

Budget survey

488 responses

Are you responding as				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A Wokingham borough resident		98.35%	477
2	An elected borough councillor		0.41%	2
3	A town or parish councillor		0.00%	0
4	Representing an organisation		0.41%	2
5	Completing the survey for someone else		0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify):		0.82%	4
			answered	485
			skipped	3

Priority one: Our primary objective will be to maintain sound finances so we avoid becoming insolvent, which would mean facing Government intervention to severely limit our spending options and potentially force a large Council Tax rise (services such as our libraries, leisure centres, climate emergency response and weekly waste/recycling collections would be under immediate threat).

To what extent do you agree with this priority?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		50.41%	244
2	Agree		33.88%	164
3	Neither agree nor disagree		9.50%	46
4	Disagree		4.13%	20
5	Strongly disagree		2.07%	10
			answered	484
			skipped	4

Do you have any comments on this priority?

132 respondents commented on this priority. The key themes are:

- Stop spending on projects that only benefit a few people and reduce spending on staff
- Keep services such as libraries, leisure centres and waste collections as they are important for residents' health and safety
- Cutting services such as libraries, leisure centres and climate emergency projects would save money
- Increase council tax rather than cut services
- Find efficiencies within the council or create new income sources
- Lobby government for more funding

Priority two: When making budget decisions we will prioritise those people who need us most.

To what extent do you agree with this priority?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	31.39%	151
2	Agree	36.80%	177
3	Neither agree nor disagree	16.42%	79
4	Disagree	12.47%	60
5	Strongly disagree	2.91%	14
		answered	481
		skipped	7

Do you have any comments on this priority?

172 respondents commented on this priority. The key themes are:

- Need more information to answer this; depends on definition and criteria of need
- Need balance – need most value for most people
- Everyone should have the same level of service; prioritise universal services
- The council doesn't use its money/resources wisely; could make savings in specific areas
- The council should no support trendy causes, things that only benefit a few people
- This risks WBC's approach becoming reactive/short term
- Generally supportive
- Have service users pay part of the cost

Priority three: We will generate income through increasing universal charges and through sensible long-term investments. We do this to minimise the need to reduce services and to prioritise support for those who need us most.

To what extent do you agree with this priority?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	20.08%	96
2	Agree	40.38%	193
3	Neither agree nor disagree	23.64%	113
4	Disagree	10.88%	52
5	Strongly disagree	5.02%	24
		answered	478
		skipped	10

Do you have any comments on this priority?

185 respondents commented on this priority. The key themes are:

- What does this mean? Who decides what is sensible? Need more information
- Sensible long-term investments can be risky; council should not make investments outside providing services
- Agree with increasing charges but need to understand impact first
- Generating income through increasing charges causes hardship
- Agree; sensible investment sounds good; income generation would be good
- Don't reduce services; stop wasting money on non essential things like cycle lanes
- Increase council tax

Priority four: We will only reduce services as a last resort, after considering alternative ways they could be provided and who could provide them.

To what extent do you agree with this priority?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	37.29%	179
2	Agree	41.04%	197
3	Neither agree nor disagree	10.21%	49
4	Disagree	8.54%	41
5	Strongly disagree	2.92%	14
		answered	480
		skipped	8

Do you have any comments on this priority?

136 respondents commented on this priority. The key themes are:

- Cut outsourcing, consultants; should better manage contractors to deliver quality services
- Agree to cut some services
- Depend on what services to be cut; need to consult residents beforehand
- Don't agree to cut vital or statutory services
- Don't agree waste collection changes would save money
- Run service more efficiently; reduce spending on projects that benefit a small group of people

Priority five: To safeguard our financial future, we will modernise the way we provide services by working with partners to maximise our joint resources.

To what extent do you agree with this priority?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree	31.16%	148
2	Agree	39.58%	188
3	Neither agree nor disagree	21.05%	100
4	Disagree	5.47%	26
5	Strongly disagree	2.74%	13
		answered	475
		skipped	13

Do you have any comments on this priority?

170 respondents commented on this priority. The key themes are:

- Must not be accompanied by service or staffing cuts
- General disapproval
- Reduce council staffing or improve procedures instead or as well
- Doesn't believe / questions if this will save money
- General approval Council must retain control of any arrangement / be transparent
- Keep Shute End / other assets
- Don't know enough / don't understand question / question is too vague
- Depends on the specific details of the arrangement
- It's the only option
- Suspicious of outsourcing to private sector
- Partnering with other councils or agencies would be more efficient

Are there any other priorities we should use to guide our financial decision?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	207
		answered	207
		skipped	281

Do you have any comments on this priority?

207 respondents commented on this priority. The key themes are:

- Everybody should have same level of service, prioritise universal services
- Need balance - can't have the many losing out to needs of a few. Need most value for most people
- Unsure of, or depends on, definition and criteria of need and whether it's fairly/accurately assessed
- Council doesn't use its money/resources wisely, could make savings in specific areas
- Better to prevent people becoming vulnerable than intervene later
- Stop prioritising cyclists
- Council should not be supporting "trendy", "woke" etc causes
- Prioritise statutory services/most vulnerable residents
- Council needs to explain financial issues better
- Too much housing - wouldn't be so much need if there wasn't/get more from developers
- This approach risks WBC becoming reactive / short term, not proactive / long-term
- Prioritise young people and their services
- Other - generally supportive comments
- Yes but balance savings with income - keep WBC attractive
- Consult residents on definition of need / priority
- Make service users pay part of cost or learn to help selves where possible
- Support businesses and/or jobs
- Reorganise local government across the region
- Prioritise quality of life
- Prioritise the environment/green initiatives
- Lobby central government Be more flexible/work more quickly
- Reduce staffing costs - Cap pay/reduce headcount/stop consultants and temp staff/restructure
- Shared services with other councils
- Apply common sense
- Go to the office more often
- Don't know/None
- Run more services in house/reduce contractors
- Crime prevention including littering
- Cost of living has had massive impact/don't increase
- Prioritise the arts
- Be more efficient

Are there organisations or groups that you are aware of that WBC should contact about working in partnership for community benefit? If yes, please tell us the name and contact information for the organisations or groups.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	105
		answered	105
		skipped	383

About you (optional)

The following questions are to ensure we take the views and needs of differing people into consideration and to understand your responses to the previous questions a little better. It is a legal requirement for us to ask these questions, but you are not obliged to answer any you do not wish to. The data is used for this survey only and cannot be used to identify you.

What town or parish do you live in?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arborfield and Newland		1.04%	4
2	Barkham		1.81%	7
3	Charvil		1.55%	6
4	Earley		13.99%	54
5	Finchampstead		8.81%	34
6	Hurst		0.78%	3
7	Remenham		0.26%	1
8	Ruscombe		0.00%	0
9	Shinfield		4.66%	18
10	Sonning		1.04%	4
11	Swallowfield		1.30%	5
12	Twyford		5.96%	23
13	Wargrave		2.85%	11
14	Winnersh		6.48%	25
15	Wokingham		31.87%	123
16	Wokingham Without		4.66%	18
17	Woodley		11.92%	46
18	Don't know		0.78%	3
19	Outside Wokingham borough		0.26%	1
			answered	386
			skipped	102

What sex/gender do you identify as?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Female	40.89%	157
2	Male	56.25%	216
3	Transgender	0.00%	0
4	Prefer not to say	0.78%	3
5	Other (please specify):	2.08%	8
		answered	384
		skipped	104

How old are you?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	17 or younger	0.00%	0
2	18-20	0.00%	0
3	21-29	1.04%	4
4	30-39	5.99%	23
5	40-49	15.10%	58
6	50-59	18.75%	72
7	60 or older	59.11%	227
		answered	384
		skipped	104

What race or ethnicity best describes you?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Arabic	0.00%	0
2	Asian/British Asian: Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
3	Asian/British Asian: Chinese	1.04%	4
4	Asian/British Asian: Indian	1.82%	7
5	Asian/British Asian: Pakistani	0.26%	1
6	Black/British Black: African	0.00%	0
7	Black/British Black: Caribbean	0.26%	1
8	White: British	86.72%	333
9	White: Other	4.17%	16
10	Mixed race	1.56%	6
11	Gypsy/Traveller	0.00%	0
12	Prefer not to say	2.34%	9
13	Other (please specify):	1.82%	7
		answered	384
		skipped	104

What do you consider your religion to be?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Buddhism	0.26%	1
2	Christianity	44.91%	172
3	Hinduism	1.57%	6
4	Islam	0.26%	1
5	Judaism	0.78%	3
6	Sikhism	0.26%	1
7	No religion	43.08%	165
8	Prefer not to say	6.79%	26
9	Other (please specify):	2.09%	8
		answered	383
		skipped	105

Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Asexual	0.80%	3
2	Bisexual	1.33%	5
3	Gay	0.80%	3
4	Lesbian	0.53%	2
5	Heterosexual/Straight	83.73%	314
6	Prefer not to say	9.60%	36
7	Other (please specify):	3.20%	12
		answered	375
		skipped	113

Have you undertaken any form of sex/gender reassignment?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	0.00%	0
2	No	92.51%	346
3	Prefer not to say	7.49%	28
		answered	374
		skipped	114

Are you currently pregnant or have you given birth within the last year?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes	0.53%	2
2	No	69.05%	261
3	Not applicable	26.46%	100
4	Prefer not to say	3.97%	15
		answered	378
		skipped	110

Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health condition?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
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Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health condition?

1	Yes		21.11%	80
2	No		71.50%	271
3	Prefer not to say		7.39%	28
			answered	379
			skipped	109

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