



## Appendix B

### Shape Worcestershire - parish and town council event outcomes

1. Bromsgrove and Redditch parish and town councils event on 18 June
2. Wychavon parish and town councils event on 26 June
3. Malvern Hills parish and town councils briefing on 7 July

# **Bromsgrove and Redditch Parish and Town Councils event**

## **18 June 2025**

Summary of feedback received from 4 Parish Councils and CALC.

### **What does good look like in 10 years time?**

- Better infrastructure for the growing population.
- Authority to be financially sound & have clarity of plan. Responsible officers to be accountable for their actions. For there to be defined response times to issues. Parish Councils to have a greater say in what happens in their areas.
- A future Worcestershire that is thriving, inclusive, and sustainable will be judged by how well it meets the aspirations and needs of its people, communities, and environments. From each sector's perspective, "good" in ten years might look like this:

#### **Residents**

- a) Connected Communities
- b) Affordable Living
- c) Health and Wellbeing
- d) Digital and Physical Access

#### **Businesses**

- a) Prosperous Local Economy
- b) Talent and Innovation
- c) Sustainability

#### **Public Services**

- a) Joined-up Delivery
- b) Prevention First
- c) Community-Centric Governance: Local services are shaped by community input, with parish councils, district representatives, and residents having meaningful influence on decisions.

#### **Third Sector Organisations**

- a) Resourced and Respected
  - b) Enablers of Inclusion
  - c) Collaborative Power
  - d) A Worcestershire-Wide Vision
- More connected, resilient, and thriving County—where strong local governance plays a central role. Town and Parish Councils across Worcestershire are key enablers of this vision, acting as the grassroots drivers of change, community voice, and place-based innovation.

A co-operative delivery model exists with Town and Parish Councils working close with the Unitary Council to deliver on this vision for the residents of the County.

That services are provided, and assets looked after by those accountable to the local community. Services and assets will be run on a cost effective basis, but at a high standard.

'Good' means a Worcestershire where local voices shape local outcomes. Town and Parish Councils are not just administrative bodies—they are trusted anchors of place, wellbeing and opportunity. Over the next decade, investing in their capacity and influence is essential to building a stronger, fairer Worcestershire for everyone.

- Easily recognisable service providers with one point of contact for the public to access. Duplication of roles is unnecessary and unhelpful. Whether it be 1 unitary or 2 unitary services must be customer driven at all times not cost driven
- A thriving, well-balanced parish that has grown to meet housing needs while preserving its valued rural character, strong community spirit, and high quality of life for all residents. This vision will be achieved by devolving powers to the Parish Council and providing the Parish Council with the support and opportunities it needs to influence and shape the future of the Parish.

**What specifically needs to be kept/improved/created to achieve the above?**

- More designated off-road parking for schools
- Strong Community Spirit and social cohesion
- Natural Assets- green spaces and heritage sites
- Local parks
- Economic growth
- Local Markets and High Streets
- Well-being programmes
- Existing primary and secondary school provision is valued but overstretched
- The Lengthsman scheme
- Civic Engagement Structures: Keep and strengthen mechanisms like Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums that enable grassroots decision-making.

**What Needs to be Improved (Strengthen or Modernise):**

- Transport Infrastructure
- Health and Care Services
- Digital Connectivity
- Library services
- Education and Skills including a new secondary school
- Expansion of youth facilities and engagement initiatives
- Affordable Housing:
- Environmental Sustainability
- Increased investment to improve maintenance and accessibility of play and recreation areas to meet the needs of a growing population
- Support for small scale commercial developments

**What Needs to be Created? (New Initiatives or Institutions):**

- Community Hubs
- Local Green Investment Fund
- Youth Futures Programme
- Digital Inclusion Alliance
- Community-Led Housing Trusts
- Integrated Public-Third Sector Platform
- Local Climate Action Plans
- Cross-sector Skills and Innovation Hubs
- Traffic safety improvements at high-risk junctions
- Speed reduction measures on key routes
- Parking enforcement and fly-tipping enforcement
- Town and Parish Councils need to be created to cover the County. Capacity building needs to take place within Town and Parish Councils to enable them to help deliver the unitary councils vision of a healthy and happy Worcestershire.
- More open and accessible services to the public.

Town and Parish Councils are fundamental in ensuring these goals are achieved. They should be empowered to act as local leaders, rooted in the identity and values of their communities.

Listen to Town and Parish Councils and to create elements which will help them facilitate and deliver on the vision for Worcestershire

**What local characteristics (identity, culture, heritage) need to be considered when designing future local government structures in Worcestershire?**

- Keeping new builds in line with existing properties.
- Having green spaces for leisure.
- An understanding of the different needs of rural and urban environments is required.
- It is vital to respect and reflect the County's distinct local identity, culture, and heritage. These characteristics shape residents' expectations of governance and community life.
- Town and Parish Councils can help deliver on this by helping to deliver local events that foster a sense of community. By delivering services and assets in localities Parish and Town Councils can help deliver on local ownership and promote a better and more inclusive community.
- The public need a local authority they can identify with. Therefore 2 unitary authorities rather than 1 countywide one would make more sense. People in localities especially some distance from Worcester will not identify with 1 county base. North or South Worcestershire would actually mean something to them.
- The Parish Council' distinct rural identity, strong community values, and

historical and environmental assets must be recognised and safeguarded:

**What mechanisms (existing or new) would contribute to ensuring effective community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment?**

- Having a strong parish council.
- Having a local police officer.
- Involvement of schools in local issues.
- To ensure effective community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment in Worcestershire, a blend of existing mechanisms and new, innovative approaches is essential. The goal is to move beyond consultation toward genuine co-design, codecision, and co-delivery of local services and plans.
- The goal is to embed engagement and empowerment into the everyday fabric of local governance. Town and Parish Councils can harness a combination of traditional methods (like meetings and community forums) alongside innovative solutions (like digital platforms and participatory budgeting) to ensure residents have a genuine and ongoing influence over their local environment. By creating multiple channels for communication, feedback, and active participation, we can build stronger, more resilient communities in Worcestershire where local people shape their futures.
- More public facing offices in localities. More officers accessible to the public. communities. We need to remember also that we have an ageing population and their ability to travel to Worcester to see officers etc is an increasing problem. Put people before money!
- Improved communication channels
- Devolution of services and decision-making to the Parish Council
- Youth involvement mechanisms

**Other Comments**

During the feedback discussions there were several areas of concern raised which included:

1. Were Parish Councils to be abolished? – Confirmed that was not the case.
2. Approval of Planning applications – would Parish Councillors be responsible for approving Planning applications following Local Government Reorganisation? It was explained that through previous experience of moving to unitary councils there would be no delegation of powers to make planning decisions without Parish Councils being involved in the consultation this matter and any discussions.
3. Are precepts going to need to be raised?
4. Will there be a requirement for Parish Councils to empty litter bins and refill salt bins?
5. What will happen to the lengthsman scheme? – it was indicated during the meeting that Parishes were keen to retain this scheme following LGR.

6. Will Parish Councils have some local control over highways and what will happen with the highways they currently look after?
7. Will currently projects that have been passed over to the District Council be passed back to the Parish Council to progress?
8. What are the implications for the Parish Councils?
9. Will there be any staffing increases needed?
10. Will more funding be required to pick up any responsibilities?
11. Concerns around retention of assets and loss of regalia on the town, tradition of the town and identity and history.
12. Retention of assets – it was important to start this process early and in a proactive way so that Parish Councils could establish what assets there were.
13. It was felt that it was important to continue to have high life expectancy, high numbers of incubation of businesses and to have the best outcomes in terms of economic development for residents living in Bromsgrove.

Parishes needed to think about the following:

- Their own identities
- Their own values
- Identify what they were good at now so that these can be included in the process as LGR is progressed.
- Identify what they wanted to keep so that these can be included in the process as LGR is progressed.
- Identify what they wanted in the future so that these can be included in the process as LGR is progressed. Be aspirational!

## **Wychavon Parish and Town Councils event 23 June 2025**

This event took place at the Civic Centre in Pershore and focused on local government reorganisation and the potential impact on and opportunities for parish and town council. The event included two workshop sessions, run by Adrian Pass with support from David Manning. The focus of the sessions was to look at the two options for Worcestershire and invite initial feedback from the parish and town councils present.

Both workshops followed the same format with a presentation forming the focus of the questions and facilitated discussion occurring around this. The main points raised are summarised below.

### **Workshop one – (31 people)**

A few minutes of discussion at the start of the workshop was focused on the forthcoming Wychavon residents focus group due to be held on 25.06.25.

Some of the key points about which option was preferred:

Attendees preferring the single unitary highlighted issues such as:

- Concerns that there will be insufficient experienced staff to share over two authorities and therefore a single option is better
- Head over heart decision on one simply down to cost effectiveness
- Concerns about the costings and assumption that single authority would be more economically viable.
- Concerns that any breakup of big-ticket items such as adult social care or children's services could be very expensive

Attendees preferring the two-authority option highlighted the following issues

- Concerns over the loss of distinctiveness and agency for the rural areas – “north of the county is very different to the south”
- Already operating across the three authorities in many work areas so the shared approach is already there
- Concerns that in a single authority the resources would be pushed to the urban areas and the south of the county would lose out
- Discussion around the need to break up adult social care and children's services in the two unitary option – examples of working across boundaries
- Perceived concentration of areas of higher need in the north of the county meaning that resources would be focused there.

General consensus that this is a difficult conversation to have given the lack of financial detail available on both options.

There was a brief discussion about the potential for parish and town councils to take on additional services and concerns were voiced about the impact on volunteers and the struggle that parishes in particular have in generating volunteers locally.

Finally, the attendees were asked to raise their hands to demonstrate which option they currently preferred, although it was clearly understood that there was a lack of detail currently. The results of this were as follows:

In favour of single unitary – 4 attendees

In favour of two authorities – 27 attendees

### **Workshop two – (29 people)**

Very similar response to the first workshop, although there was less conversation at the start about the focus group.

The discussion was more focused, but the general areas of discussion reflected the first workshop almost exactly. There was more discussion about the concept of the “Wychavon culture” and the need to embed this in whatever the new authority structure looks like.

Again, at the end of the session, we asked attendees to do a show of hands to indicate their preference for single or two authority options.

In favour of single unitary – 5 attendees

In favour of two authorities – 24 attendees



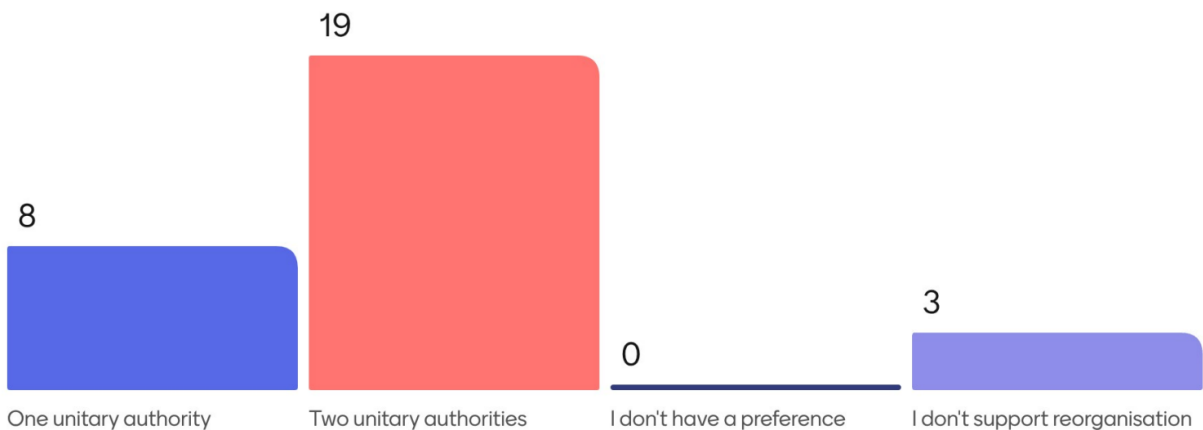
# Malvern Hills parish and town councils briefing

## 7 July 2025

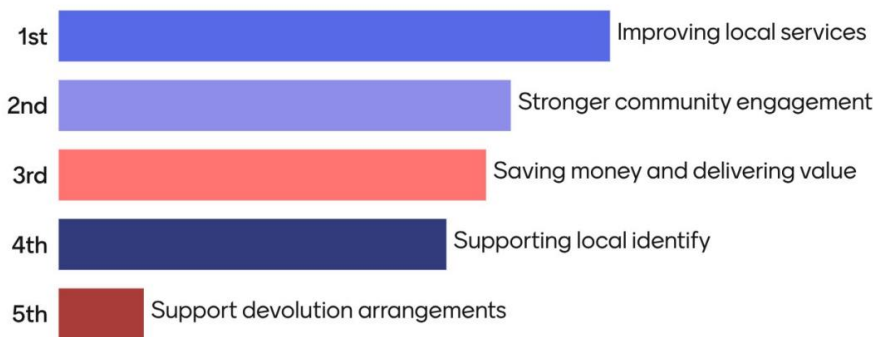
Much of the of content of the Malvern Hills parish and town council briefing was similar to the Wychavon parish and town councils event.

Participants were invited to give their views on local government reorganisation in Worcestershire using Mentimeter, which is an interactive presentation and polling tool. The outcomes are presented below.

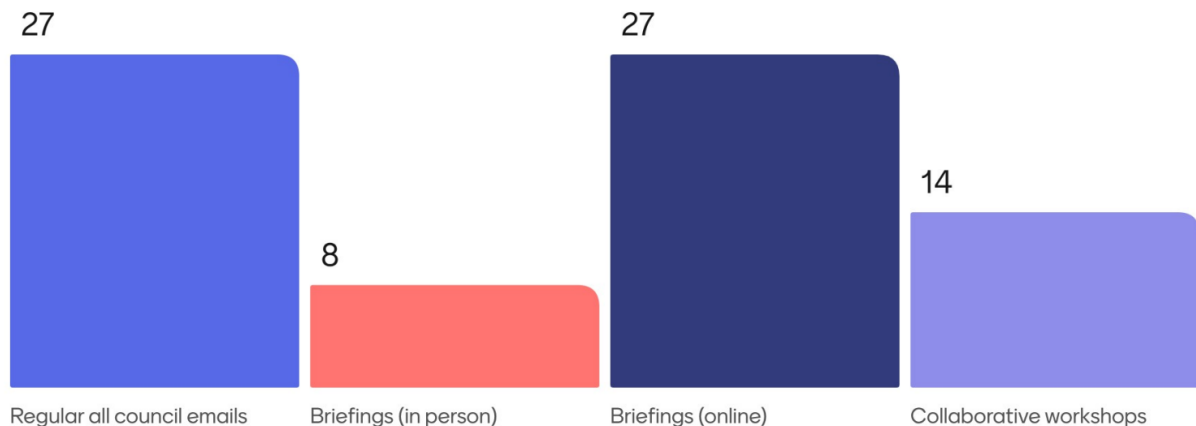
Which of the options for local government reorganisation do you prefer?



Which are the top three things that are most important in helping you make your preference?



## How would you like to be kept informed about LGR?



From a town & parish council perspective, which 1 or 2 words describe what 'good' would look like in 10 years' time?

