

Summary and analysis of consultation responses and summary of representations from named consultees

Background

1. A statutory consultation on proposals for unitary local government in Worcestershire was opened on 5 February and closed on 26 March 2026. We received a total of 1972 responses.
2. The two proposals being consulted on were made by councils and submitted to the Government on 28 November 2025.
3. This document provides a summary of the 1972 responses received to the Government's consultation on the proposals for future unitary local government in the Worcestershire area.
4. The Government announced to Parliament on 16th July 2026 that the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for Two unitaries submitted by Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council.
5. The consultation invited views on the proposals submitted by councils in Worcestershire:
6. One Worcestershire, submitted by Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council, proposed one unitary council across the whole of the area of Worcester comprising the current district areas of Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest;
7. **From here this will be referred to as the 1 unitary proposal.**
8. Transforming Worcestershire, submitted by Bromsgrove District Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council, proposed two unitary councils: one for the North comprising the current district areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest; the other for the South comprising the current district areas of Malvern Hills, Worcester and Wychavon.
9. **From here this is referred to as the 2 unitary proposal.**
10. The consultation on these proposals has informed an assessment of the merits of each proposal. All the proposals have been considered carefully, alongside the responses received to this consultation, representations and any other relevant information, in assessing the proposals against the criteria before a judgement was taken on which proposal to implement.

11. The criteria by which proposals for local government reorganisation have been assessed are set out in the letter of invitation, sent to councils in area on 5 February 2025 [[Letter: Worcestershire - GOV.UK](#)]. The consultation asked questions relating to the criteria for each of the above proposals.
12. This consultation relates to the structure of local government in Worcestershire. These proposals relate to England only.

Methodology

13. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 states that the Secretary of State may not implement a proposal unless they have consulted with every authority affected by the proposal and other such other persons as they consider appropriate. Those councils and persons considered appropriate are hereafter referred to as 'named consultees'.
14. The list of named consultees is available at Annex C of the consultation document: [Proposals for local government reorganisation in Worcestershire - GOV.UK](#).
15. In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (the Ministry) welcomed the views of any other persons or bodies interested in these proposals, including local residents, town and parish councils, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.
16. The Ministry used Citizen Space, a third-party consultation programme to collect responses. Citizen Space was open to both named consultees and all other interested parties. Further information on the statutory basis for, and methodology of, the consultation is provided on the [publication page](#).
17. Responses to the consultation were also received by email and letter.
18. The Ministry used a tool named Consult AI to assist in the analysis of responses. The AI tool identified themes present in the responses which Ministry officials have checked for accuracy. The tool did not have access to any personal data. All responses from named consultees were read by Ministry staff. 23.
19. To evaluate Consult's performance, human reviewers independently checked the theme assignments Consult had produced, and these were compared against Consult's original outputs using an F1 score — a standard measure that penalises both over- and under-assignment of themes. Consult's theme mappings were consistent with people.
20. The department has conducted an evaluation of the Consult tool and concluded that Consult's theme mappings are consistent with human reviewers' assessments. For this consultation, human reviewers independently checked the theme assignments Consult had produced and likewise found that Consult's theme mappings were broadly consistent with the human reviewers.

Consultation Questions

21. Respondents answered the questions below using a five-point agree–disagree scale, ranging from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’, with an additional ‘don’t know’ option

22. The questions were as follows:

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support? [As of 5 February 2026, within the Worcestershire area, Worcestershire County Council had received [in-principle Exceptional Financial Support](#) to support their 2025/26 budget. This council will not necessarily be in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support in future financial years.]

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements.

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Question 9: If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

Summary of responses

23. There were 1975 responses to this consultation, 19 from named consultees and 1956 by other respondents.

Responses from named consultees

Named Consultee respondents	Number of Responses
Principal councils	9
Neighbouring councils	4
Strategic Authorities	0
Health Bodies	1
Police and Fire	2
Education Bodies	1
Other Public Sector	1
Voluntary and Community Sector	0
Business Organisations	0
National Bodies	0
Other named consultees	1
Total named consultees	19

Responses from other respondents

<i>Other respondents</i>	Number of Responses
Individual living in Worcestershire	1802
Individual not living in affected area	81
Organisation	73
Total other respondents	1956
Total responses (Including named consultees)	1975

Summary of findings

24. Tables in this report included numbers rounded to the nearest whole number, and as such, not all cumulative scores will equal 100%.
25. Respondents were invited to respond to 8 number of multiple-choice questions per proposal and could provide a rationale for their answers in a free text box. Where a proposal included boundary change, respondents were invited to answer an additional question and provide an additional free text response. The multiple-choice questions invited respondents to state whether they strongly agreed, somewhat agreed/agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, somewhat disagreed/disagreed, strongly disagreed, or did not know when responding to a statement.

26. For the purposes of this document we have classified positive responses as strongly agree, somewhat agreed or agree and negative responses as somewhat disagree or disagree and strongly disagree.
27. Quantitative scoring against specific questions was applied to responses submitted by email and post only where respondents provided explicit answers based on the scale provided. No assumptions or inferred positions were applied to submissions that did not directly address those questions.
28. Responses received by email and post are not included in the respondent count for questions 9. A summary of the relevant views expressed in those responses against each criterion is included within the summary of free text responses for each respondent type.
29. In addition to this round of consultation, the Government undertook consultation on 6 other local government reorganisation areas between 19 November 2025 and 11 January 2026. One response received as part of that consultation is relevant to all local government reorganisation areas, including those in this round of consultation. A summary of the relevant views expressed in that response against each criterion is included within the summary of free text responses for that respondent type.
30. The table below takes the average response across the multiple-choice questions to provide an overall view of whether all respondents viewed a proposal positively or negatively.

All respondents

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	14296	32%	60%	7%	1%
2 Unitary	14744	59%	33%	7%	1%

31. Overall, the responses demonstrate a preference for the 2 unitary proposal. 59% of respondents to the 2 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 33% of respondents provided negative responses. 8% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference is for the 2 unitary, with the 1 unitary proposal less preferred.

Named consultees

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	136	44%	41%	14%	1%
2 Unitary	136	51%	29%	19%	1%

32. Overall, the responses from the named consultees demonstrate a preference for the 2 unitary proposal. 51% of respondents to the 2 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 29% of respondents provided negative responses. 20% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference is for the 2 unitary proposal with the 1 unitary proposal less preferred.

Individuals living in the Worcestershire area

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	13128	31%	60%	7%	1%
2 Unitary	13500	59%	32%	7%	1%

33. Overall, the responses from the individuals living in the Worcestershire area demonstrate a preference for the 2 unitary proposal. 59% of respondents to the 2 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 32% of respondents provided negative responses. 8% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference is for the 2 unitary proposal with the 1 unitary proposal less preferred.

Individuals living outside of the affected area

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	576	29%	63%	6%	2%
2 Unitary	612	46%	47%	6%	2%

34. Overall, the responses from the individuals living outside the Worcestershire area demonstrate a preference for the 2 unitary proposal. 46% of respondents to the 2 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 47% of respondents provided negative responses, with the figures for the single unitary being 29% and 63% respectively. 8% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference is for the 2 unitary proposal, with the 1 unitary proposal less preferred.

Organisations

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
1 Unitary	456	36%	50%	12%	2%

2 Unitary	496	65%	24%	10%	2%
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35. Overall, the responses from organisations demonstrate a preference for the 2 unitary proposal. 65% of respondents to the 2 unitary proposal provided positive responses to the questions and 24% of respondents provided negative responses. 12% were responses of neither agree nor disagree or don't know. Preference is for the 2 unitary proposal, with the 1 unitary proposal less preferred.

Analysis of responses by question

Question 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Summary of Named Consultee Responses

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal 1 unitary</i>	8	38%	63%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	8	88%	13%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	50%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	136	44%	41%	14%	1%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	136	51%	29%	19%	1%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1644	37%	60%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1687	65%	32%	3%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	32%	60%	8%	0%

<i>Individual living outside affected area</i> <i>2 Unitary</i>	77	53%	40%	5%	1%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>1 unitary</i>	57	37%	47%	12%	4%
<i>Organisations</i> <i>2 Unitary</i>	62	68%	24%	6%	2%

Total Responses Question 1

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>1 unitary</i>	1790	37%	59%	3%	0%
<i>Total all responses</i> <i>2 Unitary</i>	1843	65%	32%	3%	0%

Question 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal</i> <i>1 unitary</i>	8	38%	63%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority</i> <i>2 Unitary</i>	8	88%	13%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority</i> <i>1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	25%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority</i> <i>2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority</i> <i>1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority</i> <i>2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	50%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	17	53%	35%	12%	0%

Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	17	47%	41%	12%	0%
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Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1642	33%	62%	5%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1687	62%	33%	5%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	29%	67%	5%	0%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	77	45%	49%	4%	1%
<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	37%	54%	5%	4%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	63%	24%	10%	3%

Total Responses Question 2

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1788	33%	62%	5%	1%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1843	61%	33%	6%	1%

Question 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
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<i>Principal Authority Proposal</i> 1 unitary	8	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority</i> 2 Unitary	8	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority</i> 1 unitary	4	50%	25%	25%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority</i> 2 Unitary	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority</i> 1 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority</i> 2 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies</i> 1 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies</i> 2 Unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies</i> 1 unitary	2	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies</i> 2 Unitary	2	0%	50%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies</i> 1 unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies</i> 2 Unitary	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 1 unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector</i> 2 Unitary	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector</i> 1 unitary	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	1787	34%	58%	7%	1%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	1843	58%	36%	5%	1%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1641	28%	64%	6%	3%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1687	45%	47%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	28%	64%	6%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	77	45%	47%	6%	1%
<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	35%	47%	16%	2%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	65%	26%	6%	3%

Total Responses Question 3

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1787	34%	58%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1843	58%	36%	5%	1%

Question 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support? [As of 5 February 2026, within the Worcestershire area, Worcestershire County Council had received [in-principle Exceptional Financial Support](#) to support their 2025/26 budget. This council will not necessarily be in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support in future financial years.]

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal 1 unitary</i>	8	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	8	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	25%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	50%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	17	41%	41%	12%	6%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	17	47%	35%	12%	6%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1641	32	60%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1689	55%	35%	8%	2%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	29%	65%	3%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	76	41%	50%	5%	4%
<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	35%	47%	16%	2%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	58%	26%	15%	2%

Total Responses Question 4

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1787	32%	60%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1844	55%	35%	9%	2%

Question 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal 1 unitary</i>	8	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	8	75%	25%	0%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	25%	0%

<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	17	47%	41%	12%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	17	53%	35%	12%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1641	30%	62%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1687	58%	32%	9%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	29%	67%	3%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	76	45%	49%	7%	0%
<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	37%	53%	9%	2%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	65%	21%	15%	0%

Total Responses Question 5

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1787	30%	61%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1842	58%	33%	9%	1%

Question 6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal 1 unitary</i>	8	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	8	88%	0%	13%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	25%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%

<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	17	35%	47%	18%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	17	53%	18%	29%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1641	27%	65%	7%	1%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1685	59%	31%	9%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	28%	65%	6%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	77	47%	51%	1%	1%

<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	33%	58%	9%	0%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	69%	21%	10%	0%

Total Responses Question 6

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1787	27%	64%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1841	59%	31%	9%	1%

Question 7: To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements.

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal 1 unitary</i>	8	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	8	75%	13%	13%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	25%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	17	47%	41%	12%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	17	47%	29%	24%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1640	32%	50%	14%	4%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1689	54%	31%	11%	3%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	35%	47%	13%	6^
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	75	43%	44%	11%	3%
<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	35%	40%	23%	2%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	58%	23%	16%	3%

Total Responses Question 7

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1786	33%	49%	14%	4%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1843	54%	32%	12%	3%

Question 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Principal Authority Proposal 1 unitary</i>	8	25%	5%	0%	0%
<i>Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	8	88%	0%	13%	0%
<i>Neighbouring Authority 1 unitary</i>	4	50%	25%	25%	0%

<i>Neighbouring Principal Authority 2 Unitary</i>	4	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 1 unitary</i>	0	25%	75%	0%	0%
<i>Strategic Authority 2 unitary</i>	0	88%	0%	13%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	50%	25%	25%	0%
<i>Health Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	25%	50%	25%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 1 unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Police and Fire and Rescue Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	2	50%	0%	50%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
<i>Education Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 1 unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Other Public Sector 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Voluntary and Community Sector 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Business Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>National Bodies 1 unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%

<i>National Bodies 2 Unitary</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 1 unitary</i>	1	100%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Other named consultees 2 Unitary</i>	1	0%	100%	0%	0%
Total Named Consultees 1 unitary	17	35%	47%	18%	0%
Total Named Consultees 2 Unitary	17	59%	18%	24%	0%

Individuals and Organisation (not named consultees)

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Individual living in affected area 1 unitary</i>	1683	26%	66%	7%	0%
<i>Individual living in affected area 2 Unitary</i>	1689	62%	29%	8%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 1 unitary</i>	72	25%	69%	4%	1%
<i>Individual living outside affected area 2 Unitary</i>	77	49%	43%	6%	1%
<i>Organisations 1 unitary</i>	57	39%	56%	5%	0%
<i>Organisations 2 Unitary</i>	62	71%	24%	3%	2%

Total Responses Question 8

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>No. of responses</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	1784	27%	65%	7%	1%
<i>Total all responses 2 Unitary</i>	1845	61%	30%	8%	1%

Question 9: If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

<i>Respondent type/Proposal</i>	<i>Total Named consultees</i>	<i>Total Individuals living in area</i>	<i>Total individuals not in area</i>	<i>Total Organisation</i>
<i>Total all responses 1 unitary</i>	14	931	40	36
<i>Total all responses 2unitary Option 1</i>	12	952	39	37

36. We also received 44 responses by email and post. 6 were from named consultees, 14 were from individuals living in area, 7 were from individuals not in area or who did not specify their location, 18 were from organisations. A summary of the views shared in these responses is included within the summaries below.

37. Summary of named consultee responses

Principal councils expressed support for the proposal that they put forward. Comments included that the 1 unitary proposal was too large and centralised, and risked being less agile and less place-responsive; while the 2 unitary proposal was seen as not being financially viable and risked the financial and operational stability of local government in Worcestershire.

Neighbouring principal councils showed a preference for the 1 unitary proposal feeling it better supported economic growth, infrastructure and service delivery, while they were concerned about the potential impacts of moving to two unitary councils and the fragmentation of county-wide services.

Health bodies had a broad preference for the 1 unitary as they had concerns focused on the risk that moving to two unitaries could split services and make the health and social care system more complex, including creating duplicate boards and scrutiny functions. It was felt this could make coordination harder and impact how services are delivered across the county, even though some potential benefits for the 2 unitary proposal of stronger local alignment were recognised.

Other public sector bodies did not show support for either proposal, but stated that any changes should not undermine joint planning and response to public health incidents and that local government reorganisation should be used as an opportunity to strengthen services, to streamline systems by eliminating duplication and to focus on local priorities.

Education bodies' responses to the consultation questions showed a preference for the 2 unitary though no substantive additional comments were made.

Voluntary and Community Sector bodies did not express a preference for either of the proposals submitted, but gave information on what they felt should be

considered and how the voluntary sector should be supported moving forward under local government reorganisation whichever proposal was chosen.

Business bodies raised concerns that the 2 unitary proposal could lead to a less efficient system, weakening coordination of planning for skills, infrastructure, workforce development with funding streams remaining fragmented rather than aligned. The 1 unitary proposal was seen as retaining strategic functions at the county level, providing greater clarity and efficiency, and reducing impact on service users and businesses.

Comments against the criteria

38. For criteria 1: A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government:

Concerns were raised that a single unitary could risk weakening local identity, reducing accountability, and distancing decision-making from communities, though residents did feel that the one unitary option gave efficiency gains due to reduced duplication. For the two-unitary, concerns focused on the financial impact and the risks of splitting existing services, which could create disruption to delivery, reduce efficiency, and affect continuity. There were worries about the additional costs and operational challenges involved in breaking up and reorganising current services, though some residents felt that the distinct economic, geographic, cultural differences between North and South were better addressed with the two unitary option.

39. For criteria 2: Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks: Concerns were raised that while a single unitary may bring efficiency savings, it may become too distant from local areas and possibly therefore risks reduced service quality and responsiveness. For the two-unitary proposal, consultation responses put forward the view that there was a lack of clear financial evidence in the proposal, making it difficult to judge whether the model is viable. There were also worries about the potential extra costs of running two councils, challenges in dividing resources against local needs, and the risk that smaller councils may struggle to manage financial pressures though positive feedback highlighted the feeling that councils were large enough to be financially resilient, but small enough to retain a strong sense of place and local accountability.

40. For criteria 3: Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens: Concerns were raised that moving to two unitaries could create risks for children's services, particularly around maintaining consistency, fair access to support, and continuity of care. There were worries about the impact of setting up new leadership teams, potential disruption during case handovers, and the effect this could have on vulnerable children. In contrast, concerns about the single unitary proposal focused on the risk that resources may not be distributed fairly, with rural, northern and more vulnerable communities potentially missing out, though feedback again highlighted the potential efficiency gains associated with the proposal for this criteria. It was also felt it had the greatest potential for strategic partnerships and shared strategic priorities across public services.

41. **For criteria 4: Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views:** The one unitary proposal referenced that in its development it had consulted with organisations and institutions rather than undertaking a public consultation, and this was also noted by respondents. By contrast the 2 unitary proposal is cited by respondents as being informed by local people and focuses on local delivery. However, some respondents noted that the local consultation carried out to inform the two-unitary proposal was completed by less than 1% of the total population, although a majority of those who participated supported the two-unitary proposal. They also expressed the view that that consultation had not provided sufficient financial context or clear information on how splitting the county would affect service delivery.
42. **For criteria 5: New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements:** Concerns were raised that a single unitary authority could make it more difficult to work with neighbouring areas on devolution and reduce flexibility in pursuing future devolution arrangements. Some respondents also expressed concerns that this could make it harder to build the local support needed to deliver devolved powers effectively. In contrast, public concerns about the two-unitary proposal focused more on the potential challenges associated with dividing the county, although some respondents felt that two aligned authorities could provide greater flexibility for cross-boundary working and future devolution arrangements.
43. **For criteria 6: New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment:** Concerns were raised that the 1 unitary proposal could weaken local identity and accountability, making it harder for decisions to reflect the needs of individual communities. It was felt that councillors covering a larger area would struggle to engage closely with residents, reducing opportunities for neighbourhood involvement. Many responses suggested that smaller unitaries would be more effective, allowing for stronger community engagement and making councillors more visible and accountable to the people they serve.
44. **The themes identified by the AI tool were as follows:**
- **Distinct economic, geographic and cultural differences.** There are clear differences between the north and south of Worcestershire in terms of the economy, geography and culture, and a single unitary council may struggle to meet these different needs, while separate north and south councils would be better able to respond to them.
 - **A single large authority risks being too remote.** There were concerns that one larger authority could become too big and distant, leading to less efficient and lower quality services, while having two separate councils could increase costs, reduce efficiency, and cause disruption by splitting services.

- **A single unitary gives efficiency gains.** The single unitary was seen as more efficient as it would cut down on duplication and complexity of service delivery and partnerships.
- **Local accountability.** There were concerns that a single unitary council could weaken local identity and accountability, making it harder for decisions to reflect what communities need, while two councils were seen as more responsive and better connected to local areas.
- **Resource Distribution.** A single unitary may offer unfair resource distribution, especially for rural, northern and vulnerable communities, a 2 unitary is seen to give improved representation and tailored services.

45. **Summary of paper and emailed non-named consultee responses**

Key themes included the importance of financial sustainability, effective and accessible services, and clear accountability and leadership. Supporters of a single unitary emphasised benefits such as strategic consistency, reduced duplication, streamlined partnership working, and stronger county-wide coordination, while those favouring two councils highlighted more localised decision-making and responsiveness to differing needs across north and south Worcestershire. Across all responses, concerns were raised about implementation risks, transition costs, democratic representation, and the need for meaningful engagement, with no single theme universally shared.