

## Fast facts

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## **About Worcestershire and its County Council**

About [Worcestershire County Council](#):

- **Top performance rating**

All councils are assessed by the Audit Commission, on behalf of the Government, using a system called Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Councils are rated between zero and four stars, with four being the highest score. Worcestershire County Council has achieved the top four star rating in its last two assessments, and was previously rated as 'Excellent' under the old system. It also received top marks for 'value for money'.

- **The council's six main priorities**

The Corporate Plan [Building on Success](#) explains more about the council's priorities between 2005 and 2009:

- Improving Community Safety
- Raising Standards in Schools
- Improving Highways, Footways & Transport Services
- Supporting Older People to Live Independent Lives
- Strengthening Worcestershire's Economy
- Enhancing Services to Young People

The council is also committed to keeping Council Tax as low as prudently possible.

- **The county has a 'two-tier' system of local government**

The County Council delivers a wide range of services across Worcestershire, while six [district councils](#) operate at a more local level.

- **Some of the council's services**

There are six district councils and one County Council in Worcestershire. Below is a brief summary of the councils' main areas of responsibility:

District councils	County Council
<b>Responsible for:</b>	
Household waste collections	Education
Housing	Roads
Environmental Health	Social care
Leisure	Waste management

- **Worcestershire has 57 County Councillors**

Worcestershire's [County Councillors](#) are made up of 29 Conservatives, 17 Labour, eight Liberal Democrats, two Liberals and one Independent Health Concern councillor.

## Fast facts

- **‘Leader and Cabinet’ political structure**  
The Leader of the Council, Dr George Lord, chairs a [Cabinet](#) of six more Conservative councillors who are the decision-making ‘executive’ each with a particular focus and portfolio for a service area.
- **Overview & Scrutiny keeps an eye on work**  
Councillors from all parties take part in the [scrutiny](#) process to examine the Cabinet’s decisions and the work of council officers, with the help of partners and the public. Examples of [scrutiny work](#) in recent years includes [highway maintenance](#), [healthy eating in Worcestershire schools](#), [homecare](#) and [bullying](#).
- **Chief Executive**  
The council’s Interim Chief Executive is Ian Stewart. The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing the councillors’ policies. Trish Haines will become the authority’s next permanent Chief Executive in March 2008.
- **The council employs the equivalent of 12,500 full time staff**  
This includes teachers and school staff as well as officers from the whole range of council services. Part time staff are represented as ‘full time equivalents’.
- **Funding comes from Council Tax and central Government**  
In 2007-08, Council Tax makes up £195.3 million of the council’s £271.4 million budget. £71.1 million comes from central Government and another £5 million comes from reserves. Schools receive £334.4 million from the Government’s Dedicated Schools Grant, which the council administers.
- **Band D is £943.80**  
Council Tax bills in Worcestershire are consistently [lower than in neighbouring counties](#). For 2007-08, the County Council’s Band D precept is £943.80. The full amount of each household’s bill varies as precepts from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, West Mercia Police Authority, the local district council and sometimes a parish or town council are also added.
- **The council looks after about 2,500 miles of roads**  
It’s also responsible for around 1,800 miles of footways, more than 3,000 miles of public rights of way, 50,810 streetlights, 5,670 illuminated road signs and bollards, and 62 zebra crossings.
- **Waste is being minimised**  
In 2006-07, 35 per cent of Worcestershire’s waste was recycled or composted. The council manages waste in partnership with Herefordshire Council in accordance with a [30 year strategy](#). District councils are responsible for kerbside collections of waste.
- **Access services via the Hub**  
The best way for Worcestershire residents to access County Council services is through the [Worcestershire Hub](#). The Hub is a partnership that lets people get in touch with the services of all six district councils as well as the County Council over the phone, in main customer centres or online.

## Fast facts

- **There are nearly 80,000 children of school age in the county**  
Worcestershire's 267 schools deliver education from the age of four or five up to 16. The County Council offered 96 per cent of children a place at their first preference school in 2006-07.
- **...and millions of books**  
The council's 23 [libraries](#) loan more than 3,000,000 books per year.

About Worcestershire:

- **More than half a million people live in Worcestershire**  
In mid-2005, [research](#) estimated the figure at 555,800 people living in approximately 240,000 households.
- **The population is getting older**  
The average age of the county's population is rising. In 2006-07, we provided [home care](#) services to 3,347 people – a 14 per cent increase since the previous year.
- **Diversity is growing**  
According to the [2001 Census](#), people Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) communities made up 2.5 per cent of the county's population. This is predicted to rise to 3.1 per cent by 2011.
- **Elgar, sauce and steam**  
Amongst many other things, Worcestershire is known nationally and internationally for being the birthplace of composer Sir Edward Elgar, Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce and the world-renowned Severn Valley Railway.
- **Sights to see**  
Visitors to the county are attracted by landmarks such as the Malvern Hills, Worcester Cathedral, Broadway Tower, the West Midlands Safari Park, New Road County Cricket Ground, Redditch's Palace Theatre and even the funfair at Stourport-on-Severn.

For more information about Worcestershire, visit the [Destination Worcestershire](#) web pages.