

Budget Consultation – July 2016

Each year, Herefordshire Council asks residents to help shape the way its budgets are set. We will need to be even more efficient and effective to protect priority services and continue to support our county's vulnerable residents, whilst ensuring that Herefordshire remains a great place to live, work and learn.

Our priorities for Herefordshire are:

- enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives;
- keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life;
- support the growth of our economy; and
- secure better services, quality of life and value for money

Herefordshire Council has saved over £59 million over the past six years. We must deliver further savings in order to balance our budget between now and 2019/20. We are working to develop a one Herefordshire approach with the NHS, Police, Fire and other public sector organisations in the county to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

We want to hear what council services you would want to protect and any ways in which you might be able to help us in enabling community services to continue. We also want to hear ideas on how we can improve – perhaps by using new technology, changing the way we do things, or by working with other organisations, community groups, or charities.

It's quick and easy to fill out online or if you have any more ideas, tweet us at #hfdsbudget or send us a facebook message. You can also share your views with your local councillor or parish council.

We are also running a number of consultations that may be of particular interest to those people who are currently receiving council services. More details can be found at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations/current-consultations. Further and more focused consultation may be required with groups directly affected by any anticipated changes.

The budget consultation runs from Friday 29 July 2016 to Friday 7 October 2016.

All responses will be collated, analysed and published. All individual responses will be anonymised, and responses on behalf of an organisation will have comments attributed to them in the final report. The feedback received will inform Cabinet's decision making on the draft budget. This will be proposed to Full Council in February 2017.

Budget consultation 2016

29 July - 7 October

The council already charges for a number of services. The majority (71%) of respondents to last year's consultation thought that the council should increase service charges to protect current services across the county.

- 1. Are you willing to support an increase in charges for council services above the level of inflation?**

 **Yes**

 **No**

Every additional 1% increase in council tax raises around £0.9 million. We have already factored in a 1.9% increase to take account of general inflation, plus the Government is allowing us to increase council tax by an additional 2% to support the rising cost of social care. Given our ageing population and pressures in this area we intend to take them up on this offer. The current band D charge for Herefordshire Council services is £1,325 and so a 3.9% increase will cost the average council taxpayer an extra £52 per year. If these increases are not levied, additional savings will be required.

Next year our budget plans include £7 million of savings. Increasing council tax could help Herefordshire Council to support its services and reduce the amount of savings required. If we wanted to raise council tax above the 3.9% level, we would be required to hold a countywide referendum (which would cost approximately £300,000), where we ask residents to say whether they're for or against the proposal.

- 2. Would you support Herefordshire Council in making a further increase in council tax above 3.9%, which will require a referendum, to raise additional funds?**

 No - £7 million savings still required

☒ Yes - raise an estimated £2 million by increasing council tax by a total of 6.1% (costing the average council taxpayer an extra £81 in 2017/18)

☒ Yes - raise an estimated £4 million by increasing council tax by a total of 8.3% (costing the average council taxpayer an extra £110 in 2017/18)

☒ Yes - raise an estimated £7 million by increasing council tax by a total of 11.7% (costing the average council taxpayer an extra £155 in 2017/18)

Herefordshire Council is considering its future plans, along with budget and council tax levels for next year, and would like your views. We remain committed to delivering services you need in a way that offers both value for money and protects services for those who are most in need. The challenge we have is how we can do this with less funding.

Our current savings proposals total £28.4 million between this year and 2019/20. For more detailed information on the savings proposals, medium term financial strategy and Corporate Plan, see www.herefordshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

- 3. Do you have any suggestions about what other things the council should consider to achieve the required savings?**

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The council provides a wide variety of services to people in Herefordshire, particularly to those who are vulnerable and have complex needs. As more pressure is placed on the council's budget, and on the budgets of partner organisations, different ways of delivering these services need to be developed.

As part of last year's consultation, over half of respondents (58%) thought that town and parish councils, community groups or voluntary organisations could do more to help deliver services in their local community if Herefordshire Council reduces or stops delivering a particular service.

4. Respondents to last year's consultation suggested a number of activities that could be undertaken locally. Your parish council has the power to charge an extra amount on top of your council tax. Do you think that they should exercise this power and charge extra in order to carry out any of the following?

(please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining communal areas (parks, playgrounds, sport pitches) | <input type="checkbox"/> Good neighbour scheme (e.g. visiting isolated elderly) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grass / hedge cutting | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer contact centre and advice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter / dog fouling enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing activities for babies, toddlers and pre-school children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Road / footpath maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Winter services (e.g. gritting, clearing roads / pathways) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus service | <input type="checkbox"/> Helping out in emergencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries / museums / leisure facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respite and day service | |

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Volunteering means giving unpaid help to any groups, clubs or organisations. It includes anything that you take part in, support, or help in any way, either on your own or with others. For example, helping at a youth or day centre, helping to run an event, campaigning or doing administrative work. It does not include giving money or anything that is a requirement of your job.

5. Do you currently volunteer in Herefordshire?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. People have previously indicated that they would be willing to help out more in their community. Please indicate whether you currently volunteer or would be interested in volunteering in the following roles.

(please tick all that apply)

	<i>Already volunteer</i>	<i>Interested in volunteering</i>
<i>Maintaining communal areas (parks, playgrounds, sport pitches)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Grass / hedge cutting</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Litter picking</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Footpath maintenance</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Community transport</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Car sharing</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Supporting libraries / museums / leisure facilities</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Buddy scheme (e.g. befriending or mentoring someone)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Respite and day service</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Good neighbour scheme (e.g. visiting isolated elderly)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Helping families who need help to look after their children (e.g. where parents may need a lot of medical treatment)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Helping provide activities for babies, toddlers and pre-school children</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Helping out in emergencies</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>Other (please specify below)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Supporting the growth of our economy is one of the council's strategic priorities. We want Herefordshire to be a place where businesses want to settle and can flourish. We also want our city and town centres to be vibrant and successful and our neighbourhoods to be attractive and sustainable. The county is already home to a wide range of businesses and we will continue to support and encourage the growth of our high value business sector and our small enterprises.

At the same time, we want to encourage a broad mix of businesses that will offer employment and training to local people. We also want to make sure residents, particularly young people, have the right skills needed for local employers. In doing this we want to achieve a sustainable infrastructure that protects and promotes the natural environment, communities and the county's economy.

7. What do you think the council could do to improve the attractiveness of Herefordshire to businesses? (tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Improve infrastructure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Enable new housing development</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Upskill workers</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other (please specify below)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Access to funding and business support</i> | |

Herefordshire Council has funding which enables us to invest in and maintain assets across the county, as well as deliver new projects and infrastructure which support the local economy and help maintain public services.

The capital programme has an estimated spend of £51 million for 2017/18.

Projects include targeted capital investment to:

- Attract and secure inward investment;
- Create jobs and get local people into work;
- Improve school buildings to help with educational attainment;
- Improve connectivity through road improvements;
- Provide better broadband connectivity;
- Enable new housing development; and
- Sustain key local services.

More detailed information on the capital programme can be found at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

Any additional projects will need to be paid for. For example, through an increase in council tax or business rates, the sale of council buildings / land, or grant funding.

8. Is there any other capital investment you think the council should make?

9. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding how we could deliver services in a different way?

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 postcode?

(not including the last 2 letters, e.g. HR4 0)

What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

What is your age band?

☐ 0-15 years

☐ 25-44 years

☐ 65-74 years

☐ 16-24 years

☐ 45-64 years

☐ 75+ years

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- ☐ Yes - limited a little ☐ Yes - limited a lot ☐ No

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

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish | <input type="checkbox"/> Welsh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> British | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | |

If Other please specify:

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)

If Other White please specify:

If Any other ethnic group please specify:

Do you feel that the council has treated you differently (positively or negatively) because of who you are? (e.g. your gender, age, disability or ethnicity)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify:

Data Protection Act 1998

The data collected in this form will only be used for the purpose of statistical monitoring. This information will only be retained for as long as is considered necessary for monitoring purposes and then it will be destroyed. At all times it will be kept in accordance with the Act.

Thank you for your time

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