



Report to: Policy and Resources Committee, 6th September 2022

Report of: Corporate Director - Finance and Resources

Subject: OUTLINE PROPOSALS FOR ANNUAL SURVEY 2022

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee approves the proposed annual survey and consultation timetable for 2022.

2. Background

While there is no requirement for the Council to consult on the annual budget it is recognised as good practice to do so and promoted under openness and accountability guides and regulations published by the Government between 2011 and 2015. There is a specific duty to consult with local businesses on the preparation of the annual budget under Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

- 2.1 In recent years, the Council has conducted an annual consultation in Autumn. In 2021, Worcester City Council conducted a 6-week budget consultation from 30 September – 11 November 2021.
- 2.2 The survey was conducted through both online and offline channels. Hard copies were made available at Customer Service Centres, our museums, leisure centres, community centres and on request. Both versions were produced in-house. The consultation was promoted through social media, our Resident Panel, the Council's website and publications and local media. Additional advertising was purchased through Facebook and Worcester News.
- 2.3 The survey was also promoted directly to the Council's community contacts to encourage responses from a wider range of community groups and to help engagement with groups that are harder to reach. Copies were also made available in Polish and Urdu and other languages will be considered for future surveys.
- 2.4 Altogether 969 responses were received. The full results, along with an explanation on how those were taken into account in service and financial planning for 2022/23 was presented to the Committee at its meeting of 8 February 2022.

3. Preferred Option

- 3.1 The main aims of the consultation are to:
- Assess resident views and priorities for the level and cost of services
 - Raise awareness of the Council's finances and spend for key services
 - Inform the Council's Business Plan and City Plan.

- 3.2 As in previous years, the survey will be primarily online, with hard copies at Council buildings and on request. Both online and hard copy versions are to be produced in-house to minimise costs, which can be met from existing budgets. For consistency, the current branding: 'It's your City - have your say', is to be retained and the approach to promotion will be as per 2021.
- 3.3 In addition to publicising the consultation with our community contacts, it is proposed to request and support Members to promote and distribute the survey directly to their constituents, to further encourage participation and widen the demographic representation of respondents. It is also proposed to take advantage of community events to distribute copies of the survey directly to attendees.
- 3.4 In order to provide trend data, core questions from previous surveys relating to City Plan themes, satisfaction with services and spend on services have been retained. Questions based on current issues, Council activities and new developments are included, partly to engage public interest in these activities and to inform future decision-making, and partly to publicise recent developments. The draft survey is annexed.

4. **Draft Timescales**

- 4.1 The proposed timetable for the survey is set out below:

Date	What	Details
16 Aug	CLT meeting	Review of proposed draft questions and consultation approach
05 Sep	Leadership meeting	Agreement of draft questions and consultation approach
06 Sep	P&R Committee	
Wed 07 Sep	Final proof of draft	
Wed 07 Sep	Member Information Bulletin	Inform Members of questions and consultation approach. Request support.
w/c 12 Sep	Advertising and translation booked	
w/c 19 Sep	Printing (leaflets and surveys)	
w/c 26 Sep	Distribution of paper surveys and leaflets to Council venues	
30 Sep	Go Live	6-week public consultation period
11 Nov	Consultation close	
Nov - Dec	Analysis of results	
Dec / Jan 2023	Initial feedback on consultation	
07 Feb 2023	P&R Meeting	Final report

5. **Alternative Options Considered**

- 5.1 To set up consultation events, as undertaken in previous years. Attendance was previously low and feedback received did not add value to the budget setting or prioritisation process.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The proposed consultation exercises can be undertaken within existing budgets.

6.2 Legal and Governance Implications

The Council has a duty to consult with local businesses on the preparation of the annual budget which must be set by full Council, taking into account the results of consultation exercises, by 31 March of the financial year preceding the relevant budget year.

6.3 Risk Implications

None directly arising from this report.

6.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

Setting a balanced budget over the medium term enables the Council to plan annual resource requirements over a five-year planning horizon. This provides assurance that policy objectives can be achieved through the application of appropriate levels of resources within an agreed approach.

6.5 Equality Implications

The Council sets the budget based on equal benefit to all Worcester's residents, businesses and visitors and the consultation process enables all interested parties to influence the budget. Any equalities implications arising from particular initiatives introduced into the budget will be considered as part of the proposals for each specific development.

6.6 Human Resources Implications

None directly arising from this report.

6.7 Health and Safety Implications

None directly arising from this report.

6.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

The Council sets the budget based on equal benefit to all Worcester's residents, businesses and visitors and the consultation process enables all interested parties to influence the budget. It is important that the budget and the range of services delivered reflect the Council's priorities as these are shaped through the City Plan and this annual consultation process. The survey therefore forms a part of the key theme of establishing and developing stronger and connected communities and enhances the relationship between the Council and its customers. Priorities for investment in the city also need to be shaped, and subsequently tested, through a sound feedback process.

Ward(s):

All Wards

Contact Officer:

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Background Papers:

None



It's your City - have your say...

Welcome to Worcester City Council's Annual Survey 2022

We all want a city that is prosperous, accessible, diverse, inclusive and makes the most of its heritage; with great opportunities for work, leisure, sport and tourism alongside a quality of life that is attractive to all.

The City Council is the only organisation exclusively dedicated to serving Worcester's 103,900 residents, but we face tough decisions as we consider how your money should be spent and what our priorities should be for the year ahead.

It is important that our priorities reflect what matters most to our residents and businesses, so **we want to hear your views about the Council and the services we provide.**

The information from this consultation will help us to plan our work and set our budget for 2023-2024. It will also be used to inform our refreshed City Plan.

The deadline for responses is 11 November 2022.

All responses are confidential and none of your information will be passed on to third parties. For full privacy information please see our associated Privacy Notice at <https://www.worcester.gov.uk/public-consultations>

If you are 18 or over and a resident or business in Worcester, please take part in our consultation. You can do this online:

www.worcester.gov.uk/voicait

Thanks for taking part and giving us your views.

If you would like this information in large print, audio form, another language or require any assistance with responding to the consultation, please contact strategy@worcester.gov.uk or call 01905 722233

The survey results will be statistical and will never contain your name or anything that could identify you. Your details will not be linked to your opinions in any way.

For full privacy information please see our associated Privacy Notice at <https://www.worcester.gov.uk/public-consultations>

Worcester Resident or Business Owner?

Are you a **Worcester resident**?

Yes

No

Are you a **Worcester business owner**?

Yes

No

Your postcode:

Part One – City Vision

We have identified a number of proposed key themes in our refreshed City Plan, which set out our vision for the development of Worcester up to 2027.

Which one of these themes is most important to you? *(Please tick 1 only)*

Theme	Most Important
Stronger and connected communities	
A prosperous city	
A healthy and active city	
A heritage city with a 21 st Century culture	
Enhancing and sustaining our beautiful city for future generations	

Part Two – City Council services

As a city council we deliver some of the many local services provided. Council tax and business rates also go to support the County Council, which provides

social care, education, highways, libraries and other services and the Police and Fire Authorities. This survey is about services provided by the City Council.

You can help us provide better local City Council services by letting us know how satisfied you were with the services that you have received **in the past year**.

How satisfied have you been with the below services? (please tick 1 option per service)

Services	Satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Not Used
Rubbish collection and recycling						
Garden waste collection						
Trade waste collection						
Street cleaning						
Car parking and parking enforcement						
Planning and planning enforcement						
Support for local businesses and getting people back into work						
Support for housing and homelessness						
Customer Service Centre (The Guildhall or Trinity Street)						
Council Tax billing, housing benefits and other payments						
Sports and leisure activities and facilities						
Arts and culture events and facilities (Guildhall, Commandery and Museum & Art Gallery, Tourist Information Centre)						
Parks and play areas						
Cemeteries and the crematorium						
Licensing (taxis, premises)						
Environmental Health (food hygiene, business regulation, air quality, gulls)						

How satisfied have you been with Worcester City Council services overall?

- Satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Not Used

Do you have any other comments about Worcester City Council's services?

In addition to providing these services we delivered or supported a number of activities and initiatives last year to help make Worcester successful, vibrant and sustainable whilst improving the quality of life for our residents.

What do you think about the following projects? (please tick 1 option for each)

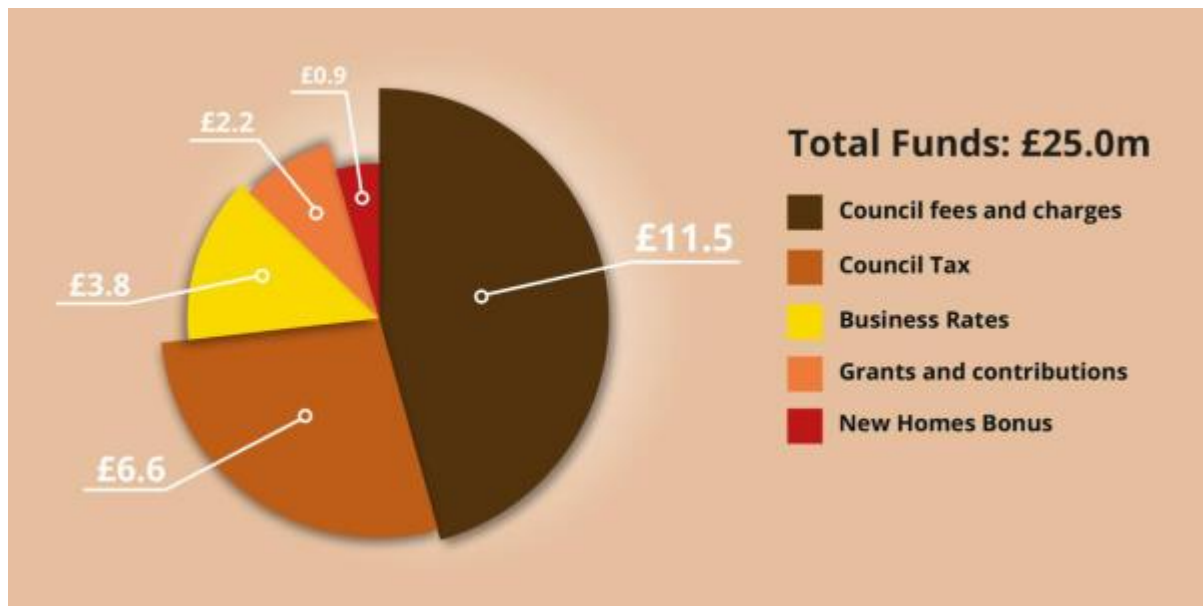
	Like	Neutral	Don't Like	Don't know about
Light Festival held in February and the Atmosphere range of installations in June, along with support for a range of community festivals such as The Mela and 'Love the Arbo'.				
Worcester has joined a growing number of towns and cities on the Dscvr tourism app (https://www.dscvr-app.com/) – a fantastic resource for visitors and residents				
Tourist Information Centre extended opening hours to seven days a week in the summer				
Renovation of five Victorian railway arches to bring them into use for creative activities and events				
First phase of improvements to Perdiswell Park including the creation of a wildflower meadow, installation of bird and bat boxes, new and improved pathways, seating and interpretation panels				

	Like	Neutral	Don't Like	Don't know about
Installation of a synthetic cricket wicket at the King George V Playing Fields				
The memorial 'Forget You Not Garden' opened at Astwood Crematorium and Cemetery to remember those who were lost during the pandemic.				
The Knife Angel, the national monument against violence and aggression, was in Cathedral Square in March to raise awareness of the impacts of violence and aggression and was the focal point for a programme of activities for all ages.				
Used planning powers to take action to tidy up four empty and neglected properties in the city				
Agreed to continue to commit over £527,500 worth of funding to support a range of arts and community organisations over the next five years				
124 new-look, larger litter bins were installed across Worcester as part of a £403,000 investment to upgrade current facilities and reduce the amount of litter on the city's streets.				
Provision of up to £215,000 to provide free school meals to children over the summer holidays.				
New Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy launched aimed at tackling inequality, challenging discrimination, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity in the city.				

Part Three – Where should we spend your money?

Breakdown of Council Funding

We spend about **£25.0m** a year to deliver the above services and projects, funded from council tax business rates and income from other sources.



Please tell us if you think the budget should be increased, decreased or stay the same for each of the service areas listed below (please tick 1 option per service area)

Service areas	Increase spending	Maintain current spending	Decrease spending
Rubbish collection and recycling			
Clean streets and the City Centre			
Car parking and enforcement			
Planning and enforcement			
Supporting local businesses and getting people back into work			
Support for housing and homelessness			

Service areas	Increase spending	Maintain current spending	Decrease spending
Council Tax billing, housing benefits and other payments			
Supporting local groups and community activities			
Making Worcester a safe city where residents and visitors feel safe			
Promoting the city as a place to visit and invest			
Sports and leisure activities and facilities			
Arts and cultural activities and facilities			
Parks and play areas			
Cemeteries and the crematorium			
Licensing (taxis, premises)			
Environmental Health (food hygiene, business regulation, air quality, gulls)			

We generate about **£11.5 million** income every year from the services we provide to help pay for them and keep council tax down. This income is generated from fees and charges for the services listed in the table below.

Would you pay more for these to help sustain Council services? (please tick 1 option per service area)

Service areas	Increase charges	Maintain charges	Decrease Charges
Car parking			
PCN income (parking enforcement)			
Cemeteries and the crematorium			
Planning, Land Charges and Building Control application and enquiries			
Trade waste collections			
Garden waste collections			
Bulky waste collections (fridges, cookers etc.)			

Service areas	Increase charges	Maintain charges	Decrease Charges
Other Environmental Operational services (skips and cleansing equipment hire)			
Museums			
Licensing & fees (e.g. taxis)			
Guildhall rooms and venue hire			
Housing licences, e.g. Houses of Multiple Occupancy			
Leisure admission fees			

Part Four – Our Customers

We try to make our services accessible, so it is important for us to understand whether you had access to what you needed if you tried to contact us in the past 12 months.

Have you needed to contact the Council in the last 12 months?

Yes

No

If you have contacted the Council in person, by phone or through the website or social media, did you find it easy to use/access and did you get what you needed? (please tick all that apply)

	Easy to access	Difficult to access	Got what I needed	Didn't get what I needed	No contact
I found services.....					

If you had difficulties contacting the Council, why was this?

If you have visited one of our Customer Service Centres, how was your experience?

The Guildhall	Yes	No	Don't know / haven't used
Were you able to find the Customer Service Centre easily?			
Were the facilities and appearance satisfactory?			
Were you happy with the service provided?			

Trinity Street (Housing)	Yes	No	Don't know / haven't used
Were you able to book an appointment at a convenient time?			
Were you able to find the Customer Service Centre easily?			
Were the facilities and appearance satisfactory?			
Were you happy with the service provided?			

Worcester City Council also has a number of services which are available online.

Have you used these online services in the last 12 months? If so, did you get what you needed? (please tick 1 option)

	Not Used	Used and got what I needed	Used but didn't get what I needed
Council Tax payments			
Planning enquiries			
Garden waste payments			
Parking fine payments (PCNs)			
Parking appeals			
Fixed penalty notice payments			
Bulky waste collections			
Reporting missed bins			
Requesting a new bin			
Business rates payments			
Reporting issues or problems			

Part Five - Getting involved

Do you feel that you can influence decisions that Worcester City Council make?

Yes

No

Don't know

If no, why is this?

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Which of the below methods would you use to influence decisions?

(please tick all that apply)

Attend a Council meeting	
Speak to my Councillor	
Take part in consultation events / activities	
Contact the Council directly (email/telephone/webform/letter/social media)	
Other (please state)	

How did you find out about this survey? *(please tick all that apply)*

Facebook	
Twitter	
Instagram	
Worcester City Council website	
Local Media – local newspapers or their websites	
City Life magazine	
Worcester City Councillor	
By email as a member of the Worcester City Resident Panel	
From a member of my community / local group	
From a leaflet or poster	
Other (please specify below)	

Did you know that you can now view Council meetings online on our website at www.worcester.gov.uk ?

Yes

No

Resident Engagement

Resident Panel - from time to time Worcester City Council would like to ask our residents and businesses about their views on a variety of council issues and services. By adding your details to the 'Worcester City Residents Panel' database you can receive notifications from the Council about future surveys, consultations and discussion groups.

Would you be interested in joining the Resident Panel?

Yes, I would like my details added to the **Worcester City Resident Panel** database and to be contacted about future surveys, consultations and discussion groups

If you have answered '**Yes**', please provide contact details below.

Name:

Address:
.....

Email:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (TBC)

Worcester City Council has published a new strategy aimed at tackling inequality, challenging discrimination, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity in the city.

The new **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy** is designed to help reduce inequalities and safeguard the rights of people protected by the Equality Act 2010.

<https://www.worcester.gov.uk/news/new-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-launched-by-worcester-city-council>

Would you be interested in helping us take forward this important area of work?

Are you a member of a group or organisation who can work with us to tackle these issues?

If so, please provide your contact details so that we can get in touch with details of how you can get involved.

Part Six – About you

This section of the form is about you. Each of the questions below is optional and you can skip any or all of them.

It is very helpful to the Council if you do answer these questions. The reason why we ask you these questions is so we can:

- **Make our Council services open to everyone in the city**
- **Treat everyone fairly and appropriately when they use our services**
- **In consultations, make sure that we have views from all across the city**

The Equality Act 2010 makes these aims part of our legal duties. Your answers help us check that we have met the law and help improve our services.

Your answers are completely anonymous and confidential. We will only use them to make services better. Information provided from all surveys is combined so you cannot be identified.

For more information on how we use this information, see our Privacy Notice.

Age:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ |

Disability: Do you consider yourself to be a Disabled person? (i.e. do you have physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities?)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Gender:

- Male
- Female

Other

Gender Identity: Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

Yes

No

Ethnicity:

White

- White British
- White Irish
- White background

- Eastern European
- Any Other

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Indian
- White and Pakistani
- Mixed background

- White and Bangladeshi
- White and Chinese
- Any other

Asian or Asian British

- Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Asian background

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other

Black or Black British

- Black British
- African
- Black background

- Caribbean
- Any other

Gypsy or Traveller

Other ethnic group

Arab

Any other ethnic group

Other

Religion/belief:

No religion

Buddhist

Christian

Muslim

Jewish

Sikh

Hindu

Other

Sexual orientation:

Heterosexual/straight

Bisexual

Gay man

Other

Gay woman/lesbian

Relationship status:

Single

Co-habiting

Married

Widowed

Civil Partnership

Other

Pregnancy/Maternity: Are you pregnant or have you given birth in the last 26 weeks?

Yes

No

Thank you for taking part and giving us your views.

Please return your completed survey by **11 November 2022** using the attached Freepost envelop or send to:

**Corporate Policy and Strategy Team,
Worcester City Council, FREEPOST WR427,
Worcester, WR1 2ZD**