

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

The information gained from this consultation will be used to inform our budget and the results will be published in December 2021 on the council website. Any comments provided will be treated as confidential and will be anonymised before publication.

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: <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/access-information/4>

Please complete this survey by **Monday 4th October 2021**.



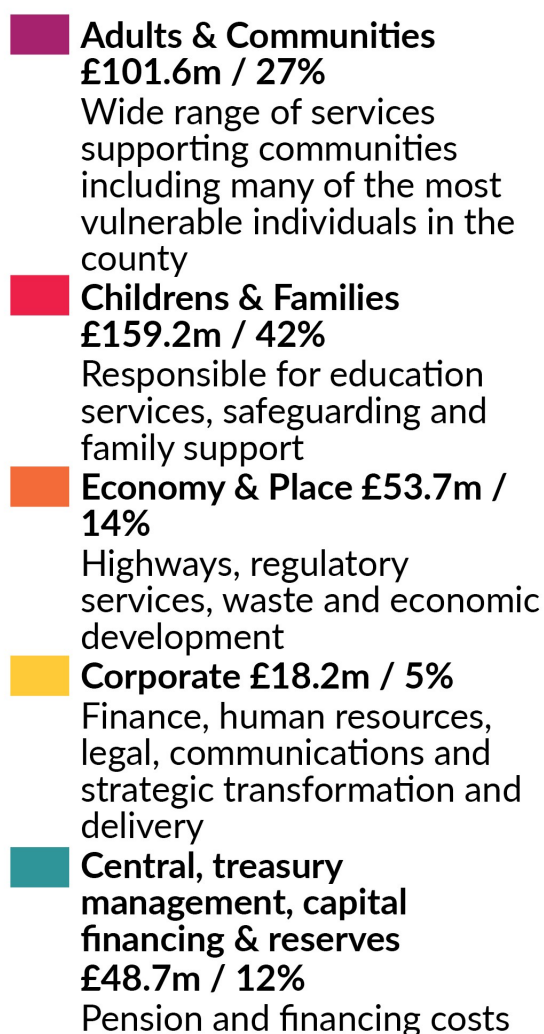
If you have any queries or would like this questionnaire in an alternative format or language, please contact researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

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

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

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

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



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



What do you think of our services?

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

[illegible]

Making services more affordable to run

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- e. Making more services available online

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

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

a. Children’s services

b. Adult social care

c. Support for vulnerable people

d. Specific prevention measures for any other service area

Q4 Local authorities have the opportunity to borrow money from central government and other sources, and currently Herefordshire Council has not borrowed as much as it is able to. Do you agree that the council should borrow more money to achieve its wider aims?
Please see County Plan for aims:
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1500/county-plan-2020-24>

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (go to Q6)
- ☐ Don't know (go to Q6)

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

	1	2	3	4	5
Measures to address the climate emergency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Road maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult social care e.g. care homes, day care services, mental health support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children's services (not education) e.g. children in care, respite care, support for children with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing affordable housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

Tackling climate change and protecting nature

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

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

More information are in the council's Carbon Management Plan (<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/20530/carbon-management-plan-2020-21-to-2025-26>) and the corresponding Action Plan (<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/22295/carbon-management-action-plan-2021>)

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

- ☐ Yes, enough
- ☐ No, not enough
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ I don't agree with Herefordshire Council working towards this ambition

Q6a Any other comments:

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

	Yes, I am doing this already	Yes, I intend to do	I support this but can't do myself (e.g. can't afford, due to disability)	No	Don't know
Accessing Keep Herefordshire Warm for home energy advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Walking more for local journeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn to ride a bike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using Beryl bikes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cycling more for local journeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choosing public transport rather than own vehicle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Changing to an electric or hybrid car	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aiming for zero food waste	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Composting food waste, paper, etc	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using reusable bottles and containers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7a. Other, please give details below:

Relevant links:
<https://keepherefordshirewarm.co.uk/>
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/cycling-1/cycling>
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/walking-1/walks-trails/5>
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/parking-1/electric-car-charging>
<https://zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk/>

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

Schemes to help support vulnerable residents

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

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

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

- ☐ Geographical priority areas
- ☐ Thematic areas such as children, vulnerable adults, climate emergency
- ☐ Specific charities or local groups
- ☐ Allocated to parish and town councils to decide with local residents for their area
- ☐ Other

Q9a Other, please give details below:

Council Tax options for 2022/23

Proposed Council Tax increase

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q10 Which of the following options would you prefer?

- ☐ Option A: increase Council Tax by 2.99%
- ☐ Option B: increase Council Tax by 1.99%
- ☐ Option C: increase Council Tax by 0.99%
- ☐ No preference
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Don't know

Further information about Herefordshire Council Tax can be found using this link:
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/21942/your-council-tax-explained-2021>

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

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not yet
- ☐ No opinion

More information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council-tax-1/council-tax-reduction>

Q13 Have you taken part in a budget consultation previously?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

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

About you

Q15 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.

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

- ☐ I do not wish to complete this section

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

- ☐ A
- ☐ B
- ☐ C
- ☐ D
- ☐ E
- ☐ F
- ☐ G
- ☐ H
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your age band?

- ☐ 0-15 years
- ☐ 16-24 years
- ☐ 25-44 years
- ☐ 45-64 years
- ☐ 65-74 years
- ☐ 75+ years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

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

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

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)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please tell us the first part of your postcode:

Please return your completed questionnaire to:

Hoople Limited
Finance: attention of the Intelligence Unit
Plough Lane Offices
Hereford
HR4 0BR

Please note a stamp will be required.

Thank you