

YOUR SAY ON HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S BUDGET AND TAX FOR 2024/25: RESULTS

Version 1.0

Herefordshire Council Intelligence Unit

January 2024

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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

Introduction

Herefordshire Council's Budget and Tax consultation was carried out from 22 November to 31 December 2023. The following results are from 326 responses received to the online consultation questionnaire. In addition to the standard responses there were nine email responses received with additional comments which are included in free text comment analysis (Q1b).

The 326 respondents to the survey were self-selecting, therefore these results should not be considered a representative view of the population of Herefordshire.

The online survey was only one part of the council's budget and tax consultation. Impact Consultancy has carried out a series of public engagements around the county during the same period. These results should be read in conjunction with Impact's summary report of the findings from the qualitative engagement exercise.

Please note that the percentages in this report are based on respondents to each question/statement.

Results

Q1. To what extent do you support or not support the following approaches to saving or generating money?

From the five approaches listed in the question, four were supported by a majority of respondents. The exception being 'Raising money through increases in parking charges across the county', which 69% of the 326 respondents opposed (compared to 30% support).

The highest level of support that respondents expressed were for:

- 'Investing in potholes repair and the road network' (93% support vs 7% oppose)
- 'Reviewing the council's assets to maximise returns and benefits' (88% support vs 8% oppose)

The following approaches were also supported by the majority of respondents, but with higher levels of opposition than those above.

- Continuing the 100% discount on Council Tax for people most in need (69% support vs 27% oppose)
- Introducing a paid-for subscription based garden waste (61% support vs 27% oppose)

Figure 1: Extent of support for the approaches to saving or generating money (ordered by support)

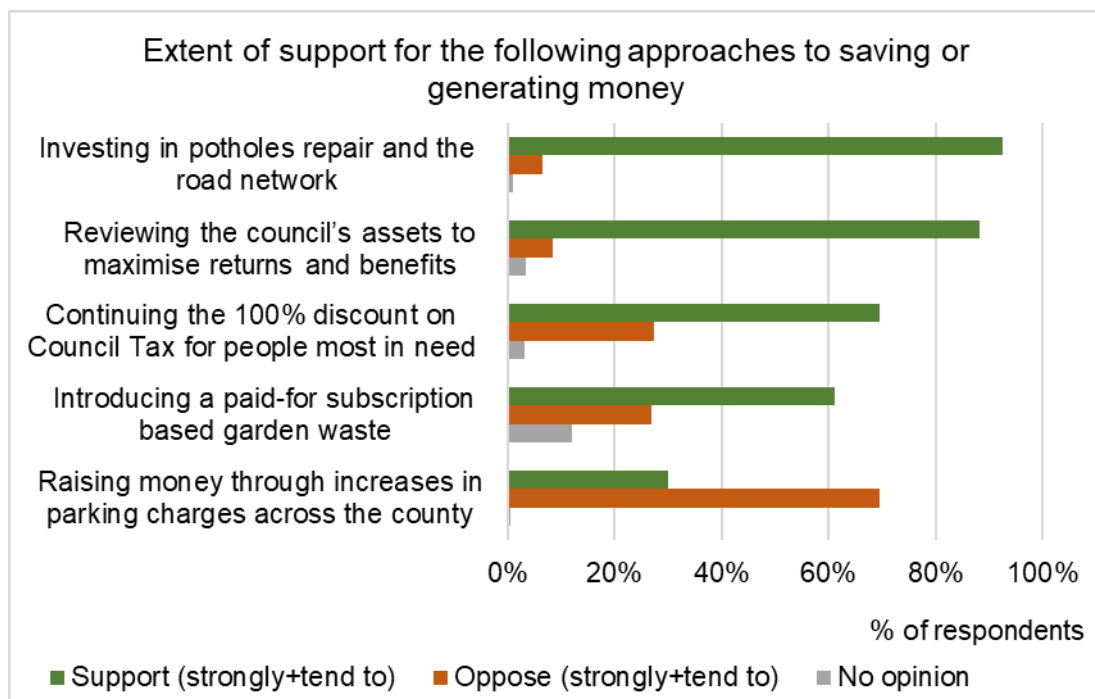


Table 1: responses to Q1 by percentage of respondents giving each answer

	Strongly support	Tend to support	Tend to oppose	Strongly oppose	No opinion
1. Continuing the 100% discount on Council Tax for people most in need (this measure seeks to support residents in the community struggling to pay their council tax charge)	34%	35%	18%	9%	3%
2. Reviewing the council's assets to maximise returns and benefits (a review to ensure the council's land and building assets are used efficiently to get best use and value for money)	59%	30%	4%	4%	3%
3. Investing in potholes repair and the road network (to improve the road network and prioritise those roads identified as requiring the most urgent work)	63%	29%	4%	3%	1%
4. Raising money through increases in parking charges across the county	12%	17%	24%	45%	1%
5. Introducing a paid-for subscription based garden waste (the introduction of a paid for subscription based collection service would replace the current arrangement and green sacks for garden waste will no longer be available for purchase)	31%	30%	12%	15%	12%

Q1b. This question asked respondents to specify their answers (support/oppose) to the approaches to saving or generating money in Q1a.

A total of 115 comments were received in response to question 1b of the online survey. In addition, 9 comments were submitted by email. The key themes to emerge (in order of frequency*) were as follows: See appendix 1 for full list of comments.

Theme	Number of comments
Criticism of the way the council runs things (it, or its contractors, does not offer value for money, is out of touch, has the wrong priorities, wastes money, and/or suggestions for how it can economise or raise revenue)	35
Comments relating to the efficacy of the proposed garden waste scheme	34
Opposition to increases in car parking charges	32
Complaints about roads and pavements and/or road transport issues	30
Opposition to cutting services and/or selling off council assets. Council should be investing in services	23
The Council's focus should be economising and/or keeping Council Tax increases to a minimum	19
Opposition to the 100% Council Tax discount for poorer households	12
The Council should invest more in greener transport and/or active travel	7
Low income, elderly and/or vulnerable households should be protected from further Council Tax increases	6

* Comments could cover multiple themes, so the sum of themed comments is greater than the number of respondents who commented.

Q2. Herefordshire Council will need to make difficult decisions about the services it delivers and supports to balance next year's budget, so we want to know what is important to you and your family. From the following list of services that the council either provides or supports, which do you think are the most important to protect?

The respondents were asked to choose up to three answers and rank order of importance (1 being the highest). The results presented in Figure 2 are based on a weighted score of the responses marked for each rank.

There were only minor differences in the order of priority if looking at the total proportion of respondents who selected a service as one of their 'top three' or by calculating a weighted score based on the relative rankings. The table shows the proportions, whilst the chart shows the weighted score (where rank 1 is given a score of 3, rank 2 a score of 2 and rank 3 a score of 1).

Key points are:

- There are three services which are clear priorities: highways and roads, care for older people and children's social services (note here that children's social services got the most top rank but the others were selected more often overall).
- Schools and care for physically disabled and those with learning difficulties were ranked next most important.
- Not much to distinguish between all other services.

Figure 2: The most important areas to protect ordered by weighted score

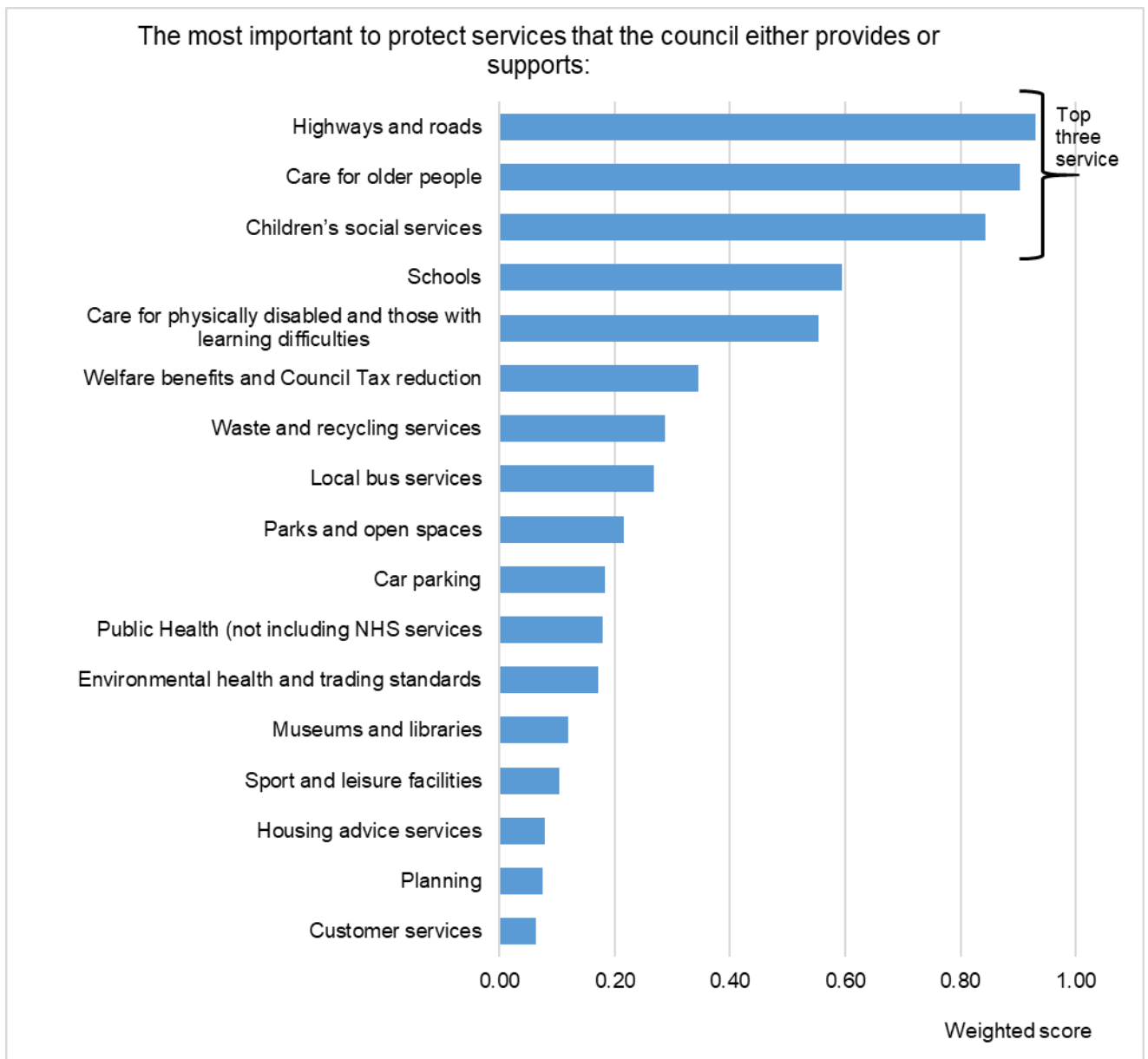


Table 2: proportion of responses to Q2 based on total respondents who ranked their top three options (from 1 to 3).

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	% Total respondents
Highways and roads	16%	17%	11%	44%
Care for older people	15%	16%	13%	44%
Children's social services	17%	12%	10%	39%
Care for physically disabled and those with learning difficulties	8%	12%	9%	28%
Schools	11%	10%	6%	27%
Waste and recycling services	3%	5%	9%	17%
Local bus services	4%	4%	7%	15%
Welfare benefits and Council Tax reduction	8%	3%	3%	15%
Parks and open spaces	2%	5%	6%	13%
Public Health (not including NHS services)	4%	1%	4%	9%
Car parking	4%	2%	3%	9%
Environmental health and trading standards	3%	2%	3%	9%
Museums and libraries	2%	1%	4%	7%
Sport and leisure facilities	1%	2%	4%	7%
Housing advice services	1%	1%	3%	5%
Planning	1%	1%	1%	4%
Customer services	1%	1%	1%	3%

Council Tax options for 2024/25

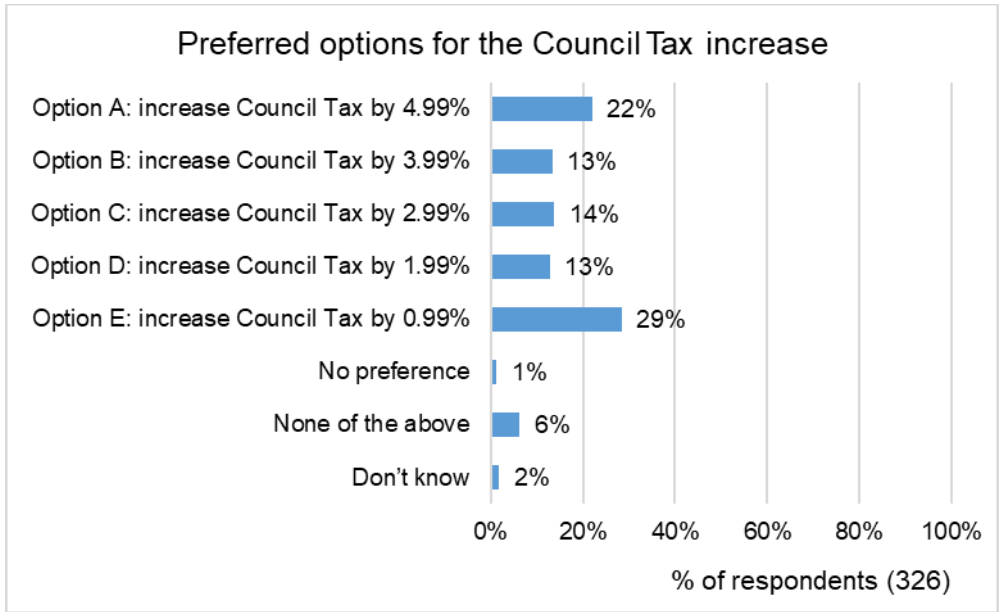
Q3. Which of the following options would you prefer?

Respondents were asked about their preference on the level of Council Tax increase that the council should consider for 2024/25. Although there was no clear overall preference, the most common response, selected by 29% of the 326 respondents, was to increase by 0.99%. The next most common response (22%), was to increase by 4.99%. The options in between received equal levels of support.

Figure 3 shows the respondents preferred options.

- 29% of respondents supported an increase of 0.99%
- 22% of respondents supported an increase of 4.99%
- 13% -14% supported an increase of either 1.99%, 2.99% or 3.99%
- 7% indicated that no preference or none of the given options

Figure 3: preference on increasing Council Tax



About you

Although the online survey approach is self-selecting and cannot be considered a representative sample of the views of the population, it is still useful to compare the characteristics of respondents to the population of the county as a whole.

For this reason, respondents were asked a few questions about themselves. The entire section, as well as the individual questions, was entirely optional to complete. 41 respondents (13%) indicated that they did not wish to complete this section

The profile of responses was broadly similar to the gender and disability profile of the county, but was skewed towards higher council tax bands and 45-64 years age group. And respondents were less likely to be from an ethnic group other than 'white British' (5% compared to 8% of population aged 16+).

Which Council Tax band are you in?

Table 3: percentage of respondents and percentage of dwellings in Herefordshire by Council Tax band

Council Tax Band	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of dwellings (2021)
A	8%	15%
B	13%	23%
C	16%	19%
D	27%	15%
E	11%	14%
F, G or H	16%	12%
Don't know	9%	-
Total respondents	290	

Your gender?

Table 4: percentage of respondents and percentage of Herefordshire 16+ population by gender

Gender	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of MYE 2022 aged 16+ years
Male	47%	49%
Female	53%	51%
Other	1%	-
Total respondents	287	

What is your age band?

Table 5: percentage of respondents and percentage of Herefordshire population by age band

Age band	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of MYE 2022 aged 16+ years
16-24 years	4%	8%
25-44 years	25%	26%
45-64 years	45%	28%
65+ years	27%	26%
Total respondents	285	

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?

Table 6: percentage of respondents and percentage of Herefordshire 16+ population by disability status

Disability or Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI)	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of population aged 16+ (Census 2021)
Yes	20%	17%
No	80%	83%
Total respondents	285	

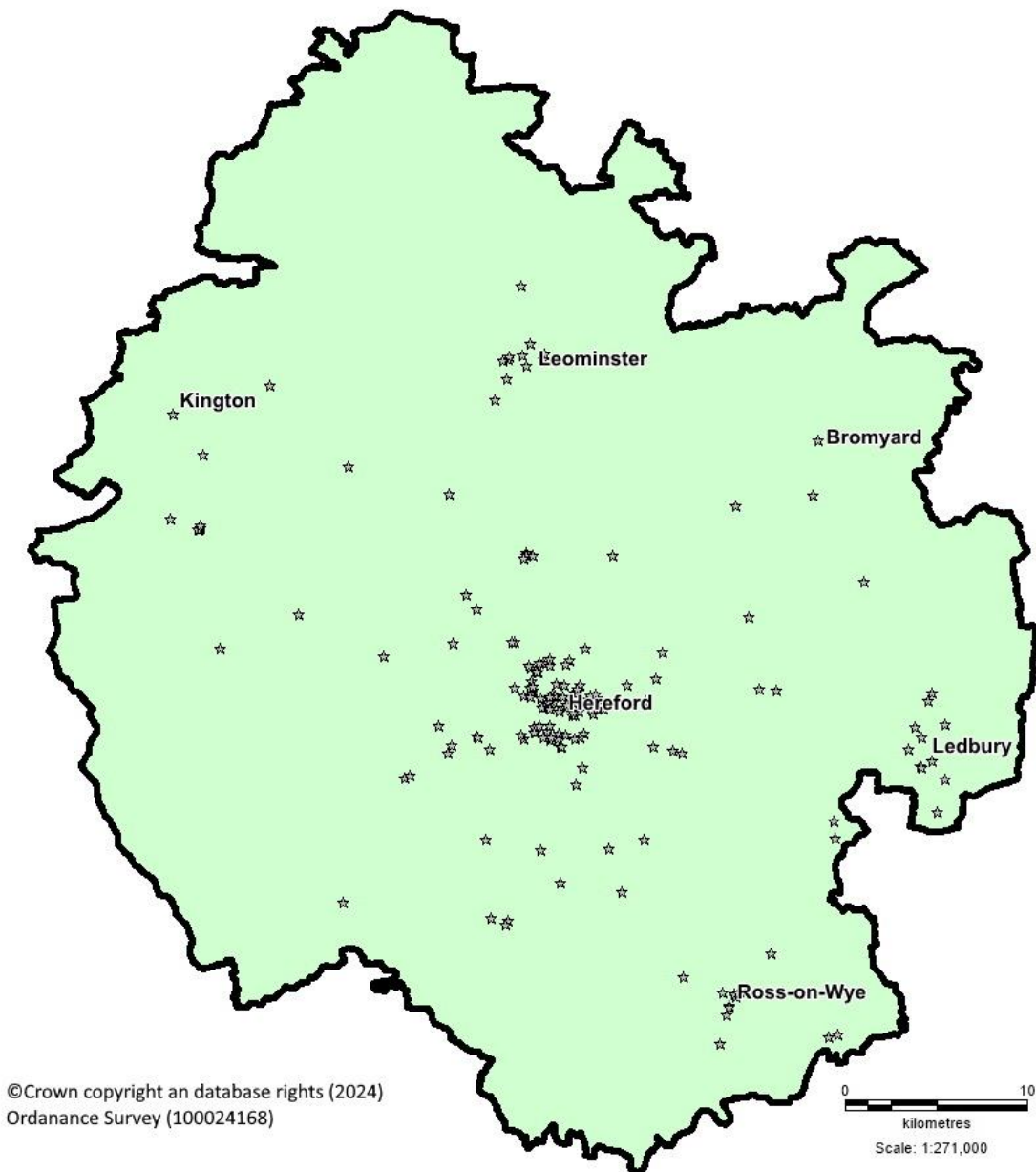
Table 7: percentage of respondents and percentage of Herefordshire 16+ population by ethnic group

Age band	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of population aged 16+ (Census 2021)
White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish	94%	92%
Other White	4%	5%
Any other ethnic group	1%	3%
Total respondents	284	

Postcode

Respondents were asked to provide their postcode with the aim of understanding the distribution of the responses across the county. 194 of the 326 respondents chose to provide their postcode, 192 of these are within Herefordshire. The following map shows where the postcodes spread across the county. Please note that the points on the map represent the centre of a postcode, not the actual address – see Figure 4

Figure 4: Respondents' postcodes



Appendix 1: List of free text comments to Q1b

Comments
Parking charges are high and it isn't fair on car owners to have to bail out everyone.
The garden service is already available from Biffa
The council should have two aims: (1) To eliminate all non-essential spending and (2) To minimise the Council Tax to benefit "everyone".
It would be good to see the council spend as much money and effort on the rural areas of the county as they do on the city. We all pay Council Tax, I feel that those of us not in the city do not get any value for our money. For example, free buses in the city but no buses outside if it. And being penalised for driving into the city, how else are we supposed to get there?
Re. 100% discount. I support a generous discount as there is no point chasing people who genuinely cannot pay, but feel that it may be abused. Something should be charged - even if a token 5 - 10%
Isn't number 5 re-inventing the wheel, when the brown bin scheme has been running successfully for a number of years?
1-No further comment 2-I support the reviewing of assets as long as the findings don't affect or impact the services offered by the council as a way to achieve a cost saving. 3-No further comment 4-Strongly oppose, Herefordshire already has extremely expensive parking charges, so much so I often avoid going into central Hereford and for larger in person shops prefer to travel to neighbouring counties. 5-The suggested costs in your garden waste survey currently ongoing are a lot more expensive than the cost of the bags.
Whilst it is important to maximise building use- it doesn't take into account the current use and costs to other departments if rents are increased. We rent buildings where social care activities take place and the council is looking to increase rents - we will therefore have to charge more to that department for services.
Important that those who are on low incomes/ most in need see no increase in their Council Tax. For those who are more fortunate (including myself), we should be willing to accept that it is our responsibility to pay more to maintain/ improve council services for all.
Council Tax discounts must be effectively means tested in line with current Government moves regarding welfare benefits eligibility. Garden waste collection subscriptions should be voluntary to accommodate residents who already compost all garden and kitchen waste at home.
A paid-for subscription based garden waste would be a great idea but concerns as to cost. If there are 18 collections, at £ 2 a collection (£36pa) would probably buy it but any more, would not bother. Am sure the council understands the economies of scale derived from making it very attractively priced so maximum number of people subscribe, with minimum cost per collection to them.
Do not increase Council Tax!!!! I work full time and can hardly afford to live as it is just so you can all line your pockets!!!! Invest in infrastructure and the actual city with empty shop and traffic issues.
Support more cultural services and the museum.
Stop wasting money on vanity projects.
No1 - The money spent on these services is given out too freely - we all know of people that don't deserve our money. No 5 - As long as I don't have to subscribe - those wishing to partake should pay.
We need a bypass and roads free of pot holes
There are people receiving 100% discount Council Tax, but smoking & drinking which they class as normality. Bills are priority then treats/habits only if you have the finances. We need to stop supporting those who expect everyone else to finance their habits, which also cost NHS their resources & out tax money. Society today has no idea of self respect resulting in those that are wise supporting those that don't care!

Comments
Just put all the money, literally every penny, toward easing congestion... Ideally a bypass!
I support paying for garden waste collection. However, £55 for just 8 months of the year seems excessive compared to other parts of the country. Also, stop slipping the start date. I moved in last December (2022) & the website said 2023. Then, earlier this year, it slipped to 2024. Now it says 2025. Are you really going to introduce it - ever?
I personally use the green waste collection provided by Biffa, so unless the council scheme is cheaper then I wouldn't use it.
If you raise parking charges, this will further disincentivise people to visit/shop/work in Herefordshire. I will usually go to Worcestershire at it's a lot cheaper. Biffa already offer a subscription based garden waste service, you need to ensure that your offer is competitive with theirs.
I agree for the payment of collection of garden waste however this will I think promote fly tipping.
The roads need sorting out desperately. Even to cycle the roads are bad and you expect people to travel by car less. Bypass please to make it safer on the roads for a cyclist. Too many lorries going through the city centre. People don't go to town anyway so raising parking will just make it worse. I avoid town due to parking costs and lack of shops. Rather go to a retail park.
Introducing a garden waste scheme seems unfair to the organisation who currently offer this service - you will be taking business away from them
I feel raising the cost of car parking when you can easily get to smaller market towns and even larger cities often with cheaper parking and better road networks will put further strain on city centre businesses. I already only come to Hereford when I have appointments and shop elsewhere this would deter me further
Due to the excessive number of empty shops in Hereford increasing parking charges will deter more people coming into Hereford from outside of the city. Unless we had a value for money park and ride scheme.
Parking costs need to come down, I believe that more people will visit the county if the parking is cheaper. Need to also have a park and ride for Hereford City so that this would also help with parking
Parking charges have been steadily increasing for years now. As a resident of Hereford, I go into town much less than I used to, simply because the parking charges make it an expensive exercise. I know of many people who feel the same. It is stopping the city from prospering from it's own inhabitants.
You are proposing to give a 100% discount to residents struggling to pay Council Tax yet increasing it for the people who work hard to pay. This is unfair on every level. More support should be given to find out the reasons for people being unable to pay and to help them to get to a position where they can pay. Increasing parking charges will encourage inappropriate parking and will deter people from visiting the towns. Local bus services help elderly people and teenagers who don't drive to get into town and have independence. Taking a bus full of residents instead of multiple cars is much more efficient.
Biffa already has a paid for garden waste collection service - would this continue or will this replace it?
Having parked at many car parks in other areas of the UK, and locally we firmly believe raising car park charges would only deter shoppers and visiting people!
Need to build more homes for those who have lived in Hereford their entire life and need a council home rather than more houses to buy. Ridiculous.

Comments
I would be very disappointed if the parking charges were to further increase. I presently go into Ledbury every day for my paper and other brief errands. Not finding free short term parking means I already incur enough charges to park my car. I also have to pay charges to park my car to use the gym and even a 6pm class still means I have to pay as I need to arrive 5 minutes earlier and have spotted a traffic warden patrolling the car park at 5.56pm. I also have to manage my home budget and already considering buying my paper and other bits and pieces from the supermarket where parking is free rather than support local businesses.
Regarding item 3, surely the number of pothole repairs is indicative of the need to resurface many roads.
Of course I can only comment on your selected options. How about - "save money by reducing levels of management"?
I think road resurfacing should be the biggest priority.
100% Council Tax reduction for people most in need - should contribute on a 95% reduction, as the council recoups this by raising for everyone that does contribute and this small amount for the vulnerable would show willing to support all. Hereford has one of the highest parking charges nationally apart from big cities. By raising this you again are putting people off coming into town which then has a knock on effect on our already struggling high street. Hereford is one of the largest rural locations with poor public transport, with the cost of fuel, running a car and then paying high parking charges you are excluding people from accessing the main town both for leisure, essential needs, hospital, dentist and general needs that central Hereford offers.
Stop wasting money on green projects.
Yet again penalising & fleecing car drivers by increasing the already too high parking charges is not the answer! You want people to come into the city not stop them coming!
The road network is an incredibly costly piece of infrastructure to maintain. Don't allow it to be subsidised by those who use it least.
5 - Under current arrangement can I assume that the waste sites in county towns would continue?
Do not raise Council Tax any further.
We already have a paid for garden waste system in brown bins.
Charging more to park in the city centre will just further lower footfall. Green waste charges would just be another tax on country people who mostly compost their waste and who already get few services from the council. Road surfaces need repairing not potholes that just come back.
There is already an efficient garden waste scheme in operation, competing with this may effect the cost and viability of both schemes. Running two vehicles over each route I will create unnecessary additional pollution.
In all honesty, who is going to pay for green waste to be taken away? It will just lead to fly tipping, or more garden fires, which is not good for the environment as it is releasing carbon which could be directed back into the ground by composting. You need an incentive to avoid more un-ecological ways of dealing with garden waste, e.g. a community hub based shredding facility or composting facility. I'd rather pay more for my GreenGro that expect the public to pay to dispose of green waste, because they won't do it. Absolutely hare-brained and pointless - where's the decision paper for this? I want to see the rationale!
5 would penalise ratepayers who are unable to get to a waste disposal facility .3 - proper regard should be given to cyclists safety. 4 - the previous scheme for the elderly should be reinstated.
Just sort the roads!!! No one cares about anything else.

Comments
<p>Don't be silly and sell Council assets. Stop outsourcing, employ your own people and keep the money circulating in the Council. Selling assets is short-sighted. The money will just go in one hand and out the other. E.g. selling a building or piece of equipment, then needing to rent or outsource is false economy. Don't raise parking charges. Freeze and encourage people to continue to visit town and support local businesses. Raise funds through a better EV network. That can be a good business. Or create a solar power farm and generate money that way. Think green. Be at the forefront.</p>
<p>Large infrastructure projects e.g. western bypass put [the] council at financial risk. Look at the likes of Woking as an example of [a] council brought down.</p>
<p>With such a rural community and patchy bus service, increasing car parking fees would penalise those of us in the more rural parts of the county who have to use cars and car parks for basic necessities such as food shopping and medical appointments.</p>
<p>re: 1a 2 I do not agree with the selling of council assets. Why not employ local tradespeople to make good repairs to council buildings? This may also help residents in the community struggling to pay their Council Tax charge 1.a - 1. As there would be more work opportunities. 1.a 3 Repair the roads and potholes (using local tradespeople) will help victims of pothole damage to their vehicles have more available money to spend locally thus supporting local businesses. Good roads will potentially encourage out of area people to the County too. 1. a 4 I cannot understand why elected Councillors or even anyone would think increasing car parking fees will encourage people to shop in Herefordshire. This is utter short-sightedness.</p>
<p>The parking charges in Herefordshire are very high compare to its neighbouring counties. With such high parking rates we keep people away from visiting our county, which means we are losing money from [the] tourism aspect. With more affordable parking charges, we can attract more people to come and visit our beautiful counties and improve our economy.</p>
<p>Re question 5 - this is already an option available to purchase at £6.67 per month with a brown wheelie bin and collected fortnightly - works really well.</p>
<p>Car parking needs a review to rationalise the numbers to provide bigger more suitable car parks with introduction of pay on exit where possible and dispose of the smaller car parks for redevelopment with monies reinvested.</p>
<p>Not sure all those getting 100% discount are worthy. Other concessions are very tight, so perhaps a small amount should be required from all residents</p>
<p>I appreciate the poor state of many of Herefordshire's roads, but the county's bus services are in much more urgent need of improvement. There are very few places with an adequate service. As for my opposition to reviewing council assets, I should clarify that I am not opposed to making better use of existing land (e.g. renting it out, developing etc.) however I would vehemently oppose any land sales. This would be very damaging in the long term, and reduce the council's future agency.</p>
<p>I am neutral about the paid-for garden waste as such a service would be of no practical use to me notwithstanding that I do have a garden which produces waste. This is because the waste produced varies between nothing over the winter to large quantities of prunings and lawn cuttings which would overwhelm any weekly or fortnightly collections.</p>
<p>Drivers must recognise they must pay for climate change which fossil fuel use has caused.</p>
<p>The review of council's assets should not be done by expensive outside consultants. What is missing is investing in capital grants for rural community hubs.</p>
<p>Do not get rid of green bags as the elderly or occasional users will still need these.</p>
<p>Where are all these extra police officers supposedly recruited to justify another tax rise? All lies and now your going to put it up yet again for cut services. It's a disgrace the amount of money the council waste year in year out.</p>
<p>Far greater resources are needed for public rights of way work and active travel schemes. This should be prioritised within the highways budget.</p>

Comments
Please do not spend any money on 20 mph consultation.
Everybody should pay some level of Council Tax and no one should have 100% discount. They should be on a scale down to 25% if they can't pay.
The council should also be looking for efficiency savings and opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities and other organisations. It should routinely benchmark its activities as to both cost and effectiveness, so as to identify areas for improvement, and publish the results.
We need to protect those that need help. Increasing parking charges will hit local businesses, town and city centre footfall I already subscribe to a garden waste bin collection - a service offered by Biffa, so why have this as an option?
Why tax the motorists? We pay enough in duty and VAT? Green waste for people in the countryside will not work as I have a large garden with hedging all around and create a lot of green waste which I take to the tip as a bin would not be big enough. Also I would have to walk 100 metres with the green bin to the road and as a pensioner with a double bypass would not be a good idea.
Parking charges - Kington residents' needs for parking must come first and not at cost over and above the Council Tax we already pay garden waste - a) the green sacks have worked well for many - adding an extra charge is not ok; and getting garden waste to the recycling centre is a prime reason for residents' parking to be available as near their homes as possible.
Make the Maylords Centre into a hub similar to Worcester Library! This is a fantastic idea and needs to be followed through. Selling council assets is short-termism in the extreme. Assets have been built up in order to save money in the long run.
Use money effectively and efficiently. Why change agreements e.g. library in Shire Hall instead of Maylords? Is this cost effective or Tories doing what they want, not what is cost effective.
Clearly there is a need to raise income/revenue, so although regretful it is a necessary thing to increase charges across the board for the services the authority offers.
Best value for money re PROW bridge installation costs. BBLP charge nine times the cost when other quotes are compared. Please put PROW bridge installations out for public tender for the 25 bridges needing repair, public tender would save £450,000
Review your agency / interim spend in posts that are not hard to fill. You have expensive interims in jobs that would be £50k salary but are probably costing you £600 / day and you've had them for 2 plus years now. Ridiculous! They are not hard to fill.
Whilst I support an increase in tax to save valued services I do not wish to see more money wasted on revisiting the Southern Bypass proposals. Also I condemn the money wasted by changing the planned location of Hereford Library.
Our roads are in need of urgent repair. Repairs on vehicles due to poor roads has increased according to my mechanic. I have had to replace 3 coil springs this year & need new shocks due to humps & state of our roads. The money government gave Hereford a few years ago towards roads has not materialised! Our roads are dangerous we all avoid holes now driving zigzag constantly. We should not support people on benefits who drink smoke & waste their funds. Irresponsible causing those working to support their habits. Worked all my life, paid my bills, been honest & what for? Doesn't pay to be hard working we just support lazy people in this society. About time those that can work & don't are given tasks for their benefits. Clean our streets, unblock drains, wash street signs, cut over grown hedges etc., all the things the council can't do now.
High cost of parking in Herefordshire already discourages me from visiting Hereford to shop.
Stop asking for more then wasting it on green initiatives. Sell the planters and give us back our street parking
Make Etnam Street car park free for up to 2 hours and free to all Etnam Street residents when permits start

Comments
There could be a review of street lighting to remove many of the unnecessary street lights in rural areas. This would save money on maintenance, electricity costs and would have the benefit of reducing light pollution.
I have a brown bin emptied every 2 weeks for garden waste at a cost of about £75 a year.
With regards to garden based waste I would hope that this would then mean it will be recycled as opposed to know when it needlessly goes to landfill. I assume your new scheme which we all had to vote on won't now be happening?
The issues below are all equally important and I find it offensive that you should put care of the vulnerable, schools, health & car parking in the same list.
Please look more closely at where you are already spending our money and justify those expenditures before taking more money from us.
I really hope there is an update on what this means for council workers, especially in terms of job security
If you want people to have their say let them and not have a tick box survey.
Item 5. I would support a paid for subscription based garden waste collection if I thought the garden waste would be recycled. However if it were to go to landfill as it does currently then definitely not.
I notice you provide no area to comment on Council Tax - I find this very disrespectful to those in the constituency. You should look to yourselves as to why no one wants Council Tax to rise - if it looked as though an additional six million a year was being invested in the county, no one would question you - when it looks purely wasted to line council pockets at the expense of those who need it more, a rise is simply despicable. I am sure that there are many hidden costs that no one sees that are completely justified - but we all know you will look to take the most you can from everyone regardless, just very disappointing that this additional revenue is never enough year on year.
1. We need to be mindful that this does include local government workers too.
Particular attention should be applied to "green" investments, most of which are very poor value for money. Virtue signalling must be avoided when there are real monetary constraints. Only items with a 3 year or less payback should be considered.
I pay separately for the garden waste to be collected by the Green Waste Club (Biffa) @ £6.67 per month. It works well for me. If the council had a subscription-based service, people would need to know how it would affect their subscription to GWC Biffa.
The council are losing staff in droves due to poor pay and conditions, you need to address this.
All car parking should be free to residents. This would ensure that car parks not residential roads are used for parking by those of us visiting. Freeing the roads for road-users, leaving road side parking only for residents who have no off road parking at their home. I believe that the Council Tax as it stands should be abolished. This is also my answer to your question number 3. Instead, a contract should be made between the council and residents for necessary spending i.e.. provision for Schools, people with special needs, the elderly, refuse collection and road mending, stating the services provided, by whom and their cost. Anything else i.e. 'city trees', could be 'crowd funded'. For example, if each household paid £1.00p towards a scheme they cared about, a considerable amount of money would be raised. Most important, listen to the residents of Herefordshire not the Government. We live here, they do not.
The garden waste service needs to be self financing if not small profit making.
The council wastes copious amounts of money between moss planters and excessively expensive Widemarsh Street repairs and poorly constructed bicycle lanes. More expensive should be spent on improving services (contacting the council about Council Tax is appalling ineffective) and properly maintaining the road network and public transport to reduce the demand of cars.

Comments
Whatever happens, the Southern Link Road and bypass must be prioritised.
There should be a larger discount for sole occupiers especially sole pensioner occupiers.
Scrap Beaufort Beatty who are poor value.
I live in Hereford for 2 years now and I have been living in Herefordshire for 5 [years] and I think one of the issues that no one is addressing is speeding across town. Mobile or stationary cameras must be considered and speed bumps too.
With regard to 100% discounts on Council Tax, this should be assessed and properly means tested so only those who are genuinely in need will benefit and not those who just don't want to work.
Question 5 - there is already a good private provider of this service.
Revenue increases needed to increase council funding.
The council need to stop wasting money on nonsense. Ask the people what they want, Hereford is long over due a bypass, we don't need plant pots, office refurbishments or any of the other things you waste money on. Don't keep raising Council Tax if you fail to ask the people why they want. The council are so out of touch it honestly makes me think no one on the council actually lives in Hereford or the surrounding area.
The roads are in need of repair difficult to cycle due to amount of potholes.
I live in a rural area with very poor - roads, bus service, and no garden waste collection, I get very little from the Council Tax I pay. I don't agree people should get a 100 % reduction if they are on benefits.
I think increased parking charges is playing with fire, unless there is an alternative. I think the Zipper buses are a great additional asset, but there definitely needs to be more frequent bus services or a park and ride.
I wish to prioritise more than 3 services. I know this source is not meant for this comment but there seems no further opportunity to comment. Prioritising only 3 will distort the importance people put on different services and could introduce bias into the survey.
Please stop wasting our money on consultants and manage your contracts properly to deliver VFM - hold suppliers responsible for their delays and mistakes, stop taking all the contractual risks.
Not just roads, pavements are in a right state. Drains need clearing as well. I have lots of elderly neighbours who are losing independence due to the state of the pavements. It's not fair!
Priority needs to be spending what money there is wisely and efficiently.
Increasing parking charges will run the risk of increasing short-term revenue only to make Herefordshire towns less and less attractive to visit. It is very short-sighted.
The roads are terrible in this county. This has to be your focus if you keep putting Council Tax rates up. Stop wasting money. It's shocking how much was spent on lowering a curb and on refurbing a council building that already overspent a few years ago. Maybe sack some consultants or senior staff at the council and stop giving out bonuses.
I think increasing parking costs reduces use of high street shops. It certainly puts me off shopping in a town if the parking is expensive, I prefer to be able to park for up to 2 hours for free and whizz around my chores. If I can't park for free, I shop on line instead. Road repairs definitely need to be prioritised. I think it would be better to give those worse off, higher benefits, but make them pay at least some Council Tax so they appreciate the need to budget for their household costs and then they might be invested in what the Council Tax they pay is used for. Garden waste should be composted, so those who cannot do it at home, should be pleased to be able to pay to get it composted, much better than the current green sacks that just go into landfill. So if anyone is paying for green sacks, they should be quite happy to pay for a garden waste scheme.

Comments
A tiered system, based on what someone can afford, instead of a blanket 100% reduction would be a fairer system and spread the cost. This would bring further funds into the council pot and mean remaining constituents are not further stung by unfair and unsustainable tax increases.
I think that there should be greater priorities than repairing potholes (e.g. investing in Early Help for families which would save money by reducing large costs of children in care, child protection and care proceedings). The contract with Balfour Beatty is terrible value: should be better managed and re-negotiated. Increasing parking charges may reduce people visiting Hereford etc. to shop etc.
EMAIL COMMENTS
Hello, I would suggest using option 'C'.
I am writing with regard to the Council Tax options for next financial year. I think the Council Tax for Ledbury is exceedingly high. There is so much house building in Ledbury that will obviously give you more funds that surely this will fund additional expenditure for any social care costs. As an alternative, can you look out increasing Council Tax for outlying parishes so it is at least equivalent to Ledbury rates i.e. a 4 bedroom property with 1/5 acre garden in Pixley and district currently pays less than 4 bedroom property with a garden so much smaller in Ledbury.
For too long roads have been neglected in our county and need urgent repairs, the budget for 24/25 should be capped at 2.99% as we have had a 40% increase in Council Tax over the last 8 years. If you live in the countryside you get very little from the council , odd salt bin, refuse collection and not much else, where are the police etc. The proposed garden waste would be good for towns and villages but where I live it would be a waste of time as I would need a skip to remove my garden waste in spring and autumn. The plans for food waste is a waste of time as I compost and do not have cooked food waste as I cannot afford to live like that.
Invest in potholes repair and the road network (To improve the road network and prioritise those roads identified as requiring the most urgent work)- agreed Raise money through increases in parking charges across the county- disagree Introduce a paid-for subscription based garden waste collection service (The introduction of a paid-for subscription based collection service would replace the current arrangement and green sacks for garden waste will no longer be available for purchase)- disagree. The Green waste club already exists in Hereford and I will not be switching to a paid for service by the council, I do not think that would be value for money. If I worked for the council I would want to see a business case for it. Any investment by the council should be subject to a clear business case outlining the rationale for investment, the costs/ risks/ timescales and resources needed, as well as a clear options appraisal (including a do nothing option). Projects such as the planting of trees along the road by the railway station were not value for money and were not a good investment. I am certain that there was no business case for this work. The final item that should be considered is the need for a bypass. We travelled from Marden to Tesco on Belmont Road last week and it took 47 minutes. This is entirely unreasonable. This is a regular occurrence and is not a one off. The main question I would be asking if I were a member of staff about any investment projects the council does is: Would I spend my own money in this way? I think the answer to most of the projects Hereford Council does is no. There should be much more rigorous scrutiny of expenditure at the council.
I'd vote for option A.

Comments

We would like to offer feedback on the budget 2024/25 consultation. As a small business based in Hereford city centre that has been operating for [REDACTED] years, we have seen many changes introduced by various councils over the years. One of the budget themes this coming year is to raise money through increases in parking charges across the county. Along with many other businesses in the city, we strongly disagree with this, as there have already been significant increases to parking charges in city centre car parks over the past several years. This has a detrimental effect, particularly to smaller businesses, as we rely on customers coming into our shops (rather than sitting at home and ordering online). A push towards green public transport is inevitable. However, if a customer has a lot of shopping to carry home then logistically travelling by car is the easiest method, particularly if they live in a rural area. Whilst we understand the need for the Council to generate revenue in order to cover the cost of services, any reduction in car park income could be recovered by encouraging more people to visit the city centre and as a result, more businesses would stay open resulting in an increase in businesses paying rates. We also feel that a discounted option (e.g.. £1 to park for four hours) in all city centre car parks on a Saturday would be beneficial to local businesses. This would give customers a good amount of time to visit shops at a fair price. To prevent shop workers in town filling the car parks with their own vehicles, the offer could run from 10am-2pm or 11am-3pm.

In view of the cost of living crisis I would I suggest a freeze on any new projects, transport hub, etc. and as for your 20mph speed limit how much is that going to cost, the council need to wake up to the problems people are facing. As for the road repairs whoever is responsible for checking the repairs needs to get out of there office and take a look at them as some of them are a complete waste of time and money. I think you all need to get off your back sides and take a good look at yourselves.