



**Corporate Policy and  
Resources**

**Thursday, 22 July 2021**

**Subject: Budget Consultation 2021**

Report by:

Assistant Director of Finance and Property  
Services and Section 151 Officer

Contact Officer:

Tracey Bircumshaw  
Assistant Director of Finance and Property  
Services and Section 151 Officer

[tracey.bircumshaw@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.bircumshaw@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Purpose / Summary:

To present the proposed Budget Consultation  
process for 2022/2023.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. That Members agree the Budget Consultation process.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:**

None from this report

**Financial : FIN/46/22/B/TJB**

None from this report

**Staffing** : None from this report

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

An equality questionnaire will be available to complete at the end of the survey

**Data Protection Implications :**

The residents and business to receive directed invitations have agreed by registering to receive Council information

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

None from this report

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

None from this report

**Health Implications:**

None from this report

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

Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s  
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.

**Risk Assessment :**

We will assess the risk of holding face to face events and consider that in line with the Government's' guidance on not holding group events, the Covid-19 risk outweighs the benefit of holding such an event.

**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

**Key Decision:**

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

Yes

No

**1. Background**

1.1 Each year a consultation is undertaken on the following years' budget prior to it being set. Although there is no legal requirement to undertake this we have 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 West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) are members of the Consultation Institute and in accordance with best practice, we ensure that all consultations are legal and appropriate processes are in place 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 by and are:

- **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.
- **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.

- **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?

- **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.

Due to current guidelines from the Government in relation to avoiding public gatherings, it is felt inappropriate to host face to face events this year. We will however, be producing an online and paper survey, a booklet and written submissions. The responsible officer for this work is Tracey Bircumshaw, Strategic Finance and Business Support Manager 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 which we would consult with on this subject would be:

- Business Rate payers
- Residents
- Citizen Panel members

Data from this consultation will go on to inform Councillors of WLDC who will take this information into consideration when setting the 2022/23 budget.

- 3.2. To ensure we are as inclusive as possible and allow as many residents as possible to take part we run 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 there are as many views on the consultation as possible we would have 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, completing a survey on our website or through an invite from the Citizen Panel.
- Events – None to be held due to Covid-19 risks.
- 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.

### 3.3. The communications strategy will include;

- Information Leaflet – a short booklet with the aim of which is to give context and challenges for budget setting, and to promote the council and what it does for our customers (residents/businesses). It will be published on social media and the Council's website.
- Social Media – we would advertise the consultation on both Twitter and Facebook to try to spread the chance for residents to take part as wide as possible.
- Short introductory video
- Citizens' Panel and Registered businesses will be contacted and asked to participate
- Parish/Town Council and Voluntary Groups e-brief
- Subscribed Residents Newsletter – e-brief
- Public Events – (subject to latest Covid Guidance/Risk Assessment)
- Website banner – prominent notice on our front page with link to access the booklet and survey.
- Press release
- Minerva
- Customer Service promotion and Corporate wide email signatures promotion

## 4. Timescales

4.1. The timescale for the consultation and future reporting is included as Appendix 1.

**5. Survey contents**

5.1. A copy of the survey can be found at Appendix 2.

**6. Recommendation**

6.1 It is recommended that Members accept the budget consultation process for 2021.

## Appendix 1 – Proposed Timescale

<b>Action</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>
Member Workshop	Workshop with members to develop consultation questions	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	Tracey Bircumshaw
Leaders Panel	Update on progress	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	Tracey Bircumshaw
Leaders Panel	Update on progress	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	Tracey Bircumshaw
Information booklet	To be ready for Member workshop	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2021	Julie Heath
CP&R	Report outlining consultations proposal	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2021	Tracey Bircumshaw
Public/Business consultation and Engagement		2 <sup>nd</sup> August – 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2021	Katy Allen
Analysis and report writing		27 <sup>th</sup> September – 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	Katy Allen
Members Budget Workshop		TBC	Tracey Bircumshaw
Leaders Panel	Update on progress	29 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	Tracey Bircumshaw
CP&R	Report on public consultation and MTFP update	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Tracey Bircumshaw
Leaders Panel	Update on progress	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2022	Tracey Bircumshaw
CP&R	Draft Budget 2022/23	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2022	Tracey Bircumshaw
Council	Budget 2022/23	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	Tracey Bircumshaw

## Appendix 2 – Proposed consultation survey



### West Lindsey District Council Budget Consultation 2021

#### 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 the Engagement Team on [engagement@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:engagement@west-lindsey.gov.uk).

Please insert your name or Citizen Panel reference:

Are you responding as:

- a citizen panel member
- a resident
- a Parish or Town Councillor
- a WLDC Councillor
- on behalf of a business

#### Corporate Plan Priorities

1. Last year you told us that the top five key corporate objectives were;  
*Economy* - to ensure that economic regeneration in West Lindsey is sustainable and benefits all of our communities.  
*Finances* - to remain financially sustainable.  
*Public Safety and Environment* - to create a safer, cleaner district in which to live, work and socialise.  
*Customer* - to put the customer at the centre of everything we do.  
*Vulnerable Groups and Communities* - to create strong and self-reliant communities and promote positive life choices for disadvantaged residents.

Taking into account the recent Covid-19 pandemic do you agree that these services should continue to be our key priorities? **Please tick one box only**

- Yes
- No
- Partially

2. If you ticked partially or no, what should be our priorities?



**Valued Services**

3. In ensuring we align resources to the delivery of our Corporate Plan objectives, our Executive Business Plan details the actions we will take to deliver these initiatives. We are committed to supporting our communities by spending a net £3.7 million annually on our Place initiatives. How important are the following factors to you?

	Very important 5	4	Neither important nor unimportant 3	2	Unimportant 1
Neighbourhood Plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Safety measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enforcement activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic Growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Investment**

4. Our corporate priorities and activity to support delivery are contained in the Executive Business Plan which have been summarised within the information leaflet. Are there any suggestions where you see investment should be made to benefit our communities? Please list within the relevant categories:

Regeneration and job creation	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Housing - new housing, maximising existing housing, social housing	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Cultural - Heritage, arts, leisure, sport	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Environmental - Climate reduction, recycling, enforcement	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

5. If you have any suggestions which do not fit into these categories, please detail below:

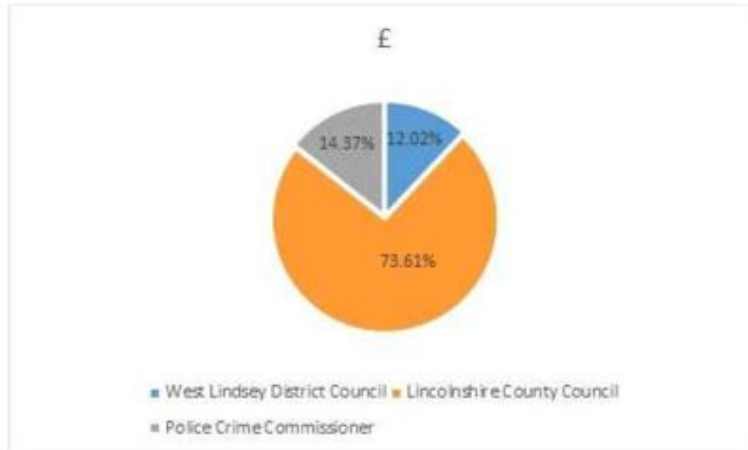
6. How would you prioritise investment decisions? **Please rank in order from 1-6 (1 being highest priority)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A commercial return - provides additional ongoing net revenues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An environmental return - provides a reduction in CO2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An economical return - provides job creation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A social return - improves health and wellbeing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investments which deliver efficiencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investments which meet the corporate priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Any comments on these priority rankings:

### 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 12.02% (excluding Parish/Town Council Precepts) and funds around 50% of our overall budget.



8. With annual increases in costs of around 3%, what level of council tax increase would you support for 2022/23? **Please tick one box only**
- 0% change - A 0% change would give West Lindsey a total level of council tax income of £6.711m.
  - 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 £6.778m.
  - 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 £6.845m.
  - 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 £6.912m.
9. Do you think that local councils should have the ability to determine Council Tax without the need for a referendum if above the Governments Cap? **Please tick one box only**
- Yes
  - No
10. Any comments you wish to make around the level of Council Tax:

### Fees and Charges

11. Our fees and charges have seen a reduction of over £700k during the covid-19 pandemic. Our policy is to set fees and charges to ensure total cost recovery, but it will however take time for our fees to reach pre-covid levels. We would therefore welcome your views on the following options for 2022/23. **Please tick one box only**
- Increase fees to take into account the current demand projections
  - Increase fees to assumed recovery demand projections with pricing increased in stages over a 2 year period
  - Increase fees by inflation only
12. Any comments you wish to make regarding the fees and charges options:

### Green Waste Subscriptions

13. The Council has charged £35 for this subscription which includes 18 collections per annum for the past 3 years. The actual cost of running the service is now in excess of this on a cost recovery basis. Which of the following options do you feel is the best for West Lindsey? **Please tick one box only**
- To increase subscriptions annually to recover total cost of the service
  - To fix the fee for the next 2 years taking into account future cost projections
  - Inflationary increase only
14. Garden waste charges throughout Lincolnshire are set between £35-£52 with between 18-26 collections per annum included. What is your optimum charge you would be willing to pay?

15. If more collections are requested this would increase the WLDC subscription charge by £2 per collection. Would you agree to more collections being added? **Please tick one box only**
- Yes
  - No
16. How many collections would you like to see added? **Please tick one box only**
- 1
  - 2
  - 3
17. When would you like to see these additional collections? **Please tick all that apply**
- November
  - December
  - January
  - February
  - March

### Further support

18. Is there any further support that you feel the Council should be providing due to the Covid Pandemic?

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

### Equalities questionnaire

By answering the equalities questions you will help us to understand how different groups of people from different areas feel about the budget consultation. All responses are anonymised and you do not have to answer these to take part in the budget consultation.

20. Are you willing to answer these questions?

- Yes  
 No - If you answer no you will be taken straight to the end of this consultation

21. Are you?

- Male  
 Female  
 Transgender  
 Prefer not to say

22. Do you consider yourself disabled?

- Yes  
 No  
 Prefer not to say

23. What age are you?

- 16-25  
 26-35  
 36-45  
 46-55  
 56-65  
 66-75  
 76 or over  
 Prefer not to say

24. Which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?
- White - British, Irish or other
  - Black or Black British - Caribbean, African or other
  - Asian or Asian British - Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other
  - Arab/Middle Eastern
  - Chinese
  - Mixed Race
  - Other
  - Prefer not to say
25. Which of the following best describes your faith/religion/belief?
- No religion
  - Christian (all denominations)
  - Muslim
  - Buddhist
  - Sikh
  - Hindu
  - Jewish
  - Other faith
  - Prefer not to say
26. Which of the following statements best describes your sexuality?
- Heterosexual/Straight
  - Lesbian/Gay
  - Bisexual
  - Other
  - Prefer not to say

Thank you very much for your time completing this questionnaire.  
Please click submit to ensure we receive your responses. You will then be taken to our website.