

A background image showing a close-up of a £10 banknote and several coins, including a £1 coin.

## Arolwg Cyllideb Cyngor Sir Powys Powys County Council Budget Survey

This report contains the findings from the Budget survey conducted from 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

There were 75 respondents in total.

*Please note: All responses (English and Welsh) are included together below for ease of analysis and not all questions were answered by all respondents.*

### Background

Powys County Council (the council) provides a wide range of services to our communities, spending over £545m every year, mainly on statutory services, which we must provide by law. A small proportion of the budget is also spent on services that we choose to provide.

Our services are highly valued by our residents and like you the Council is being significantly impacted by the current economic climate, surging inflation and rocketing energy costs have had a significant impact on the Council's financial planning for this and future financial years

The increases mean that for next year (2023-24) we will need to find more money - to maintain what we currently provide or reduce our service delivery. The Welsh Government will provide some additional funding and we will have to consider raising Council Tax to raise additional funds, – a five per cent council tax increase is being considered, but these alone will not bridge the gap in our budget.

To balance the budget next year, we will have to take out more than £20m of costs and we would like your input into how best we can do this. It will have an impact on the service we offer but by doing things differently we can reduce our costs.

We need you to help us shape what the council could look like, it will be a smaller council, but it is essential that we prioritise the services to those that need our support most. Doing things differently can help us use the money we have effectively.

The national economy is struggling too, and we do not expect our funding over the next few years to meet the costs we have so change will take place over a number of years to come.

## Survey results

**Q1. Help us decide what the council will look like. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one.**

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reduce overall service to reduce costs	5	14	11	24	21
Only support those services that are statutory (legally have to provide) this could mean that some services could stop.	13	19	4	21	18
Reduce the number of buildings from which we operate to save the cost of running them	44	21	3	2	5
Reduce the location of some services, which could mean that you would need to travel further to keep and improve the services you need	9	19	12	23	12
Look to deliver more services through online interaction rather than face to face	20	26	10	12	7
Increase Council Tax by less than 5%. If lower it would mean there would be more service reductions.	15	23	10	13	14
Increase Council Tax by more than 5%. A higher increase would limit the need for some service reductions.	9	16	3	17	30
Reduce the council's energy usage by implementing further energy efficiency measures	54	12	4	2	3
Increase county council charges e.g. car parking prices, so those who use the facilities pay more	17	18	14	16	10

## Q2. Any further comments:

It needs to be fair and proportionate; our wages aren't being increased by that much and each home is having its own cost of living crisis!
Reduce the excess staff, the amount of high paid fat cats who do nothing but reduce the services we're paying for
A very narrow questionnaire. Reduce the number of councillors and paid positions on scrutiny committees etc and announce to the public what savings would be made
Keep our sports centres open
Do not increase prices. We are so rural and on low wages and we have to travel distances for many activities. We need to lobby for a lot more money and have increased HELP from South Wales government.. We are a minority that have the same needs as the South and North.
Asking if the council should increase by less/more than 5% is totally pointless without being shown the possible impact. AS an aside the GDPR notice doesn't seem right; 'stored securely for a limited time only' - it's too vague. How long is that?
Cannot afford a greater increase in Council Tax! Would prefer reduced services. Extras can be charged directly to users.
Have a proper look at all the structures and talk & listen to staff. PCC have far too many managers/staff above grade 10 - a lot are not needed for the day to day work, i know of a few who have been away for a period and their team have not missed them at all and work has continued as normal with no issues as managers are hands off - pcc need more staff lower down where the real day to day work is done and less people on these high grades - i could save pcc approx. £200K in just 1 department by restructuring it - far too many layers from the top down to the bottom
Cap the pay and benefits of all management and executive staff whilst also cutting this cadre of staff by at least 10%.
Stop wasteful spending. Reduce the number of councillors by 50%. A maximum salary of 40,000 for Any council employee.
Waste less money on remote working. More productive working together. Make housing staff available in person encounters. It looks north Powys is forgotten about, no public face of council remaining. Elderly and non-computer users left in the dark
Re energy efficiency I do not agree that you should e.g. Close swimming pools and leisure centres to reduce cost. What I do agree with is spending to increase renewable energy sources.
Look at raising revenue by charging visitors/holiday makers to Powys. Reduce PCC staff numbers. Reduce the number of councillors.
Council tax should be no more than 1.5%, as a fairly decent wage earner for the council, inflation is hitting hard. I'm adding 50% more to my food and diesel bill than I was at the start of the year. My children and dairy intolerant, oat milk is now £1.30, the start of the year, £1. I buy 8 cartons a week, adding nearly £10 a month to my food bill. The more money I give in council tax the less I have to spend locally. Staff morale is the lowest I've ever seen it, indirectly a minimal council tax increase will help, as frankly there are no benefits to working for PCC.
Sports and leisure facilities including libraries, swimming pools and gyms should stay open. Schools should be better funded.
Instead of cutting services. Cut your wage bill. Especially higher management CEO bonus etc. Then you won't have to increase our council tax we pay the highest as it is for very limited services. You can't even collect recycling properly. Yet you want to cut essential adult services. PCC need to stop wasting money

Spend less on advisors in education and give the money to schools to reduce class sizes. This is the best way to improve schools.
Cut the fat
We will pay for services if we must, we cannot continue to pay more for less. Charge what you must for council tax for a decent level of public services.
I don't think this simplistic survey is likely to generate an informed opinion from most users. Try again PCC.
Reduce agency and consultancy costs across council, review cost of placements and large contacts for social care. Limit council tax increase as promised by new administration, cabinet need to make difficult decisions as opposed to just increasing council tax year on year
Save money by operating all services in-house. How can paying for waste, colleges, and leisure centres to be run by 3rd parties be saving money?
I have a few points 1. You talk about green energy, carbon footprint and recycling a lot, however, Powys CC are quite happy having sun contractors travel by diesel van to Powys from Coventry?? Doesn't make sense 2. People are already feeling the financial squeeze from conservatives austerity and recession looming. I'm sorry but stop charging in car parks to help local businesses would be a better though instead of penalising people. 3. Definitely not another energy saving project as this will cost way too much in surveys, engineers etc, whereby more public money being wasted.
Why should tax payers pay the price, stop wasting our money
Less pen pushers more broom pushers
Free parking. Save town centres.
It is difficult to make judgements on some of the questions without having data to hand to understand the more nuanced implications. For example does increasing car parking charges reduce footfall within town high streets pushing it towards out of town parking in larger supermarket retail areas where there are no charges therefore resulting in less footfall for businesses within the town centres? What other County council charges are included within this heading - is it likely that those who need to use the facilities more are generally going to be the less well-off anyway so unable to afford the increases?
All proposals must be transparent with sound data behind them.  Statutory services must take priority, but we must also think how we could deliver them differently. E.g. closing schools would help boost funding of others to provide better learner entitlement/provisions.
Looking after our elderly should be a priority. This can't be "online".
Reduce staff
Raising car parking charges will lead to an increase in on street parking. By reducing the car parking charges to a very affordable amount for residents without drives or garages or parking in front of their houses you would increase your revenue because these residents would pay to park in the car parks that are currently empty every evening.