



BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023

Consultation Report Summary

October 2023

1 Introduction

With reduced grants from Central Government, it is critical that we direct our resources in a way that benefits our communities and meets their needs and priorities.

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 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.

The objectives of this engagement were to seek views on the priorities for our residents and businesses and to raise awareness of the financial challenges the council faces.

This report summarises the views of residents and businesses that took part in this consultation. Views were gathered from West Lindsey residents, Parish and Town Councillors, West Lindsey District Council Councillors and West Lindsey businesses through either a direct invite, events or by visiting the website.

A total of 494 responses were received and out of these responses 260 were received electronically, 161 were postal, 10 through seated conversations at events and 63 were from votes at events. From these 494, 394 of these are members of the West Lindsey Citizen Panel, 7 are Town or Parish Councillors, 2 West Lindsey District Councillors, 4 businesses and 7 were Community Representatives.

Equality data was gathered from the surveys and a breakdown of the responses can be found within the full report.

A full report can be found at www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/budget2023

2 Summary Results

2.1 Council Tax

The results relating to the level of council tax were as follows:

Option	Results	Last years total
0% change	83 (19.6%)	103 (19.2%)
1% increase	64 (15.1%)	86 (16%)
2% increase	80 (18.9%)	93 (17.4%)
3% increase	110 (26.0%)	159 (29.7%)
£5 increase	74 (17.5%)	No data
No response	12 (2.8%)	95 (17.7%)
Total	423	536

2.2 Fees and Charges

Historically the Council has increased its fees and charges by inflation or costs of delivery which are impacted by inflation. We asked respondents their views on which of the following options they felt would be the best option for 2024/25.

Cap fees at a lower rate than inflation (3%)	39.0%
Pause fees at the current level and increase by inflation next year	24.7%
Increase fees by inflation only and review next year	36.3%

2.3 Further support for residents during these times of increasing costs

Due to the increasing costs for our residents we asked if the respondents felt that we should re-prioritise funding to directly support residents or to continue existing services but to signpost residents to where additional support can be found.

Directly support residents	27.5%
Signpost to additional support	61.5%
Not sure	11.0%

From those which marked to directly support residents they were asked how this support should be given (of which they could mark more than 1 option).

Provide direct payment such as cash or a voucher for a specific purpose	28.8%
Provide services such as school breakfasts or luncheon clubs	50.3%
Provide donations to foodbanks	20.9%

2.4 Sports and Leisure Facilities

The Council provides sports and leisure services such as Market Rasen Leisure Centre and Gainsborough Leisure Centre. We asked respondents if they thought it was important for the Council provide and enhance these services.

Yes	77.3%
No	22.7%

Just over three quarters of the respondents felt we should provide and enhance this service and from those who said yes, we asked how they felt this enhanced service should be funded.

The user should pay higher prices to access additional services	35.3%
The user cannot afford higher prices and therefore services should stay the same	28.1%
The council should look at providing a different way of providing leisure and sport facilities such as through walking and cycling routes that are less costly to maintain	25.6%

To be paid through Council Tax (an increase to all Council Tax payers)	10.9%
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2.5 Garden Waste

The Council currently charges for the Garden Waste subscription which includes 18 collections per annum. The actual cost of running this service is now in excess of the fee received on a cost recovery basis.

We asked our respondents if they would agree to more collections being added if by doing so would increase the subscription charge by £2 per collection.

Yes	40.4%
No	59.6%

Over half of the respondents felt they would not want any additional collections at the cost of £2 per collection. From those respondents who said that yes they would like additional collections we asked how many collections they would like to see added. 42% of those who would like additional collections felt that 2 collections would be an ideal number.

1	37.3%
2	42.2%
3	20.5%

These respondents wanting additional collections were then asked when they feel this would be most beneficial. Respondents were allowed to tick more than 1 option for the months. Over half of those saying yes they would like additional collections at the cost of £2 per collection wanted November and March to be the months when these were received.

November	53.0%
December	17.5%
January	9.6%
February	8.4%
March	59.0%

2.6 Carbon Reduction Schemes

As part of our Climate Change programme of work we wanted to ask respondents whether they are concerned about the environment and the impact of climate change.

Yes	81.2%
No	18.8%

After this the respondents were asked if they felt it was achievable for West Lindsey District Council to reduce their own carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Yes	24.3%
No	34.0%
Don't know	41.7%

Respondents were then asked if they agreed that West Lindsey District Council should prioritise work around Climate Change.

Yes	54.9%
No	32.1%
Don't know	13.1%

And finally whether they believe that West Lindsey District Council should set aside budget for Climate Change projects.

Yes	50.1%
No	33.5%
Don't know	16.4%

2.7 Voting on prioritisation

Six events were held in the District at Gainsborough, Market Rasen, Caistor and Nettleham. These events were a mixture of seated conversations and market stalls. At the 3 events where seated conversations took place the respondents were talked through the survey questions and the responses added to the sections above. At the 3 market stall events respondents were asked to vote to prioritise which of 3 areas they feel the council should focus on. These areas were:

- More organised sport and leisure activities across the district?

- An increase in the number of Garden Waste collection over a calendar year?
- The Council to prioritise work and schemes to reduce Carbon Emissions?



Event	Sports and Leisure	Garden Waste collections	Carbon Emissions
Wind in the Willows at Market Rasen	13	1	3
Gainsborough Market	9	7	7
Caistor Market	8	9	6
Total	30	17	16

Overall, Sports and Leisure came out with the most votes.

2.8 Comments

Numerous comments were received both through the survey and through the events. These comments are all available upon request however, a summary of the main comments can be viewed in the full report.

If you would like a copy of this in large, clear print, audio, Braille or in another language, please call 01427 676676 email customer.services@west-lindsey.gov.uk

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