



**Corporate Policy and
Resources Committee**

13 June 2019

Subject: Budget Consultation Proposal

Report by:

Executive Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide Members with the proposal to run the budget consultation in 2019, to inform the 2020/21 budget.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members agree the proposal for consulting on the 2020/21 budget.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : FIN 38/20/TJB

Cost of the video, events and survey will be contained within existing budgets.

Staffing :

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Consultation designed with different routes to ensure as many residents and businesses as possible are able to take part.

Risk Assessment :

Risk that no residents or businesses take part. Work undertaken to ensure that as many respondents as possible are received through different consultation routes.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

None.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

x

1. Background

- 1.1 Each year a consultation is undertaken on the following year's budget prior to it being set. Although there is no legal requirement to undertake this there is a legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1992 section 65 to consult ratepayers who are persons or bodies appearing to be representative of persons subject to non-domestic rates within the district and must be about the authority's proposals for expenditure.
- 1.2 During 2016 officers at West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) have joined the Consultation Institute to ensure that all consultations are legal and to lower the risk of a judicial review. Consultation according to the Consultation Institute is the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
- 1.3 Before 1985 there was little consideration given to consultations until a case (R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning). This case sparked the need for change in the process of consultations when Stephen Sedley QC proposed a set of principles that were then adopted by the presiding judge. These principles, known as Gunning, were later confirmed by the Court of Appeal in 2001 (Coughlan case) and are now applicable to all public consultations that take place in the UK. These outline the principles which all consultations must abide and are:

1. When proposals are still at a formative stage

Public bodies need to have an open mind during a consultation and not already made the decision, but have some ideas about the proposals.

2. Sufficient reasons for proposals to permit 'intelligent consideration'

People involved in the consultation need to have enough information to make an intelligent choice and input in the process.

3. Adequate time for consideration and response

Timing is crucial – is it an appropriate time and environment, was enough time given for people to make an informed decision and then provide that feedback, and is there enough time to analyse those results and make the final decision?

4. Must be conscientiously taken into account

Think about how to prove decision-makers have taken consultation responses into account.

The risk of not following these principles could result in a Judicial Review.

2. Proposal

- 2.1. To undertake this work it is proposed that multiple routes are taken to consult with our stakeholders and following on from last year's consultation. These would include 3 events and an online and paper survey. To ensure that all residents receive the same message it is proposed that a video is produced to introduce the situation the council is currently in. The responsible officer for this work is Ian Knowles,

Executive Director of Resources with the accountable officer being Katy Allen, Corporate Governance Officer.

2.2. The objectives of the engagement are to:

- Raise awareness of the financial challenges
- Raise awareness of the diversity of services the Council provides
- Identify what areas of the Corporate Plan and the Business Plan should be prioritised.

3. Who and how to involve

3.1. The stakeholders to be consulted on this subject would be:

- National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) payers
- Residents
- Citizens' Panel members

The data from this consultation would go to inform the Councillors of WLDC when setting the next budget.

3.2. To ensure inclusivity and to allow as many residents as possible to take part there are a number of different routes to take part. These routes include events, online and paper survey and written submissions:

- Online and paper survey – to ensure as many views on the consultation as possible there would be an online and a matching paper survey which would be available to those on the Citizen Panel and any other resident that wishes to take part through requesting a survey, going onto the WLDC website or through an invite from the Citizen Panel.
- Events – 3 will be held in Nettleham, Caistor and Gainsborough. These venues have been chosen due to the amount of attendance at previous events. These events would match the content of the surveys. Informal feedback at the previous events showed that residents found this format informative.
- Social Media –the consultation would be advertised on both Twitter and Facebook to try to spread the chance for residents to take part as widely as possible.
- Written Submissions – Although written submissions are not advertised as being accepted we would accept them. They are not advertised due to the amount of time analysis of these submissions take compared to other routes.

4. Timescales

4.1. A draft timescale of the proposal is included as Appendix A.

5. Survey contents

- 5.1. A copy of the draft survey can be found at Appendix B.

6. Video

- 6.1. The aim of the video is to promote the council and what it does for customers (residents/businesses). The aim is to showcase what services WLDC delivers and concentrate on all areas of the district not just the main three market towns. It is proposed to have this video to ensure the same message is received by all respondents to the survey rather than only those which attend the events. The authority is also seeking residents' priorities for the council rather than previously where we have asked what should be reduced in terms of service budgets.

- 6.2. Key documents to consider:

- Corporate Plan – focusing on People, Place and Council

- Key messages – Our challenge is:
 - For the second year running, we will receive no funding from central government
 - Areas of the district are among the most deprived in the UK which impacts education, ASB, Health and housing standards.
 - Need to expand economic growth across the area to increase jobs and housing
 - High expectations from residents.

- Map of the District – want to showcase the whole area and not just the three market towns.

- 6.3 Interviews:

- ❖ Executive Director of Resources – Ian Knowles
- ❖ Executive Director of Commercial and Economic Growth – Eve Fawcett-Moralee
- ❖ Leader of the Council - Cllr Giles McNeill

Appendix A – Proposed Timescale

Action	Start date	Finish Date	Responsible Officer
Details of consultation to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee		13 June 2019	Ian Knowles
Video to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee members		1 July 2019	Ian Knowles
Open consultation	8 July 2019		Katy Allen
Advertise consultation	1 July 2019	1 September 2019	Julie Heath
Event – Nettleham	TBC		Katy Allen
Event – Gainsborough	23 rd July 2018		Katy Allen
Event - Caistor	TBC		Katy Allen
Close consultation		2 September 2019	Katy Allen
Inputting of data	22 July 2019	6 September 2019	Katy Allen
Analysis	9 September 2019	13 September 2019	Katy Allen
Draft report		18 September 2019	Katy Allen
Report to Policy and Resources Committee		7 November 2019	Ian Knowles

Appendix B – Draft survey



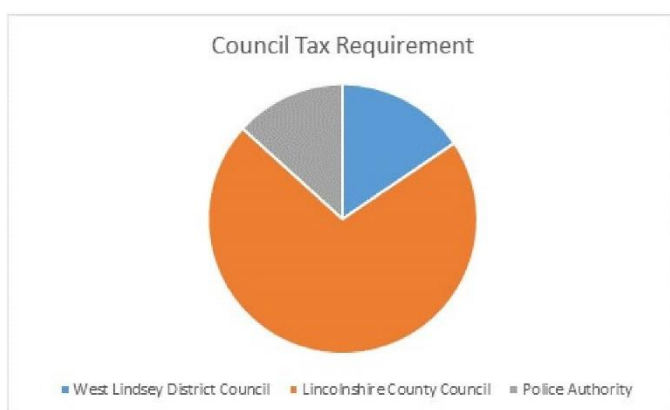
West Lindsey District Council Budget Consultation 2019

HELPFUL HINTS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

- Please read each question carefully. In most cases you will only have to tick one box but please read the questions carefully as sometimes you will need to tick more than one box, or write in a response.
- Once you have finished please take a minute to check you have answered all the questions that you should have answered.
- If you have any questions about this survey please email Katy Allen on katy.allen@west-lindsey.gov.uk or ring on 01427 675149.

Section 1: Council Tax

Local Councils, the Police and Fire Authorities fund their services through government grant, fees and charges, Business Rates and Council Tax. There is one council tax bill for each domestic dwelling whether it is a house, flat, mobile home or houseboat. We collect the council tax on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Parish and Town Councils. West Lindsey District Council share of your overall Council Tax is 12.22% (excluding Parish/Town Council Precepts) which for a band D property in 2019/20 is £213.47 per year.



1. Having watched the video what level of council tax increase would you agree to? **Please tick one box only**
- 0% change - A 0% change would give West Lindsey a total level of council tax income of £6.3m.
 - 1% increase - A 1% increase would mean a 4 pence per week increase for a band D property on the West Lindsey proportion of council tax and would give West Lindsey a total level of council tax income of £6.37m.
 - 2% increase - A 2% increase would mean a 8 pence per week increase for a band D property on the West Lindsey proportion of council tax and would give West Lindsey a total level of council tax income of £6.43m.
 - 3% increase - A 3% increase would mean a 12 pence per week increase for a band D property on the West Lindsey proportion of council tax and would give West Lindsey a total level of council tax income of £6.49m.

Section 2: Corporate Plan 2019-2023

The Corporate Plan is the key corporate document which outlines the priorities and objectives for the Council and the District over the next four years. A summary of this document has been enclosed with this survey however, a full version can be found at www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/corporateplan or by contacting the council.

Three themes have been identified in the Corporate Plan which are Our Council, Our People and Our Place and each have a set of focal points as illustrated below:



2. Please highlight from Our People which focal point would be your highest priority: **Please tick one box only**
- Health and Wellbeing - to reduce health inequalities and promote wellbeing across the district through the promotion of healthy lifestyles.
 - Vulnerable Groups and Communities - to create strong and self-reliant communities and promote positive life choices for disadvantaged residents.
 - Education and Skills - to facilitate the creation of a highly educated and skilled workforce, that meets the present and future needs of the local and wider economy.
3. Please highlight from Our Place which focal point would be your highest priority: **Please tick one box only**
- Economy - to ensure that economic regeneration in West Lindsey is sustainable and benefits all of our communities.
 - Housing Growth - to facilitate quality, choice and diversity in the housing market, assist in meeting housing need and demand and deliver housing related services to support growth.
 - Public Safety and Environment - to create a safer, cleaner district in which to live, work and socialise.

4. Please highlight from Our Council which focal point would be your highest priority: **Please tick one box only**

- Finances - to remain financially sustainable.
- Customer - to put the customer at the centre of everything we do.
- Staff and Member - to maintain our position as a well-managed and well-governed council.

Section 3: Executive Business Plan

The Executive Business Plan sets out the actions to be taken by the council to deliver the Corporate Plan over the next three years. These actions are split into the 3 themes outlined in the Corporate Plan.

5. Which of the following actions within the Our People theme should be our priority: **Please tick one box only**

- Customer First Programme - access to services through different methods as required by the customer and at times convenient to the customer. Timely and accurate responses, improved customer experience whilst increasing productivity and maintaining or reducing costs.
- Review of the Waste Depot facilities- to be delivered by December 2020
- Consider food waste and review dry recycling collections - increase in quality and value of recycling
- Charging for food safety re-inspections - ensuring safer food premises for the customer
- Continue with use of technology for anti-social behaviour/enforcement and CCTV - ensures safer communities, higher detection rates and a bigger deterrent

6. Which of the following actions within the Our Place theme should be our priority: **Please tick one box only**

- Housing and Social regeneration - Having housing solutions to meet the needs of our diverse and vulnerable communities, regeneration of areas and addressing private sector property standards.
- Growth agenda - making West Lindsey an investable district. Currently over £10 million received in capital grants to regenerate Gainsborough and Hemswell Cliff with further direct investment made in Market Rasen on £6.5 million on the leisure centre. These will increase the number of residents in the district and help to sustain the tax base which in turn will help to tackle the poverty which exists in areas of the district.
- Commercial projects - Completion of the existing projects such as the crematorium and Market Rasen leisure facility and continuation of further income generating opportunities. These projects will look at maximising health and the well being of residents in the district.

7. Which of the following actions within the Our Council theme should be our priority: **Please tick one box only**

- Finance - to have an improved, modernised and customer focused finance team which delivers better value to the services. Continued excellence in financial and management accounting and reporting.
- Performance and Programme Management - To ensure that performance management is embedded within the organisation and that programme management is part of our culture to ensure that these drive efficiencies.
- Governance and Policy - Increased efficiency across the service and improved support to services to deliver procurement savings.
- People and Organisational Development - Improved customer focused culture whilst delivering a fit for purpose workforce for the 21st century.
- Information and communication technology - Deliver an ICT infrastructure which supports the customer focused service.

Section 4: New Homes Bonus

New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a government grant awarded to the council based on the number of new properties in the district which now generate council tax. The amount awarded is based on a national average council tax and the councils' benefit by circa £1,500 per property. The current policy is that NHB is used to support regeneration and growth projects throughout the district. The council receives circa £100k per annum in NHB over a period of 4 years. 79 Parish Councils raise £2m in Parish Precepts which is between 2.2% and 39.2% (average 24% currently) of the West Lindsey District Council tax bill.

8. How should New Homes Bonus be utilised in West Lindsey? **Please tick one box only**
- Provide an allocation based on number of new properties in their Parish.
 - Provide an allocation through a Communities Grant Funding Scheme in which they can all bid for local schemes.
 - Use all New Homes Bonus to support growth and regeneration across West Lindsey.
9. Should New Homes Bonus be used to support the revenue budget? **Please tick one box only**
- Yes
 - No

Section 5: Comments

10 Are there any services which West Lindsey do not currently deliver that you feel we should be providing?

11. Any other comments you wish to make regarding this consultation:

12 Panel reference:

Thank you very much for your time completing this survey.
Please send it back in the enclosed prepaid envelope by the date noted in the enclosed letter.