
ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Consultation Report February 2025



Economic Growth Strategy 2025-2030 consultation:

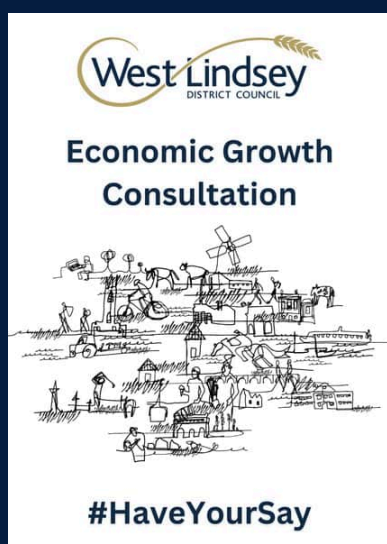
Background: West Lindsey District Council is currently developing a new Economic Growth Strategy that will run from 2025 to 2030. The aim of this strategy is to build on the successes of the Economic Recovery Plan 2021 to 2024 and foster a dynamic, vibrant, resilient and inclusive economy that supports sustainable growth, meets the challenges of climate change and fulfils the economic potential of the district, benefiting all of our communities and confirming West Lindsey's role in the wider regional economy.

Consultation: The consultation identified that the objectives (identified above) will be delivered through a work-plan linked to five distinct themes: (1) Inclusive Growth and Regeneration; (2) Business Environment; (3) Investment; (4) Employment and Skills; and; (5) Sustainability and the Green Economy. Between 28th October 2024 and 6th December 2024, WLDC sought feedback on these strategic themes. Additionally, the consultation also asked consultees to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for the local economy – now and over the next five years. This approach ensured that stakeholders were involved at the start of the strategic planning process and meant consultees responses could be integrated into the final composition of the emerging strategy.

Method: The consultation was fully aligned with WLDC's consultation strategy 'Moving Forwards Together: Empowering Community Voices' which emphasises empowering communities, fostering inclusivity and ensuring transparency in decision-making.

In order to ensure alignment, acknowledging that all residents have a stake in a dynamic, vibrant, resilient and inclusive economy, we targeted the consultation at the 'whole community' to ensure we captured both the views of our core strategy audience e.g. businesses, partner organisations, as well as secondary stakeholders such as employees etc.

The consultation was undertaken using both online and paper surveys and we targeted stakeholders via multiple routes (directing stakeholders to the consultation web-page) including:



- (1) Town and Parish Council newsletter;
- (2) Member newsletter;
- (3) Citizens Panel;
- (4) Press release;
- (5) Social media;
- (6) Business Ebrief;
- (7) Email contacts;
- (8) Resident Ebrief; and;
- (9) WLDC Officers.

This inclusive approach returned 389 consultation responses, representing businesses, partners, employees and other stakeholders.

This document is also published on our corporate website at: <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/council-democracy/have-your-say/consultations/previous-consultations>

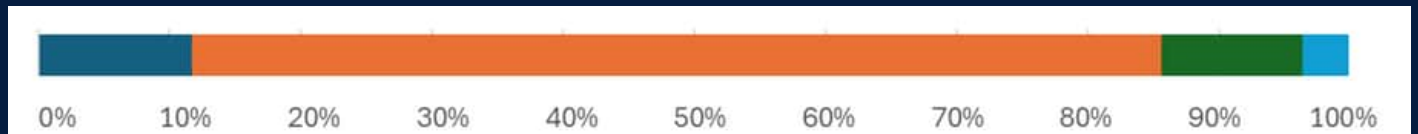
The new growth strategy will be published in Summer 2025.

All enquiries relating to this consultation should be e-mailed to: Growth@west-lindsey.gov.uk

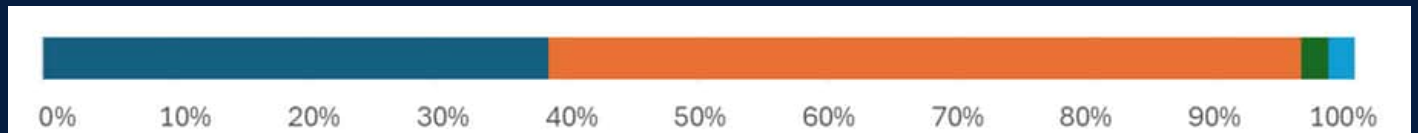
Results: Consultees were asked to confirm whether or not they agreed with the following (summarised) statements. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed with all statements:

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

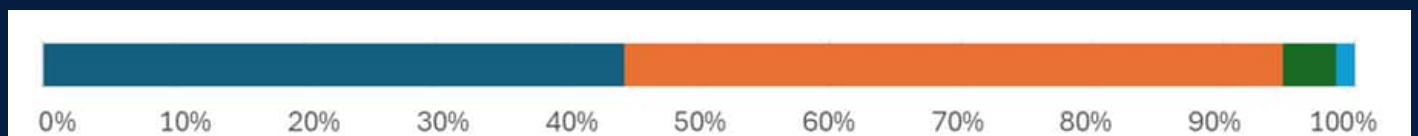
1a: The strategic themes provide a clear vision and approach to delivering growth.



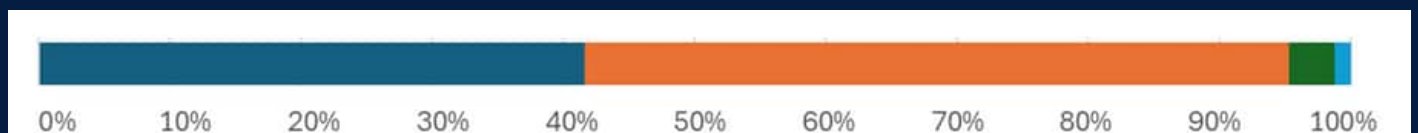
3a: Sustainable growth should create opportunities for everyone.



4a: Investment in towns and villages is important to ensure sustainability and pride in place.



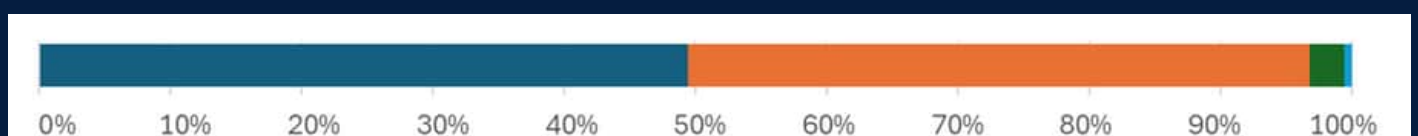
5a: Access to support is critical for WL entrepreneurs/business to realise growth potential.



6a: WLDC should facilitate public and private investment to develop a resilient economy.



7a: Access to training is critical to improving skills, productivity and access to employment.



8a: Agri-Tech/Robotics, Clean Energy and Air, Space and Defence are WL's growth sectors.



9a: WL's economy should contribute towards realising net-zero by adopting green practices.



10a: WL's businesses should be encouraged to embrace environmentally sustainable growth.



Results: Consultees were asked to identify what they believed were **‘the main challenges facing the West Lindsey Economy over the next five years’**.

Overall, respondents identified a wide range of challenges facing the West Lindsey economy – with a strong emphasis on provision of funding, improved infrastructure, workforce development and community support. There was a call for practical, accessible and meaningful solutions to address these challenges and support sustainable economic growth. A summary of the key challenges can be found below:



Funding and Investment: A significant concern is the lack of central funding and investment in the area. Respondents highlighted the need for financial support to drive economic growth and development.



Infrastructure and Connectivity: Respondents identified the need for significant investment in both digital and physical infrastructure, including sustainable transport, renewable energy systems and high-speed broadband in rural areas. Poor road conditions and transport links are also major concerns.



Economic Transition: Supporting local businesses through major changes such as digitalization, sustainability requirements and changing consumer expectations are seen as key challenges. Rising operational costs and cost competition are additional concerns that respondents felt local businesses were facing.



Workforce and Skills: Addressing an ageing population, retaining young talent and filling skills gaps across both traditional and emerging sectors were highlighted as key local challenges. Respondents identified that there is a need for better education and training to support local employment.



Rural-Urban Divide: Respondents stated that ensuring equitable development across the district and preventing rural isolation were important issues. Maintaining viable local business services in smaller communities was also a concern for some respondents.



Climate Resilience: Adapting to climate change impacts (particularly in the agricultural sector) and supporting businesses to meet environmental regulations and transition to sustainable practices were seen as critical challenges by many respondents.



Economic Inclusivity: Respondents identified that making sure economic growth benefits all communities, addressing pockets of deprivation and creating accessible job opportunities across different skill levels.



Regeneration and High Street: Regenerating town centers and improving the attractiveness of high streets to prevent people from shopping elsewhere was identified as a priority by many respondents.



Housing and Property: The condition of business premises and housing stock more broadly is a concern for some respondents, as is a need for more social housing and affordable homes for young people.



Government Policies and External Factors: Respondents mentioned the impact of government policies, global financial difficulties and geopolitical issues as major macro challenges and there was also concern about the impact of Brexit and climate change on the local economy.

Respondents also felt that tackling Crime and Community/Mental Health were also important in the context of a healthy local economy.

Results: Consultees were asked to identify what they believed were **'the main opportunities for the West Lindsey Economy over the next five years'**.

Overall, respondents identified opportunities with a strong focus on sustainability, innovation and collaboration. Respondents confirmed the need for practical, accessible and meaningful support to help realize these opportunities and drive local economic growth. A summary of the key opportunities can be found below:



Green Economy Leadership: Respondents identified that there is the potential for West Lindsey to become a pioneer in sustainable rural development by combining renewable energy, green agriculture and circular economy initiatives.



Innovation and Technology: Respondents suggested that WL could build on the area's agricultural heritage to develop an agri-tech cluster. They also identified opportunities linked to embracing new sectors like digital and clean energy.



Skills Development: Creating a skilled local workforce through partnerships with education providers, focusing on future-proof sectors and green technologies was highlighted as a key opportunity by respondents.



Community Regeneration: Using sustainable development to revitalise town centres and rural communities, while concurrently improving both environmental and social outcomes are seen as major opportunities.



Inward Investment: Attracting businesses and remote workers seeking sustainable, rural locations with good connectivity, lower cost of living and higher quality of life was identified as a key lever to unlock local economic opportunities.



Funding and Support: Taking advantage of government support for green initiatives and future iterations of 'levelling up' to accelerate local development is seen as a key opportunity by many respondents.



Tourism: Respondents identified that promoting the local visitor economy and leveraging the area's natural beauty and rural charm to attract visitors and investment continued to be a significant economic opportunity.



Redevelopment Projects: Opportunities related to the redevelopment of sites like the West Burton power station, RAF Scampton and other redundant sites are highlighted by respondents as significant for economic growth.



Clean Energy: Embracing renewable energy projects, such as fusion, solar and wind power and supporting green initiatives are seen as important opportunities for the local economy.



Collaboration and Partnerships: Working across boundaries and collaborating with neighbouring districts, educational institutions and businesses to drive economic growth and development was seen as critical to realise economic growth.

Respondents also felt that community engagement, promoting a positive image of the area and fostering a sense of pride and ownership among residents are important for economic development.

