



Report to: Council, 22nd February 2022

Report of: Corporate Director - Planning and Governance

Subject: COUNCIL ELECTORAL CYCLE

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 Council notes the outcome of the public consultation detailed in this report and at Appendix 1;**
- 1.2 Council determines whether:-**
- a) To continue with the current elections regime of elections by thirds; or**
 - b) To change to whole council elections every 4 years as from 2024; and**
- 1.3 If the Council chooses to change the electoral cycle to whole council elections once every four years, the Council authorises the Corporate Director - Planning and Governance to issue the necessary public information as required by legislation and undertake any further actions necessary to give effect to the Council's resolution.**

2. Background

- 2.1** The Policy and Resources Committee resolved on 14 December 2021 to commence a consultation process with a view to determining if the electoral cycle for Worcester City Council should be changed to whole council elections every 4 years from 2024.
- 2.2** Having consulted on the proposal for changing the electoral cycle, it is now a decision for Full Council as to whether or not the Council wishes to change the electoral cycle.
- 2.3** Prior to passing any resolution to convert the electoral cycle to whole council Elections, the Council must have taken reasonable steps to consult with such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed changes.
- 2.4** The Council undertook a consultation which ran for 3 weeks and closed on 13 February. The consultation was publicised via a press release, on the website and via social media. The Council also wrote to statutory organisations in the city and the wider county area. The residents' panel was also alerted to the consultation.
- 2.5** In total 329 responses were received to the consultation. A summary of the response data is attached at **Appendix 1**. Overall a majority of respondents supported a move to whole council elections although a sizeable minority preferred to remain with the current arrangements (by thirds). It has been clarified that elections by halves is not an option for this Council and therefore the only choice is between remaining with elections by thirds or moving to whole council elections.

- 2.6 Reasons given by consultees for preferring elections by thirds included that it provided a regular refresh of political debate and political ideas and that this arrangement had served the Council well so there was no compelling reason to change it. Reasons given by consultees for preferring whole council elections included that this would provide a better use of public resources and provide more stability over a longer political period.

3. Preferred Option

- 3.1 To advise Council on the outcome of consultation on a possible move from elections by thirds to election of the whole council once every four years.
- 3.2 To seek a Council resolution on whether the electoral cycle for Worcester City Council should be changed to whole council elections every 4 years from 2024, or stay as it is.
- 3.3 If the Council resolves to move to whole Council elections then it must approve the date by which this change should be effective. In view of the fact that the Boundary Commission requires the Council to hold a whole council election in 2024 in any event, this is proposed as the date at which the Council's resolution to change would be implemented.
- 3.4 Following adoption of any resolution to move to whole council elections, in order to make the change legally effective, the Council is required to publish the details in a "scheme" (eg on its website) and give notice to the Boundary Commission of this change.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 There is no obligation to change the Council's electoral cycle but Members had agreed to consider and debate the matter as part of the preparatory work for the Boundary Commission's Electoral Review of Worcester City Council.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

It is possible that moving to whole council elections will result in a financial saving for the Council over time, although there are a number of factors to consider, including the availability of funding for specific elections.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

Under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, councils that elect by thirds can move to whole-council elections by passing a resolution at a special meeting of the Full Council. The resolution will only be deemed carried if there are two-thirds majority of those voting vote in favour of a proposed change to the electoral cycle. If the Council so resolves, it will be unable to change the scheme again for at least five years. There are statutory arrangements which must be met once the Council resolution is passed including a requirement to publicise the fact that a resolution has been passed and produce an explanatory document; and to notify the Local Government Boundary Commission for England of the resolution.

5.3 Risk Implications

There are no significant risks identified.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

Any change to the electoral cycle would be published on the Council's website and publicised with stakeholders.

5.5 Equality Implications

There are no specific equality implications identified for either electoral cycle option. Elections must be delivered in such a way as to ensure the needs of people with protected characteristics are considered and appropriately accommodated.

The demographics of those responding to the public consultation are summarised in **Appendix 1**.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

None identified.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

None identified.

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

Regular review and debate of the Council's governance and electoral arrangements is one mechanism by which the residents and businesses of Worcester can be assured that the Council is responsive to their needs and interests.

Appendix 1: Consultation summary

Ward(s):	All Wards
Contact Officer:	Sian Stroud Corporate Director- Planning and Governance; sian.stroud@worcester.gov.uk; 01905 722019
Background Papers:	None

Appendix 1

Electoral Cycle Consultation Summary

Do you think the current electoral cycle should continue?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	36.89%	121
No	58.54%	192
Don't know	4.57%	15

Answered - 328, Skipped - 0

Responses in favour of elections by thirds

Its time to move forward if one government make these mistakes we should be allowed to vote
It's the only time we see local councillors/potential councillors as they come knocking at the door during the campaigns. This gives residents the opportunity to raise local issues with them and keeps them to account
The council should be accountable - one election in 4 years reduces accountability.
Less susceptible to single issues.
Balance of continuity and change
It reduces short termism and allows new members of the council to benefit from the wisdom of those who have been there longer.
Working ok as it is.
It has worked well and is good balance of democracy and continuity. It is also efficient use of electoral resources as there is a fairly consistent manpower requirement every year, which in turn promotes efficiency.
The system works well as it stands. This allows people to select councillors more frequently and allowing them the opportunity to feel more engaged with the process and challenge policies that they may feel are unpopular in a timely manner.
Chance for voters to regularly select councillors according to recent performance of the council & current issues. With elections only every four years, it is easier for councillors to not carry out election pledges.
Current system works fine, no need to change for changes sake
it is easy to understand and people are used to it
a) it enables changes of political opinion to be nuanced ie no sudden dramatic change of political control simply on account of what may be a temporary blip in a national party's poll rating b) there is a risk (as happens with the County Council at present) that a large amount of accumulated knowledge and experience can be lost overnight - with perhaps 50% or less of of the Council remaining. It takes time for new members to build up that knowledge. Election by thirds means the potential for such loss is reduced.
Provides transparency for audit purposes, fairness so a good range of viewpoints are taken into consideration and allows the facility to handle any poor performance
It works!
I feel the current term is enough
It's already a lot of work. Either of the proposed changes would increase the amount of work in the relevant years.

It makes rationale sense for the tenure of councillors to be staggered. To replace the whole council every 4 years could see significant impact of progress of the councils works and agenda for progress. To replace half the council would also have a consequential impact. Staggered in thirds ensures the greatest opportunity for the living memory of the council to transition without detriment to its works.
To provide some continuity on the council
I think it seems to work
It ensures that new people come onboard on a regular basis and prevents a cycle where everyone is elected at one time and comes up for re-election at the same time. A total re-election would likely cause peaks and lulls in the work of the Council which could be detrimental to the residents.
Time is given for the councillors to prove they have a benefit to the community
It annually updates the Council with the preferences of one-third of the electorate.
The existing system tends to create more cooperation between parties
To keep continuity
It ensures that there is a regular opportunity for voters to select their councillor, but without the complete disruption to the operation of the council that a full across the board election can cause (when taking into account the pre-election pause, the actual election and the post-election pause of business).
It seems to me to enable greater stability and continuity of local government as specifically avoids a wholesale change in councillors. it also reduces reduces the potential influence of general election partisan voter choices over-riding local issues when choosing councillors.
Voting every year is an enhancement of democracy; and twelve-monthly evolution of a council's composition is preferable to the more "big-bang" character of every four years.
It helps to keep us voters thinking about what we want from our councillors and hold them to task to fulfil our demands and needs
For only yearly we can get rid of those incapable. Also, leaving some in Office means that any new councillors will find out what is going on and become more familiar with the systems and maybe able to influence the amount of money wasted by this Council!
If it works don't change it.
A wholesale change of personnel could impact institutional memory. We risk repeating the same mistakes or limiting the continuity of projects.
It seems to be the sensible thing to do with County elections coming on the fourth year.
It allows for a high degree of continuity in policies rather than a sudden swing which the other options might bring. Worcester has always been sensible.
As a voter, yes I vote, I want to be able to influence the political make up of the council more often that once every 4 years. I also think that potentially changing half the seats at a time would be too disruptive. Changing up to a third of seats seems the best option to me, for continuity and for me to influence the council bias.
The current system works
It works
Give more stability to the council. Reduces number new people at any one time
It seems to offer a sensible balance between protecting continuity & cost effective management of elections
This gives a much better opportunity to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the parties in control.

Some councillors work good for there area others do not people should have their views
Helps mitigate flawed FPTP and provides more chance of consensus
More frequent elections are better as they provide more ability for voters to react to the real world. Every 4 years is far too slow. Personally I would reduce the councillor term too - 4 years before having the option to vote out a councillor is much too long.
To prevent bias caused by current events at time of election
The local voters should have chance to express their opinions as often as possible
I think it is beneficial to have a mixture of new and experienced members on the council to enable consistency in roles, enables effective handing over of departmental responsibility roles rather than having all new councillors with potentially a large number not having any experience of the role and responsibilities
Continuity, voters are familiar with the current system
I think regular elections avoids complacency.
It isn't broken. Why fix it?
I would like it kept to this as it makes them accountable to do what's best for the people knowing that if they don't they risk not being voted for there and then rather than being able to stay for 4 years
I feel it gives a opportunity for both stability but also fresh ideas
System works
It allows for some continuity at the same time as having fresh eyes on things.
Rather have someone who knows what's happening than potentially a whole new council ever 4 years
It's good for the community
seems to work OK and 'if it ain't broke don't fix it'. Some newbies mixed with oldies seems a good plan and this does this.
A regular but smaller election process will help to maintain some continuity but also bring in potential 'new blood'.
I simply don't really see that there's any reason to change. I'm not saying it's the best way but any of the options will have their drawbacks- so why spend time, and therefore money, to change. If it's not broke then don't fix it
Let it be
Less upheaval if only a third is getting used to new role
It is a system that as worked for many years, or at least has appeared to so do. The Electorate appear reticent in most areas to actually vote at these elections, unless there has been some really important discovery.
It gives local voters the opportunity to pass a verdict on the council's annual spending plans and budget.
It seems a system that's easier to manage for all with no complete change therefore enabling current councillors to keep the system running smoothly
It has served Worcester for many years and " if it isn't broken, don't fix it " that's the best solution
It means that there is a stable person in the ward when one changes but not both which would be very hard especially if they are inexperienced
It provides for small changes at each election so that the council is more representative of the views of the electorate whilst these views change during a Parliament.
Accountability more immediate

The current system permits new faces on the council at regular intervals and frequent engagement with constituents and the political process by local parties and activists. Moving to less elections would mean representatives and parties could worry less about maintaining their relationships with constituents and communities in off years and would make them less accountable.
Allows us to hold our representatives accountable often, waiting every 4 years to do this on a local level is too long.
Leads to wild swings in control in which good work can be undone. Yearly elections crucially keep councillors and parties on the qui vivre rather than letting them go to sleep and then become suddenly active once every 4 years.
It ensures gradual change rather than an issue of the moment landing us with no choice for the next four years
More frequent elections allows voters to respond to current issues and performance of councillors.
The all out elections favour larger parties and councillors could become very complacent
It lessens the ability of one-off short-term events / media spectacles to affect the makeup of the Council, leading to greater long-term stability.
The current practice ensures the current regime is encouraged to fulfil its manifesto promises on which it was elected. The other options would enable the ruling regime to be more radical, to go 'off manifesto ' before having to answer for its performance at the ballot box.
The political landscape changes all the time. The current cycle allows voters to review the type of councillor they want each year,
This option offers greater choice and gives the electorate the opportunity to change things if we are unhappy.
Stability and continuity.
It discourages political parties from becoming complacent and only campaigning and interacting with voters in the year they want election.
If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
Continuity of capabilities and experience on Council. Ensure managed transition at change of elected councillors.
Allows people to keep the councillors honest
Both provides continuity and keeps local parties in touch with the views of voters with a higher frequency.
Stability
This gives some stability to the Council. If more of the council changed each year the year would be taken up with getting to know the system and we would never achieve anything. It could lead to decisions being made for the sake of it rather than what is needed.
Having one set of elections every 4 years puts the richer political parties at an unfair advantage.
Provides a level of consistency within the council as a whole.
Continuity

Responses in favour of whole council elections

The four year cycle is a long one and, in recent years, we have seen that society changes more quickly than this. In order to have councillors who are effective, up-to-date and reflecting the zeitgeist, and in order that poor cultural attitudes and
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behaviours can be eliminated, I believe a whole council election would be more appropriate
This is how it works with the general election so it should be the same in local elections. I also feel that the candidate should live in the ward they represent!
the current system is confusing for the public and resource intensive in terms of supporting the system.
Less cost
perhaps the boundary commission should be either redefining the City boundaries to swallow up the recent developments in Wychavon /Malvern Hills or disbanding the 3 districts to form south worcestershire
I feel the councillors need to have time to enable change. They must settle into their responsibilities, understand their remit and the limits to those, to understand their plans and programmes required.
This would appear to be the most straightforward approach, allowing members adequate time to pursue their issues.
More understandable and efficient. Only problem would be that new Council could be substantially inexperienced.
Less voter fatigue and more consistency with elected officials and balance of parties.
It allows for a period of a stable council to set targets, objectives and work to achieve them over a term. The current system sees too much disturbance and changes back and forth, resulting in short term tactical work opposed to strategic approaches.
you will get a better turn out if only one election every 4 years with all members
Be nice to see a bit of competition for the positions.
We have too many elections in Worcester and I believe it is confusing to some people as in some years, some of the Wards are up for election and some are not so not everyone gets a vote every time there is an election
I think 4 years gives a councillor time to make a difference
Elections every year can mean constant changes and so no council may have a mandate for more than a year. A four year cycle gives continuity and stability allowing the council to implement longer term change.
This would effectively achieve 3 things: 1. Provide the electorate with ability to change the administration of the City if they are not happy with its policies as we can with national government. This is less certain under the current arrangements and is often frustrated by which seats come up for election. 2 Provide an administration a period of time to carry out their political mandate. 3. Would be less costly to the tax payer. Personally I would favour two further reforms 1. A unitary council for South Worcestershire with one also for the north . This would reduce duplication and reduce cost. 2. Chief officers posts to be based on 4 year fixed term contracts conterminous with Council elections. Since these posts are political appointments any new administration should able to appoint a new top team. This would reduce costs as expensive pay offs to senior officers would be avoided. If officers left close to term end they could be replaced by interims.
I feel this would reduce the costs associated with holding annual elections, it would reduce voter fatigue and it would mean that whichever party was in power would have a mandate to deliver change and/or improved services over a longer planning cycle.
Bad habits can be passed on through sitting councillors a complete clear out is better.

This approach would provide a mandate for the the new council and performance can be more easily judged. It would also focus the minds of the electorate which would potentially lead to higher turnout for elections.
Provide stability thus plans and policies would not be disrupted with constant elections
Not confusing, and I'd think costs would be lower
A condensed cost
Current cycle and option are confusing. I believe the council would be more effective being elected all together at 4 year intervals
Simple, more stable governance,less change.
It allows the majority party winning the election the opportunity to focus on delivering their policies and not to be distracted by having to fight another election within 12 months.
Think it would be good to have the chance of a change of councillors
A once in 4 years mirrors that of other elections. This gives a true reflection of the public vote
One would hope it will save time cost and inconvenience for the councillors and their backers. It will give more stability for the elected representatives to have a 4 year term to concentrate on the job of improving the city for its residents Less politics more action maybe?
Simple system and assumed to be lowest cost
It seems expensive to have more than one election every 4 years plus it can also be confusing when you see an election is coming up but not know if your area is affected or not
Because a four year term would allow councillors to complete what they were elected to do with no excuses after the four year term for in completed projects.
I think the current system is messy, painful for the electorate to understand, doesn't help with promotion or party promotion, and doesn't help the public to see change occurring when they vote. In short, it promotes more of the same and reduces the number of people who vote.
Due to funding cycles and how long projects take to be conceptualised, undertaken and implemented having a yearly election or every other year election is not long enough. However, if we have 4 years we need to ensure if the councillor is doing a very poor job there can be a decision made to remove them.
I think that stability over a 4 year term is preferable to disruption more frequently
This would focus the Electorate and improve turn out. Would also reduce cost.
Continuity
Save money and voters getting voting fatigue
More efficient
This allows for a clean break in the council leadership, prevents bad habits from one council leaking through to new members due those that remain. I believe that this also allows for councils to want to perform well to remain elected, current style can give those who aren't up for election the opportunity to perform badly to create negativity for those up for election. From a teamwork perspective, it prevents group think setting in, with new members forming a new team and wanting to prove themselves. Gives a greater chance of conflict which can lead to better performance in the long run. This can bring in new ideas, and creativity between each set of councillors are brought in.

I am choosing this option in the belief that it will be the lowest cost option since the cost of running an election seems unlikely to depend much on how many are elected at each election. Hence running the fewest elections would minimise the cost.
Simplicity
This gives the opportunity for real change, everyone is up at the same time for re-election.
The current system fails the electorate. The council, which is always closely fought is constantly on election footing. It means that councillors are always looking for short-term wins rather than long-term strategic objectives. It's had an adverse effect on the city, and means we end up with few meaningful changes. I've long thought that the electoral cycle needed to change - it has allowed Birmingham to introduce it's Low Emissions Zone, something that would never have happened if it had stuck to its old electoral cycle as it would have proved too electorally risky
In line with other electoral processes most people are used to (General/Council) and reduces need for 3 electoral processes in 4 years down to 1, must be an efficiency in this
Every year when annual plans are produced, officers work towards such plans only for them to be altered the following year because the balance of power has changed. Having the same council for 4 years would mean at least officers have the chance to achieve something without it being altered.
There is something to be said for continuity, but keeping 2/3 of the former year(s) is not good, if it's not working... Yet if they get voted in again, they have earned their place.
Would reduce electoral expenses.
Continuity of administration. Get things seen through/done.
Cheaper and simpler to understand
A single set of elections would raise the profile of local elections and would also remove confusion among electors as to whether their ward is one of those due to hold a vote in a particular year. Also, we don't elect Westminster MPs piecemeal - apart from by-elections, all constituencies go to the polls at the same time. Why not bring the local democratic process into line?
Can settle into decision making easier
Councillors can put forward projects better with more time to complete before the next elected councillors disagree
District Councils are virtually alone in holding elections more frequently than the natural term (4 years in this case). It is tedious for the public, very tedious for the politicians who lose their Spring every year (because the County takes the fourth year).
Give some stability....also Proportional representation to reinforce that stability and engage more voters.
Save money
At the present time, local politicians are constantly in 'campaign mode'. This in theory is fine with the staggered current approach but in practice it means constant flux in local leadership and a potential for cynical vote-fishing rather than what could be fairly described as local 'government'.
A more effective check on an administration, if it's more likely they can lose control or office. Also a longer-term horizon.
gives the administration chance to carry out their manifesto & vision, without continual election campaigning
You can plan for the full 4 years

I believe that my choice is the most cost effective.
Stability and consistency. The nature of elections in thirds means the administration that runs the council can change in the very short term, making it harder for the Council to deliver the administrations strategic intentions. In short, thirds have the danger of driving "short term thinking".
Might make more people actually go and vote
I think this gives more stability and allows for on occasion more radical decisions to be made
It must be more cost effective to run the election once in 3 years rather than 3 times. Also just seems to make more sense knowing the political make up of the council won't change as frequently
Save money on elections
To provide continuity of the application of policies without the disruption caused by a change of council control .
Cost effective
It allows for candidates and parties to present their case once every every so often and for the whole electorate to consider the future of local affairs on mass every so often. With the current system, no party bothers to lay out their idea of the future and the electorate are less involved or understand if they are supposed to vote or not.
This reduce the cost of hiring polling stations and in some cases reduce the disruption on schools. It will also reduce the costs for staff for polling stations. It may also reduce back office staff costs. It will also give consistency to the council and stop it swinging between labour and conservative each year. It may mean counts take longer or require more people to complete them and with potentially more new councillors starting at the same time more disruption at the first meetings, but induction once every four years should be easier. So on balance the positives of elections every 4 years outweigh the negatives.
More stable four year terms.
A longer term if stability ensures better and more cost effective long term planning.
The current arrangements destabilise the councils decision making process, in that it is regularly potentially changing the make up of the council and therefore probably changing its decision making and options bringing the likely possibility of more short term than long term decision making.
No mention is made of the costs associated with holding elections. From observation of Councillors conduct over many years it is apparent that electioneering influences public comments and decision-making for months prior to an election. A reduction in elections would reduce this disruption. These are two factors which persuade me that a move to a whole council election is desirable. A preference would be to ensure that City Council elections were arranged for the same time as the County Council elections
1) To provide stability in the political leadership of the Council. Making this change would mean that the controlling group of Councillors can deliver their priorities without there being a potential change of political control in 3 out of every 4 years. 2) To save money in light of the costs of holding local elections in 3 out of every 4 years. 3) In fact a Unitary Authority for Worcestershire and the abolition of the district Councils would be far more sensible.
"One out, all out" would provide more stability and reduce councillors changing allegiance to shift the balance of political power. It would also reduce the amount

of time the council is subject to "purdah" which can affect decision making and timescales for projects to be progressed.
Stability and reduces costs
Greater opportunity for continuity in decision making and sufficient time for council leadership to show what difference they have made. Current system can lead to a change of policy direction every year which leads to short-term planning and less strategic thinking by councillors on behalf of residents.
I think the Council should have a full 4 years to implement its mandate without the constant re-jigging of councillors putting strategies in the 'bin'.
Rolling elections create instability and add to low turnouts.
We have elections every year which is a crazy waste of man power, energy and literature. Is is neither cost effective nor environmentally sound. Perhaps if they were just once every four years, residents might take more interest.
Politicians will be braver in their decision making.
Makes sense for continuity
It would give those elected a longer term in which to make and implement policies. Also, it is very expensive and resource-intensive to hold elections every year. It's not a good use of public money. Also the system of thirds is confusing to residents - they hear that elections are happening elsewhere in the city and assume that they'll be voting at the same time too.
save money on unwanted beaurocracy

Are you a Worcester resident?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	97.08%	299
No	2.92%	9

Answered - 308, Skipped - 20

Are you a Worcester business owner?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	12.34%	38
No	87.66%	270

Answered - 308, Skipped - 20

What is the first part of your postcode, e.g. WR1?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
WR1	11.04%	34
WR2	21.43%	66
WR3	22.38%	72
WR4	16.88%	52
WR5	25.65%	79
Other (please specify)	1.62%	5

Answered - 308, Skipped - 20

Age		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 18	0.00%	0
18 - 24	2.01%	6
25 - 34	7.38%	22
35 - 44	15.01%	45
45 - 54	17.45%	52
55 - 64	23.49%	70
65+	35.56%	103

Answered – 298, Skipped - 30

Do you consider yourself to be a Disabled person? (i.e. do you have physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities?)		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	12.54%	37
No	87.46%	258

Answered – 295, Skipped - 33

Gender		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	57.82%	170
Female	41.50%	122
Other	0.68%	2

Answered – 294, Skipped - 34

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	98.97%	287
No	1.03%	3

Answered – 290, Skipped - 38

Ethnicity		
Answer Choices	Responses	
White	21.43%	63
White British	71.77%	211
White Irish	0.00%	0
White Eastern European	0.00%	0
Any Other White background	0.34%	1
White and Black Caribbean	0.34%	1

Ethnicity		
Answer Choices	Responses	
White and Black African	0.00%	0
White and Indian	0.00%	0
White and Pakistani	0.00%	0
White and Bangladeshi	0.34%	1
White and Chinese	0.00%	0
Any other Mixed background	0.34%	1
Asian British	0.00%	0
Indian	0.00%	0
Pakistani	0.00%	0
Bangladeshi	0.34%	1
Chinese	0.00%	0
Any other Asian background	0.00%	0
Black British	0.00%	0
African	0.00%	0
Caribbean	0.34%	1
Any other Black background	0.00%	0
Gypsy or Traveller	0.00%	0
Arab	0.34%	1
Prefer not to say	2.04%	6
Any other ethnic group (please specify)	2.38%	7

Answered – 294, Skipped - 34

Religion		
Answer Choices	Responses	
No religion	48.12%	141
Christian	47.44%	139
Jewish	0.34%	1
Hindu	0.00%	0
Buddhist	0.68%	2
Muslim	0.34%	1
Sikh	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	3.07%	9

Answered – 293 Skipped - 35

Sexual Orientation		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Heterosexual /straight	89.08%	253
Gay man	4.93%	14
Gay woman /lesbian	0.35%	1
Bisexual	3.87%	11

Other	1.76%	5
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Answered – 284, Skipped - 44

Relationship Status		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Single	20.96%	61
Married	60.48%	176
Civil Partnership	0.00%	0
Co-habiting	11.68%	34
Widow/er	3.09%	9
Other	3.78%	11

Answered – 291, Skipped - 37

Are you pregnant or have you given birth in the last 26 weeks?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	1.02%	3
No	98.98%	290

Answered – 293 Skipped – 35