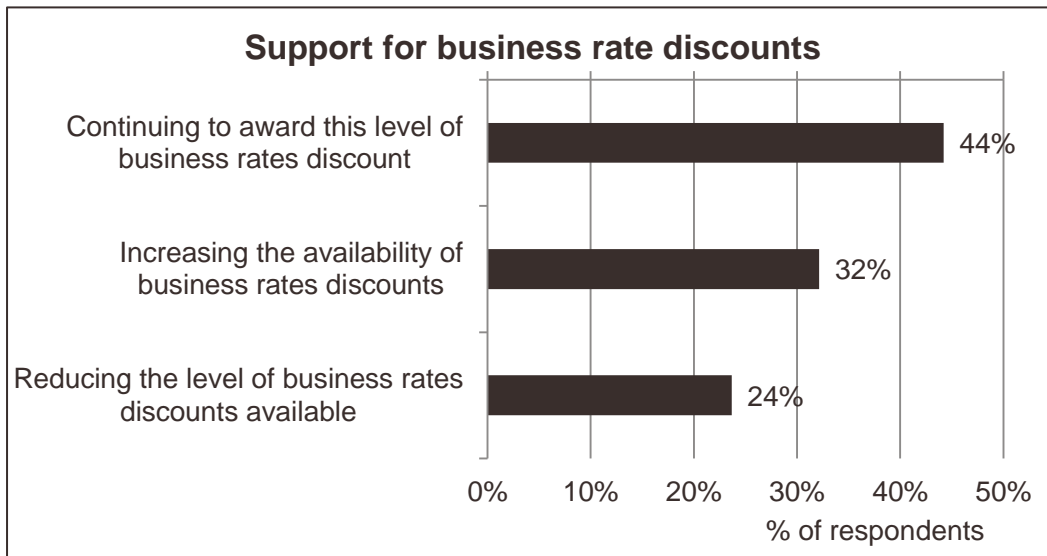
Q5. The council awards approximately £18.7m of business rates discounts in a year, including £8.4m awarded to small businesses. Would you support:

44 per cent of respondents supported to continue to award the same level of business rates, while 32 per cent supported increasing the availability of business rates, and 24 per cent supported a reduction in the level of available business rates discounts.

Table 5: respondents to Q5

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Continuing to award this level of business rates discount	99	44%
Increasing the availability of business rates discounts	72	32%
Reducing the level of business rates discounts available	53	24%
Total answered	224	100%
Not answered	1	

Figure 3: percentage of respondents to Q5



The caseloads of social workers who work with children, young people and their families to keep them safe are of concern to us. In order to reduce these workloads and the chance of children and young people being at risk because of them, we are proposing to use £1.6m to employ more children’s social workers and to support more help for children, young people and families at an early stage.

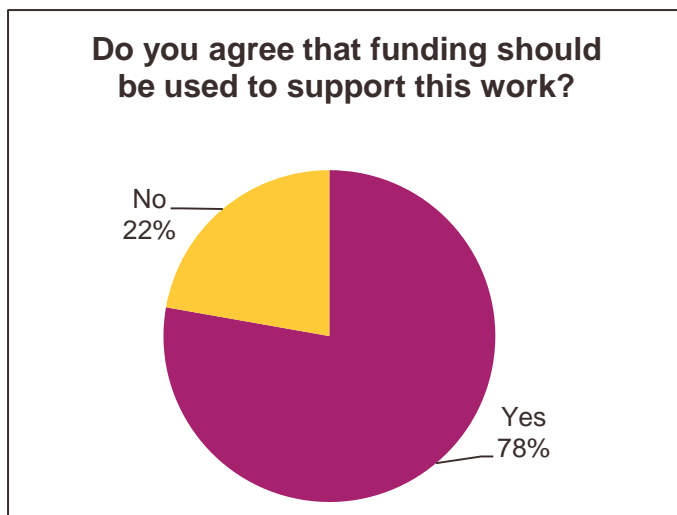
Q6. Do you agree that funding should be used to support this work?

78 per cent of respondents supported the proposal to use £1.6m to employ more children’s social workers and to support more help for children, young people and families at an early stage – table 6

Table 6: respondents to Q6

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	175	78%
No	50	22%
Total answered	225	100%

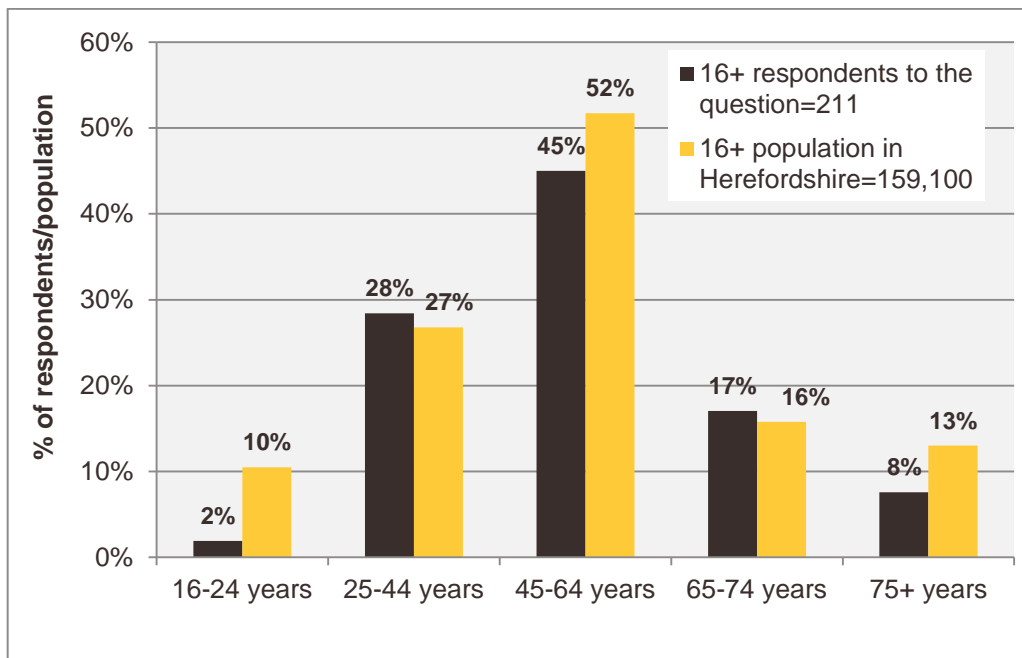
Figure 4: percentage of respondents to Q6



Respondent profile

- Two per cent of respondents represented an organisation or a group while 98 per cent were individuals. Three organisations identified themselves as:
 - Kingstone Academy Trust
 - Bosbury and Coddington Parish Council
 - Hereford and South Herefordshire Green Party
- 181 respondents provided their full postcode - please see map (appendix B- map of respondents to consultation)
- 53 per cent of respondents to the survey were males, 40 per cent were females, and 7 per cent preferred not to say.
(Herefordshire population profile: 50 percent to 50 percent)¹
- 25 per cent were aged 65 years or over, 45 per cent were aged 45-64 years, 28 per cent were aged 25-44 years and two per cent were 24 years or younger. People aged 24-64 years were largely over represented in the consultation.

Chart 4: Age distribution of survey respondents and Herefordshire population



¹ The Population of Herefordshire 2018 (<https://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/60636/population-of-herefordshire-2018-v10.pdf>)

- 13 per cent of respondents' day-to-day activities were limited a little or limited a lot because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.
- 94 per cent of respondents identified themselves as English, Scottish, Welsh or British; five per cent identified themselves as another national identity.
- Of the respondents who answered the question about their ethnicity, 96 per cent identified themselves as 'white' and three percent as 'other white'. This composition is slightly different to the adult population ethnicity profile of the county, where five per cent were 'other white' and two per cent were 'non-white' (2011 Census).

Appendix A: Nonstandard/other responses

Appendix B: Map of respondents to consultation

Appendix C: List of comments

Appendix D: The questionnaire

Email responses from residents

Email 1:

Companies such as Balfour Beatty to make a profit for their shareholders, not to enhance the lives of residents. In this rural county their lack of expertise in tree work and general care for the rural environment is all too obvious.

If the council ran its own in house workforce it would provide local jobs and that element of profit margin would be saved.

Distance travelled is a big factor in this county; employ local people in the market towns to care for the environment and facilities such as toilets.

We are a tourist destination for people keen to escape urban areas and experience old world charm so spend more on Tourist Information to promote what we have

Instead of intricate paving schemes in the heart of Hereford, spend more on plain tarmac so that our charming lanes and few main roads can be driven along smoothly and people do not trip over numerous potholes. Does the County Hospital send you details of the number of casualties they treat? Broken hips are the beginning of the end for many elderly people – this county has more than most authorities.

<name removed>

Email 2:

1. I refer to the consultation "till receipt" included in the consultation.

In the list of items 'Other income to supplement council tax' I would expect to see some income from Business Rates, Revenue Support Grant and possibly from the Energy from Waste scheme?

(In the presentation you show an expected income of £36m from business rates - a third of the income from Council Tax. Admittedly RSG is tiny.)

2. Can you explain why in the presentation of the budget for 2018/19, it showed that the savings expected from EC&C in 2019/20 were £1.060m, and in the presentation of the 2019/20 budget this time, the same directorate is expected to make savings of £2.017m.

For example, are you proposing to make additional cuts (£225m) to Public and Community Transport that were not originally projected for 2019/20?

And why the savings from Corporate in 2018/19 budget presentation were £1.2m and are now £0.5m?

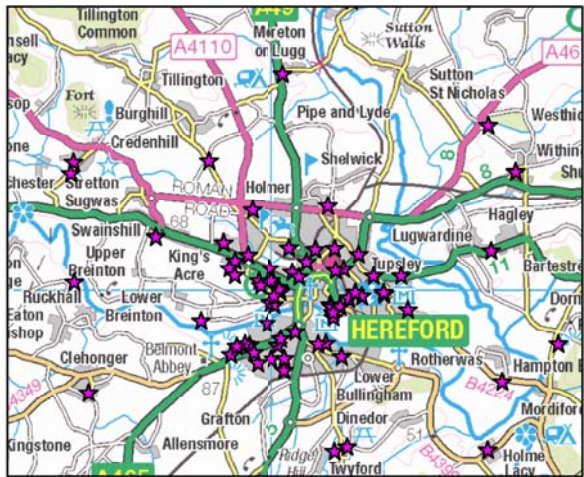
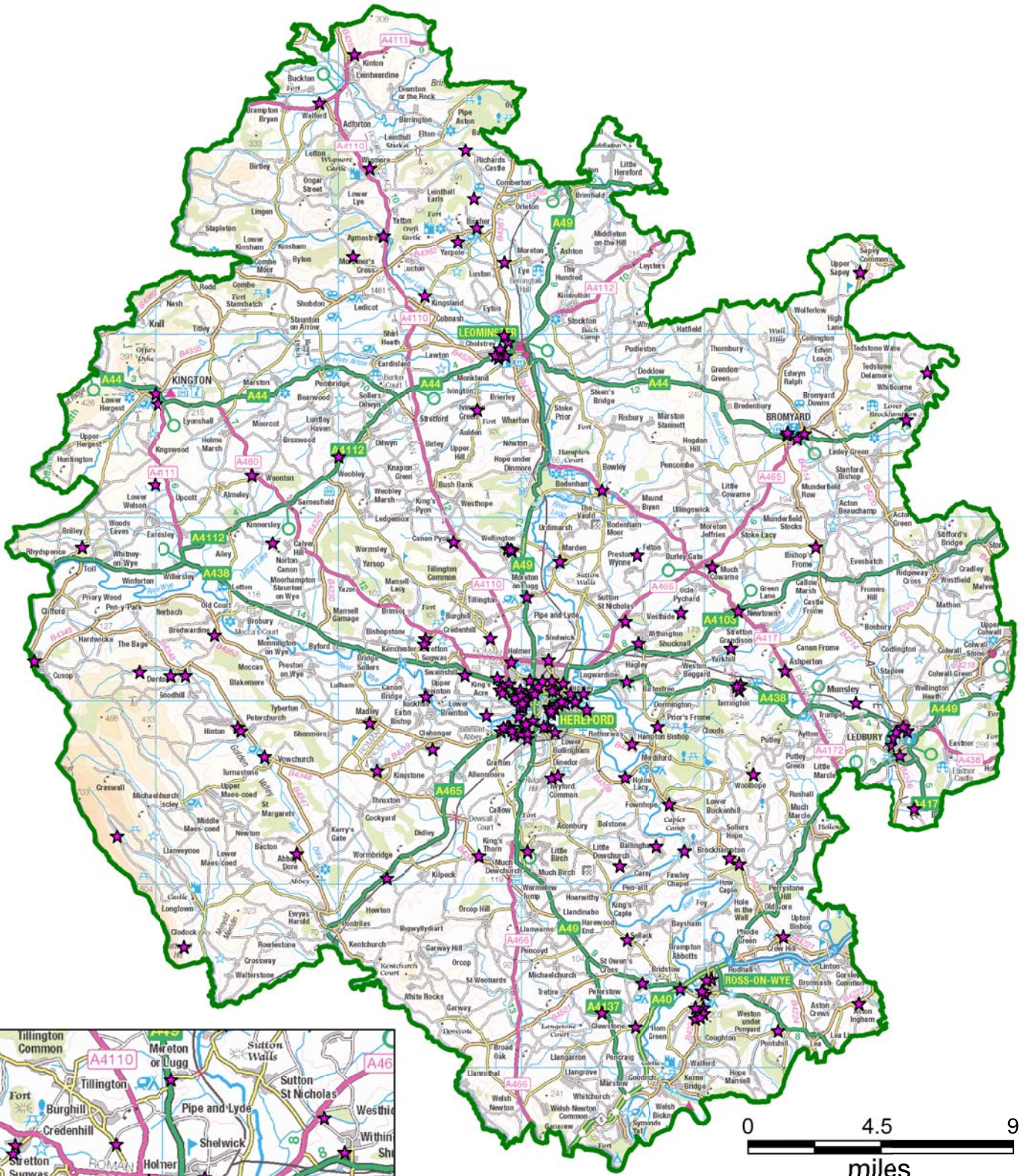
3. The Corporate Plan for 2016-2020, shows a base budget of £141m for 2019/20. This consultation has a figure of £145.4m. Why has the budget increased?

4. The MTFS Capital Programme shows a spend of £10.341m on the Local Transport Plan in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. What is this expenditure for?

5. The MTFS Capital programme for 2019/20 shows zero spend on other schemes less than £500k. Is this realistic?

Thank you

<name removed>



**Budget and priorities
consultation 2018 respondents**



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Appendix C: List of comments

Introduction

This report shows the comments made by residents to budget consultation 2018 questionnaire. Some of the comments have been edited to preserve anonymity, where this has been done the changes are marked within < >. Any remarks added by data entry personnel are shown in parenthesis, for example [comment illegible].

Note: Some of the comments refer to the statement number in the questionnaire. Where necessary, please refer to the consultation questionnaire.

Q2. Do you agree with the allocation of Council Tax spend as set out in the budget till receipt? This includes a 4.9% increase for 2019/20. If not, please explain why:

Comments:
Not enough is spent on fixing the county's roads nor on the library and museum's service
Need more road maintenance, hence answer to question1
Not enough is spent on providing affordable housing for local residents. In particular in rural villages where young families are being pushed out by market forces and buyers that come to the county from afar. It is an absolute disgrace that Herefordshire does not help its own young working families to get on the housing ladder. If private enterprise is not willing to provide affordable housing due to profit margins, perhaps the council should consider building its own housing to provide for its residents.
You waste too much money on non-essentials
Money not being put into early intervention and charities offer services for much lower rates why is this?
Your questionnaire assumes I agree with the method of collecting tax i.e. Council Tax. It is unfair regressive and there are not enough bands so that wealthy householders pay more
Economic growth is a priority for the council yet there seems to be a lack of investment; shouldn't investment in this area be presented as providing for our children's future? On the subject of protecting our children - when are the council going to get to grips with their finances. They have a research team that forecasts need, a finance team which allocates budget, and a management team that seem to overspend in this area. One of them must be wrong in what they do!!
Childrens Services require more spending helping young people in the care system and those that support them. The budget is stretched far too thinly and I would like to see the budget doubled
Too high
Start saving before spending and pay cuts up the top would help
The continuous cuts to services and rewritings regulatory criteria to reduce expenditure is not the best approach. The undefined level of savings and the means of achieving them is just wishful thinking.
I'd like to see far more spent on broadband rollout, and roads (repairs, snow clearance etc.); and much less on lifestyle services, schools and buses.
You need to lower your running costs and spend less on vanity projects and more on economic development

Comments:
Make cuts to staffing and executive pay
Some of your costs are simply too high. Why do we insist on having libraries, when most people read / buy books online now (if you do keep them, they should be part of other buildings / community hubs). Why are we paying towards planning when it's a chargeable service? Why do we pay so much for council office / administration / IT costs, these should be a lot lower and would be if you ran yourselves like a proper business.
Herefordshire residents are already paying the highest Council Tax I the UK, and have consistently and persistently shouldered the burden.
No faith in HC councillors or staff to properly consider such matters.
Too little spent on housing
Insufficient funding for child protection, e.g. early intervention, buses and community transport for isolated and deprived rural areas, roads, health in terms of preventative measures, support for elderly in their own homes and local government running costs appear high
Too greater spend on social care
Paying Hoople too much... Capital finance ill thought through... Should not have wasted do much on Blue school house... Broadband is private enterprise, not a utility. Why spend public money on it?
Far too much spent on local government running costs as a percentage of the whole, with too much time, effort and money being spent on vanity projects e.g. the bypass, a proposed university, etc.
Cost of local government running costs is too high, e.g. council overspend on Blue school House and not taking responsibility. Council is not fit to manage a budget
Children with disabilities' education are at crisis point. Families and/or carers are at crisis point. The number of profoundly disabled children is increasing. Special schools are bursting at the seams.
Where's the public transport support? I want to use a bus instead of my car all the time! What about community transport? Help that, too!
You do not spend the money wisely
Why is so much going on interest and debt repayments and so little on investment in economic growth?
Council control libraries and they are the future for our children. Increase share of funding
No arts provision. Nothing much for libraries. Herefordshire is a cultural desert - risks become very small minded, etc.
Too much for schools
More income could be achieved from car parking and investment property. Election, governance & legal costs could be reduced.
Running costs to high and low value from Roads & Bridges charges

Comments:
Suggest reduce lifestyle services (paying for people to do something they could do for themselves). Spend something on Tourist Information services.
Too much on substance abuse, sexual health and other Nanning services
I feel the council rewards its 'top' staff with large salaries when we have a history of failing the county with services that continually dwindle. Not to mention the underquote on the new building on Blue school Street! The amount of money that had been spent on the council offices and continual refurbishment is also disgraceful frankly. No accountability springs to mind.
More should go to the police.
"Roads, bridges and care of...", "Housing", and "Child protection" should be invested in more.
If you didn't waste money and overspent on things that would help with ensuring better management of tax payers money
more funding for sustainable transport solutions including buses and park and ride for the city
Nearly 40% of the allocation is 'looking after adults' - we should expect families to do more to support their loved ones, not the state. Also, the allocation against IT, Transactions & Billing seems high compared to Staff & Administration costs
Too little money is spent on maintaining public rights of way. In particular it is very short-sighted and counter-productive to close the P3 scheme, as using local contractors is far more cost-effective than using BBLP
Too much spent on capital finance
Child protection is totally out of control a complete shambles that needs scrapping.
Too much spending on adult social care and elderly. More should be done for the social responsibility of the families of these people to pay
I think more should be spent on affordable housing and less on bin collection. More emphasis should be made of community spirit, people do not have disposable income as they used to fund things like the new roads that do not provide that much function.
<u>Too much being spent on financing. Cut costs rather than borrow each year! (yes that includes those individual bottles of water at each meeting and the taxis)</u>
More funds need to be allocated to children with disabilities and additional needs given the rising costs.
We pay too much to Herefordshire Council for a bad service now
More should be spent on Broadband and less on economic regeneration.
This is not clear. More focus on prevention e.g... lifestyle
Annual inflation is not 4.9%
Social care should be paid for by the people who use it, it is expected for us to fund our own social care, I cannot afford to pay for other people's as well

Comments:
Because it is not affordable to me. Why does bin collection and environment cost so much, is this due to lack of efficient commissioning of service? It's not fit for purpose. Why is so much allocated to schools when parents are still asked to contribute so much financially additionally. Too much funding is allocated to preventative measures for smoking and has been the case for several years, what about other preventative measures and dropping the smoking. There is no rural transport and as they are run by private companies, why is this subsidised through the Council Tax. Too much money is allocated to people with disability which if invested in the community and voluntary sector organisations directly could lead to a reduction in this extortionate allocation. Why is more money not allocated to Looked after children, they are the real in need and poorly served.
Please invest more in health improvement and lifestyle services - this will reduce our costs and improve our wellbeing and health for the future
Borrowing so much is not prudent. The interest payments just mean that we have to pay higher Council Tax
I don't see why drug addiction & sexual health should have twice the allocation of resources as libraries and records. That seems very unbalanced.
Too much spent on substance abuse and sexual health
More money should be allocated to rural transport, housing, economic development and libraries, records and customer services and less should be spent on lifestyles services and I.T.
Salaries are too high for Directors in Council. Do not spend on stopping smoking campaign. Care for older people - families need to contribute more.
too much waste in council spending
Apart from the budget till receipt trivialising important decisions, it does not provide enough information. The expenditure on Hoople appears excessive, economic development and regeneration is not broken down. Why is "environment" lumped in with bin collections - what on earth does that mean? Why are elections, governance and legal services lumped together? Capital finance and interest payments are excessive and given the low level of reserves, the Council should not take on any further capital expenditure commitments. Much greater transparency and consultation is needed.
Year on year we are asked to pay way over the rate of Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation; my pension is not keeping up with these rises and it is not fair.
I think it is too little. Everything requires more funding.
Unless incomes go up by 5% how can people afford a 5% Council Tax increase?
More should be spent on funding public services such as museums, galleries, records and libraries as well as open spaces.

Comments:
Why Election and Governance costs are over four times staff costs? Why is so many locum staff employed at extortionately high agency rates? Why do the Council find it so hard to recruit and retain good experienced staff in social care teams across Adults and Childrens Services?
It is too big an increase for the services we get and too costly for struggling households
This is way above inflation
Insufficient information. Headings too broad
Stop the unnecessary by-pass and you can spread the saving without such an increase or so much borrowing - it is criminal to suggest borrowing more when you're wasting what you have
I think there should be more funding available for the public realm, open spaces, roads etc.
More needs to be spent on maintaining our roads as they are now in a shocking state. A quick repair job is not the answer or do we all have to buy rough terrain vehicles.
Libraries are the future for children, underfunded. Something only the council can do.
The spend on schooling looks high, until you see the central government income also. The net spend is comparably small. More needs to be spent on schooling - this is the future. There is both income and expenditure from capital financing interest. Assuming that the interest income is at a lower % than the interest expenditure, this appears wasteful.
How have you come to a figure of a 4.9% increase? Our family's wages have only increased 1% per year for the last decade with a pay freeze the year before that and we are a band D. 4.9% increase in a year is ridiculous.
I absolutely reject the need for the by-pass and am therefore totally against the Council borrowing millions of pounds to pay for it. I do not live in any of the residential areas affected by it, but I do travel into Hereford every day. The bypass is NOT needed, what is needed is a better internal traffic infrastructure for getting children to school - during school holidays there is hardly any problem at all. Plainly not all the traffic during the holidays will be using the by-pass, which shows how little actually would.
Car parking?
10% of Council Tax spent on disabled. Who probably make up 1% or less of population
Would like to see a bit more spent on buses, community transport, libraries and customer services and a bit less on running costs (admin, property maintenance)
It is difficult to come to a conclusion without comparisons to previous years or against other similar authorities. It seems that caring for disable adults costs twice as much as residential care for old people. Is this reasonable? Probably it is but without further breakdown of how the money is spent, I can't come to any conclusion.
Unfair that houses in higher Council Tax bands should pay 2or 3 times more than lower tax band households
Burdensome to already cash strapped residents whilst we are paying too much for IT (Hoople)

Comments:
More needs to be allocated to children's and adult social care services. Less money should be spent on commercial ventures
4.9% increase it far too much
We already pay enough for too little!
It is too big an increase for the services we get and too costly for struggling households
I disagree with the amounts being borrowed for new road schemes including the Hereford bypass. Like Nottingham council you could tax work place car parks to invest in safe Active travel especially safe routes to school, bus subsidies & comprehensive segregated cycle network across Hereford. Best use of public health grants.
It is more than twice the rate of inflation. Pensioners will not be able to afford to stay in their own homes they have worked all their lives for.
as the amount of money spent is too high and results are too small no increase if needed if procurement is done correctly
More needs to be spent on preventative services-which can only happen if there is an increase above 4.9%
Too much spent on disabled, debt repayment, and buses
Too much being spent on children in care. Too many in care given population
I think it would be possible to further reduce/sell off the council's buildings estate. It is difficult to assess whether the proportionate spend is appropriate without more detail. You do appear to be spending a colossal amount on debt interest payments - is this normal or a symptom of previous financial mismanagement?
I have had enough of my bill going up as I cannot afford it and have no access to council run services so do not benefit from any of it.
Too much
families are already struggling
I am on slightly above average wages that have been frozen for 2 years then a 1% pay raise for the past 3 years, the majority of people cannot afford their bills as they are with food and housing inflation continuing to rise from 2.3-5.6% over the past few years. We have already had a rise this past year of 4.9% which is frankly crippling most people on top of inflated costs and this would finish our family off without exaggeration.
Too much on children in care - this is not good for the children whose life chances are low
Too much is being spent on debt repayment and interest. Scale back capital investment to reduce these charges. Increase the allocation of funding to Children's Services and to Buses and Community Transport
you waste money and overspend on project , no accountability on over spending on projects like blue school street
Local salaries are not increasing at this rate

Comments:
No one's wages has gone up by that amount.
I don't agree with increase as a whole. There is an increase every year, yet the levels of services decrease every year.
Too many cuts in essential services and too much money spent and planned on vanity projects and expensive private consultants like wasp and Balfour Beatty. This stuff should be done in house and people's needs prioritised over and above expensive privatisation. Follow Liverpool and take the running of services in house with proper expert's whi have our real needs at heart, not profit for multinationals.
No money should be spent on building new roads and more spent on improving public transport and encouraging cycling/walking in safe spaces.
I do not agree with the increase. How on Earth can a Conservative administration justify tax increases?
Not enough for children's services
I am on a fixed pension income from 34 years of full-time work, and have truly grafted to pay off my mortgage; hence I am fundamentally opposed to the continuing drawdown on Council Tax-paying householders to pay for adult social care costs ad infinitum. If your view of the welfare state is take care of all, forever, costs irrespective, -then pay for it from Council borrowings with interest rates so low. For so long.
Debt repayment and interest payments should be reduced, by reducing capital spend on road building. More money should go to Buses and Community Transport and Looking after Children. Further comments / observations. 1. No income is shown on the Till Receipt from Business Rates and Revenue Support Grant 2. Can you explain why in the presentation of the budget for 2018/19, it showed that the savings expected from EC&C in 2019/20 were £1.060m, and in the presentation of the 2019/20 budget this time; the same directorate is expected to make savings of £2.017m. For example, are you proposing to make additional cuts (£225m) to Public and Community Transport that were not originally projected for 2019/20? And why the savings from Corporate in 2018/19 budget presentation were £1.2m and are now £0.5m? 3. The Corporate Plan for 2016-2020, shows a base budget of £141m for 2019/20. This consultation has a figure of £145.4m. Why has the budget increased? 4. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Capital Programme shows a spend of £10.341m on the Local Transport Plan in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. What is this expenditure for? 5. The MTFS Capital programme for 2019/20 shows zero spend on 'other schemes less than £500k'. Is this realistic?
Less should be spend on governance. Additionally, the council should not give in to pressures around road maintenance, verges etc. Providing education, care and services to our children, vulnerable people and older people should take priority. We should absolutely focus on infrastructure which brings revenue into Herefordshire and focus funding on prevention to reduce future demand. Pot holes can wait!
More on roads resurfacing, more on libraries, more on public transport, Less on economic development and regeneration.

Comments:

Not enough on roads, repairs & need for Leominster bypass, Excessive pollution unacceptable. Not enough on Libraries/Museum/archives

Q3a. To support this investment we intend to borrow £22.3m, with repayment costs incorporated into household Council Tax. If borrow more, what should the extra borrowed money be spent on?

Comments

Bus services, library and museums

bus services

Social housing and infrastructure

A detailed plan for transport especially in Hereford, which doesn't rely on a bus based system. The condition of the existing network is very poor and needs a dramatic new approach to restoring its condition.

Infrastructure

Public transport - buses to rural communities

To make sure that the above is actually completed.

Cultural provision, support for craft workers, investment in people and place - and much, much less spent on senior and middle management pay - cut the top not the bottom.

More radical thinking in our transport infrastructure at county and city level which would encourage more businesses to relocate. e.g. properly upgraded, fast, trunk roads to Hereford from M50 and Worcester; segregated cycle paths from outlying villages into Hereford city, free/cheap shuttle buses within the city to reduce car movements.

Improving the public right of way network to make it more accessible and to repair numerous bridges which are in poor repair. If these problems are not addressed the Council's fixed assets will further deteriorate

Road network needs a massive amount spent on it.

Roads, children, hospital

Projects like the university and further investment in roads like the proposed bypass

Comments
museums & libraries, public transport
Better support for Third Sector projects, schools and staff
Resurfacing roads
investment in resources for the new influx of residents and students to the County - Museums and libraries and similar tourism / enrichment activities
child health, adult mental health services, care agencies
Developing more facilities in Ledbury to allow existing businesses to expand and new businesses to be attracted to Ledbury. PS: The arithmetic on page 8-savings required is not correct. The total savings should read £6,267,000 not the figure of £5,267,000 shown. A considerable difference.
Infrastructure expenditure is declining significantly from 2018-2020. The base is hardly one of over-investment. I support more investment in infrastructure, schools and roads - but not council offices.
Borrowing is cheap at the moment. Do it now while rates are low. Don't forget North Herefordshire....
Herefordshire university & Healthy Lifestyles
More infrastructure. More housing.
Education, new council housing

Q3b. To support this investment we intend to borrow £22.3m, with repayment costs incorporated into household Council Tax. If borrow less, what investment should be cut?

Comments
fire most of them at Plough lane
Economic development and IT, transactions and billing
I do not believe taxpayers' money should be used to promote private enterprise in the county. It is not for local government to intervene and subsidise private firms or entice them with business rate cuts.

Comments
all non-essential spend such as social care which should come out of central gov. funds
I think that you need to be more specific about what these projects are. Then I can make a real decision. Borrowing is something we should look to reduce, not increase and expect us to pay for mismanaged money
Supporting delivery of, presumably private, housing shouldn't be something that my tax money is going on. I don't see how taking out loans is sustainable funding for the council.
They shouldn't sold everything as they would have funds if they waited and save the borrowing just going to get more and more as they haven't got as much income coming in
Stupid kerbs in hi town, stop moving offices every 2 minutes, stop wasting money paying 10 men to do a job when only 2 work.
Borrowing is simply disguising the Council spending beyond its means. Cut schools and housing delivery but maintain investment in roads.
New university
To date there are no projects run competitively all go to Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) why are tax cows being used to fill there trough
I don't think you should cut investment into the county, as this is highly needed, however I don't see why households should pay for it. Shouldn't the repayment costs be covered by the investment you bring into the county instead?
Stop all the ridiculous vanity projects. Reduce the number of councillors and staff. No more new housing. Let market town councils do their own funding
schools
The proposed bypass scheme
Investment too Hereford and Ross focussed
New Road allocation and the building of executive homes
Anything that is not a legal requirement should not be funded
Salaries for managers in the Council should be frozen and when officers are replaced, get rid of the six-figure salaries. Stop building of new roads, repair those we have and invest in park and ride, cycling and pedestrian infrastructures instead.

Comments
I don't think the council is capable of managing a decent sized capital project and should refrain from wasting any more public money.
Borrowing will simply add to the cost of debt, which is already at 7.5% of your "budget till receipt", you are simply pushing the financial problems of the Council forward to the next generation.
Facilities for business, a general heading which could be anything. Hereford Councils recent big projects appear to be reckless and beyond comprehension
Investing in pointless roads that serve only to increase congestion
The western bypass. For heaven's sake, it's a rubbish idea. Invest in public transport, turning space above shops into flats, reduce waste in the city and towns
Stop spending most of the money in the mid to south part of county. There is a large part of Herefordshire North of Dinmore
None. Make savings elsewhere. Investment shouldn't be the first thing to be cut.
Concentrate on maintaining existing services rather than having these capital projects.
Stop building bypass road
Get better value for investment
Over staffing and overpaying council officers who care nothing for the county unless it lines their pockets. I.E. allowing Herefordshire to disappear under acres of plastic sheeting
From all plans.
No. Comment on this
Why invest in Ross as you are not investing in the other Market Towns? Would excluding Ross mean you borrow less?
land, whilst only supporting public housing
Developing facilities for business
The so called by pass.
All should be cut equally
I do not agree the Council's spend on its proposed SLR or by-pass roads. Instead it should invest convincingly in modal shift to low carbon and active transport
Make wiser decisions. Spend less on silly little things like cycle path signs, stop executive expense waste don't spend millions on office upgrades. Need I continue?
If you haven't got it don't spend it on projects, people should always come first

Comments
New Roads/bypass
central government should be funding care of elderly, not local councils
Make sure that capital spend is necessary, will the by Really reduce city traffic?
Improving schools and delivery of housing. Schools are allowed to close when they have been in existence for 5 years with little support. There is no point in investing in housing when you are not investing in the infrastructure which needs to accompany it. Investment into business is only aimed at private businesses and not enough for the smaller businesses. Seeing as the new bypass will take years to build why the increase now?
That's your job, not mine. But I'm not at all convinced that the famous link road is money well spent.
Consultations. These are very expensive and every week there seems to be a new one for something. I have also noticed that if a consultation produces a result the council doesn't like another one is set up.
Concentrate on Hereford. Ross on Wye is just a small town - no investment needed. Make sure the bypass around Hereford actually happens!
spend more wisely, stop waste
I assume the investment includes expenditure on the bypass - perhaps the bypass should be re-visited
Plans for new roads, opening up the areas for new housing development with no corresponding provision of services - in particular health, hospitals, education and public transport. Absolutely no further borrowing.
Delivery of excessive amounts of housing that are swamping small villages and where there is no work for those who can afford to buy those new houses.
None. This money should be collected by increasing Council Tax.
I think that we should not borrow the capital because it will cost us more in the longer term in interest repayments. In my opinion, we should save until we can afford this investment.
I disagree that borrowing less necessitates a reduction in investment in our county, and strongly object to the leading wording of this question. I believe in raising sufficient funds from Council Tax revenues to finance public services and capital projects.
That is for councillors to decide
Focus business in Hereford rather than Ross on Wye
The council should prioritise its investment and reduce its borrowing to avoid problems in the future.
This bypass waste of money

Comments
This is a slanted question with misleading optional answers, i.e. investment in the county is not only borrowing especially when that includes the bypass.
The proposed bypass is a waste of money, more needs to be done to support sustainable transport
How dare you borrow more and charge us more for something we neither want nor need. In school holidays we can sail through town without the hold ups, which proves it is not the through traffic causing the problem. If you must borrow then improve the infrastructure not waste it on a white elephant and one or two Councillors personal ambition & pride!
Reduce the spend on business facilities
Focus on schools and housing
Councillors pay at the top. Stop proposed road across Kings Acre and reroute it somewhere off Roman Road/Stretton Sugwas road to make better use of that investment.
Bypass
Businesses can find other ways to gain investment.
The loan for building the by-pass should be cut. The consultation was a farce - the man in charge said it didn't matter what the outcome was; the by-pass will go ahead anyway (nowhere near his house of course!). I live further away from the city than he does but travel in every day - during the busy times. Borrowing millions to pay for what I think is his personal ambition is abhorrent - I wish I had never voted for him and certainly won't again!
Less money on roads and transport and supporting business
Supporting delivery of housing - developers make enough money on new homes and shouldn't require the help of the council
Roads and schools
My concern is not with the amount of money to be borrowed but where it is to be spent. From what I have been able to determine, plans involve mainly Hereford with some investment in Ross and Leominster. It is unclear how the market towns and rural areas will benefit yet their residents will be expected to pay for the borrowing. I would like to see increased investment in the county not just in the county town.
Herefordshire's roads and transport network
commercial ventures; consultants fees; factor in savings on interest on borrowing
Make savings elsewhere
The authority keeps on borrowing and hiking up the Council Tax so that we end up paying for the investment. A more community and holistic approach is needed to find out exactly where residents think their money should be spent.
Doesn't need to borrow less if more thought was considered from public before decisions were taken. Not a good question for public to answer.

Comments
The council should prioritise its investment and reduce its borrowing to avoid problems in the future.
Investment in the Hereford bypass which has no business case & makes congestion worse. Will worsen the average spend in the city centre decreasing the vibrancy of the Commercial sector. Cycling cities have a higher local spend per head of population so investment in a cycling network would support the city & tourism businesses.
New road building
The council has a huge income from Council Tax; I think it should be spent more wisely. Why new council offices, again? Works on Commercial Road when it has so recently been paved...
to date Hereford transport policy is a joke until this is sorted no further money should be borrowed
The endless cycle of more housing, more roads, more demand for services, more need to invest, more debt has to end eventually and the longer it takes the more painful it will be - if you haven't got the money don't buy it.
Get central government to distribute tax more fairly throughout the UK. Londoners have a far better standard of living subsidised by Europe and central government.
Houses
Reduce building of houses from 2020 when funding removed. Herefordshire's roads and transport network needs improving first, spend money on maintaining current infrastructure
The council should reduce its role in economic development & leave this to the private sector
Building the Hereford Bypass and the Southern Link Road
Salaries for Directors in Council e.g. <name removed> should be reduced significantly. Stop lining the pockets of council employees and look after the residents better
Concentrate on roads, and housing, then you're income will rise because you will be able to collect more Council Tax due to move housing.
There is a great deal of wastage by the council services. Services should be brought back in house as other Counties are finding out. Balfour Beatty are taking us all for fools as did Jarvis and Amey. Learn from your mistakes. Don't borrow more as that just leads to more being paid out in extortionate interest charges
These are unaffordable vanity projects. Investment is needed now in safe active and public transport. This would reduce congestion, improve our health, reduce crime and mental health and improve economics and social mobility. Affordable homes are needed now and city regeneration should be worked on with owners of derelict buildings and brownfield sites required to redevelop or sell up for this purpose of affordable homes.
Business development and growth. New road building. You cannot have infinite growth on a finite planet. More roads = more traffic. This has been proven time and time again.

Comments
The taxpayer should not be expected to subsidise private enterprise.
Social care. Housing delivery - developers should slim their profits to pay a % more for essential associated infrastructure, or there should be less housing - period.
Investment in road building (Hereford Bypass specifically) should be cut.
land and property
Disagree with this. If it is not viable for the private sector it is inappropriate for local government.

Budget consultation 2019/20

The questionnaire

Our budget proposals for 2019/20 have been prepared against the backdrop of the government's continuing austerity programme. Grants from central government have been drastically cut in recent years and will be almost eliminated by 2020. Council Tax and business rates currently meet around 40% of the council's annual costs and fund many services across the county, from waste collection and road maintenance to looking after vulnerable children and adults. Therefore, Council Tax would need to be raised by 4.9% to balance the budget for 2019/20. This includes a 2.9% increase in the core Council Tax and the 2% adult social care precept. The impact of this increase on a Band D property is £5.90 per month.

Your Council Tax funds many services across the county, from waste collection and road maintenance, to looking after vulnerable children and adults. Each year we set a budget to decide how much we're able to spend on services for Herefordshire residents and businesses for the next financial year.

Q1 What do you think about our proposal to increase Council Tax by 4.9% in 2019/20?

- About right
- Too much
- Too little

Q2 Do you agree with the allocation of Council Tax spend as set out in the budget till receipt at the end of this document? This includes a 4.9% increase for 2019/20.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If not, please explain why:

The capital programme - the money the council expects to spend on key infrastructure projects over the coming year - supports delivery of the council's priorities. The current 2019/20 capital programme is over £48m. This money can also be used to invest in and maintain roads, land and property. The council can use its powers to borrow funds to fund significant capital investment.

Q3 The council intends to invest over £48m in capital projects, such as improving Herefordshire's roads and transport network, developing facilities for business to establish and grow in Hereford and Ross-on-Wye, improving schools and supporting delivery of housing. To support this investment we intend to borrow £22.3m, with repayment costs incorporated into household Council Tax. Do you:

- Support the council increasing its borrowing requirement by £22.3m as proposed?
- Think that the council should borrow more than proposed to increase the level of investment in the county?
- Think that the council should borrow less, and reduce its investment in the county?

If borrow more, what should the extra borrowed money be spent on?

If borrow less, what investment should be cut?

The council awards approximately £24.8m of Council Tax discounts in certain circumstances, such as a disabled person or carer discount. We also have the power to offer a Council Tax Reduction scheme to those on low incomes and in 2017/18 we awarded these households a discount of around £10.7m.

Q4 The Council Tax Reduction scheme currently allows for households on low income to have their Council Tax discounted by a maximum of 84% of the amount payable. Would you support:

- Keeping the maximum discount at 84%?
- Increasing the level of the discount (to more than 84%)?
- Reducing the level of the discount (to less than 84%)?

The council has the power to award business rates discounts, such as to small businesses, charities and businesses in rural locations.

Q5 The council awards approximately £18.7m of business rates discounts in a year, including £8.4m awarded to small businesses. Would you support:

- Continuing to award this level of business rates discount?
- Increasing the availability of business rates discounts?
- Reducing the level of business rates discounts available?

The caseloads of social workers who work with children, young people and their families to keep them safe are of concern to us. In order to reduce these workloads and the chance of children and young people being at risk because of them, we are proposing to use £1.6m to employ more children's social workers and to support more help for children, young people and families at an early stage.

Q6 Do you agree that funding should be used to support this work?

- Yes No

About you

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

- Organisation or group Individual

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

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.

What is your full postcode?

At birth, were you described as....?

- Male Intersex
 Female Prefer not to say

What is your age band?

- 0-15 years 25-44 years 65-74 years
 16-24 years 45-64 years 75+ years

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?

- Yes No Prefer not to say

How would you describe your national identity? (Please tick all that apply)

- English Scottish Welsh
 Northern Irish British Irish
 Other

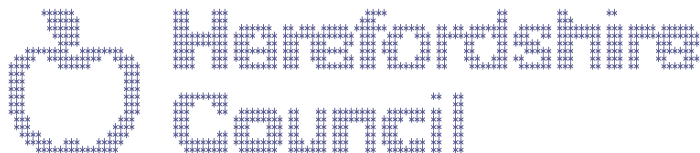
How would you describe your ethnic group?

- White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish
- Other White (please specify below)
- Any other ethnic group (please specify below)

Thank you

You can complete this questionnaire online at: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/budgetconsultation but completed hard copies can be sent to:
Herefordshire Council Research Team, Freepost SWC4816, PO Box 4, Hereford, HR4 0BR

Any information you provide will be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The information you provide will not be shared with any third parties, but where appropriate, it will be used to support the planning of services and the continuous improvement of various functions. For further information, please visit Herefordshire Council website.



Charges per month (average Band D property) 2019/20

** Daily life **	#
* * Bin collections and Environment	13.46
* Roads, bridges and care of public spaces	7.08
* Schools and education	98.11
* Buses and community transport	6.27
* Libraries, records and customer services	1.28
** Looking after adults **	
* Older People in residential / nursing care	12.16
* Older people supported at home	8.58
* Disabled adults	25.86
* Lifestyles services (substance abuse, sexual health)	2.64
* Health improvement (Public Health nursing, health checks, smoking cessation)	5.61
* Housing	0.52
** Looking after children **	
* Child protection	3.68
* Children in care	12.63
* Children with special needs	3.22
** Local government running costs **	
* Election, governance and legal services	3.18
* Directors & Staff costs	0.64
* Organisational administration	1.39
* IT, Transactions and billing (Hoople)	5.17
* Insurance and property maintenance	4.96
* Capital finance - Debt repayment	7.83
* Capital finance - Interest payments	10.24
** Economic growth **	
* Economic development and regeneration	1.24
* Broadband - rural rollout	0.13
* Planning	0.34

** VOUCHER **	
** Other income to supplement council tax **	
* Investment Property income	-2.92
* Car parking	-5.26
* Capital finance - Interest received	-2.01
* Public Health grant	-7.70
* National Education funding	-96.98

TOTAL TO PAY (per month) £121.36

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