

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2025

Consultation Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and 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.

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

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.

1.2 Methods

To undertake this work we used multiple routes to consult with our stakeholders. The consultation was undertaken using an online survey, a paper survey, through stalls at markets in our market towns and an in person event.

Surveys

All 1443 members of the West Lindsey Citizen Panel received a copy of the survey. This was split with 970 being sent via email and 473 by post. Both versions of the survey had the same content and a copy of the survey distributed can be found at Appendix A.

1.3 Response

The survey had 369 responses compared to 410 during 2024. The breakdown of these responses are:

	Survey
Citizen Panel Member	315
Resident	368
Town or Parish Councillor	2
West Lindsey Councillor	0
Businesses	2
Community representative	1

Table 1: Breakdown of respondents

Please note that respondents were able to mark more than one of these boxes and therefore could be responding as both a Citizen Panel member and a resident of West Lindsey for example.

Out of these responses 291 were received electronically, 70 were postal, 0 through seated conversations at the in-person event and 8 were from market stalls.

The total responses each year have been:

Year	Responses
2024	410
2023	494
2022	680
2021	513
2020	708
2019	595
2018	409
2017	368

Table 2: Yearly response numbers

Most sections within this consultation had a section for comments. During the analysis, the comments have been summarised. A full list of comments received will be available separately upon request.

1.4 Respondent data

Respondents were asked at the end of the survey to answer some equality questions. Whilst not mandatory, 333 respondents did give a response, and these have been broken down into gender, age, disability, ethnicity, faith/religion and sexuality.

Gender

Out of the 361 who took part, 50% of those are Male and 49% are Female and less than 1% were transgender, non-binary, other or preferred not to say.

Age

To take part in the consultation it is requested that they need to be 16 or over. Age data is available for the 361 members who took part and the ages are grouped as:

Age range	Percent
16-25	1%
26-35	2%
36-45	2%
46-55	7%
56-65	21%
66-75	35%
76+	32%
Prefer not to say	1%

Table 3: Age ranges

Disability

Out of those who took part, 27% of those classify themselves as being disabled and 70% do not. 3% preferred not to say.

Ethnicity

The majority of respondents class themselves as White British, Irish or other with 98%. Other ethnic groups which had responses but the percentage is 1% or under for each included Asian or Asian British, Mixed or multiple ethnic group, other and prefer not to say.

Religion/Faith/Belief

While the Christian religion came up with the majority of responses with 69%, the no religion option had 27%. The other religions which came in at under 1% were Buddhist, Jewish and other faiths while prefer not to say had 2%.

Sexuality

The majority of responses came from heterosexual respondents with 95%, while those who classed themselves as Lesbian/Gay were 2% and Bisexual with less than 1%. Prefer not to say came in at 3%.

2 Results

2.1 Council Tax

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

Option	Results	Last years total
0% change	64 (17.3%)	55 (13.4%)
1% increase	83 (22.5%)	71 (17.3%)
2% increase	95 (25.7%)	145 (35.4%)
3% increase	119 (32.2%)	92 (22.4%)
£5 increase	Not asked	38 (9.3%)
No response	8 (2.2%)	9 (2.2%)
Total	369	410

Table 4: Council Tax data

These figures show the option with the highest percent of votes is a 3% increase. This can also be seen in figure 1.

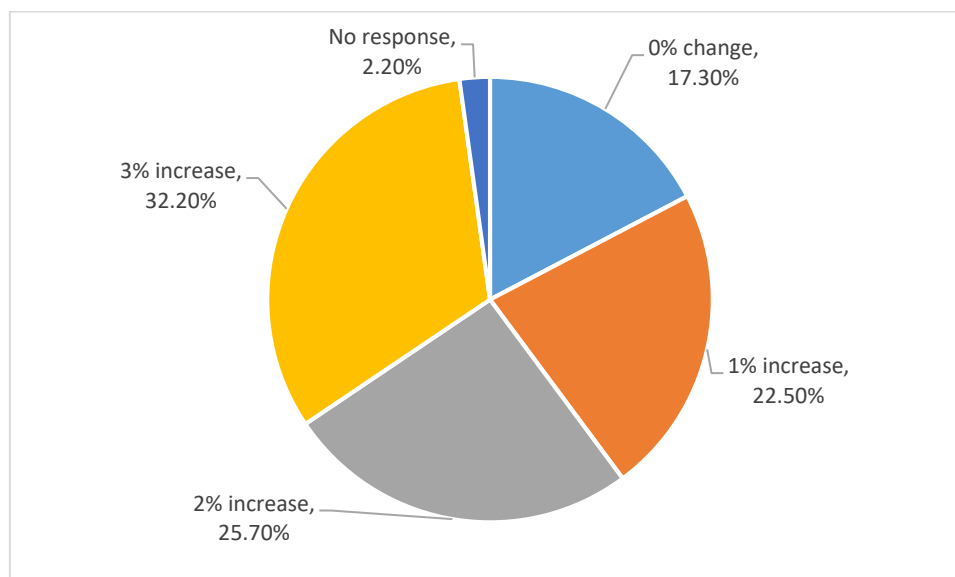


Figure 1: Council Tax change

The following comments were made in regard to this section:

- Council Tax should rise in line with inflation only
- Worried about how much the others including Parish Councils will increase theirs
- Many people are struggling with bills already
- Everyone needs to tighten their belt including councils
- What do we get for the Council Tax
- Council Tax bands need reassessing

2.2 Fees and Charges

Historically the Council has adjusted its fees and charges in line with the inflationary costs of service delivery. We asked respondents their views on which of the following options they felt would be the best option for 2026/27.

Increase fees by lower than inflation at an amount of 1% and review annually	36%
Increase fees by lower than inflation at an amount of 3.2% and review annually	33%
Increase fees at the current level of inflation (Retail Price Index 4.4% and Customer Price Index 3.6%) and review annually	31%

Table 5: Fees and charges options

From these results it can be seen that there is only a 5% difference between any of the options.

To further this data, we asked what comments they wished to make and the following was highlighted:

- Many households are struggling
- Increase fees gradually
- Fees need to be kept in line with inflation
- Improvements should be made in line with any increase in fees
- Don't cut services

2.3 Garden waste collection

The Council provides a subscription service for the collection of garden waste. The council does not make a profit from this service and with increases in costs, the actual cost of running the service is now in excess of what is charged. We asked respondents if they currently subscribed to the service.

Yes	75.5%
No	24.5%

Table 6: Subscribers to the Garden Waste Service

From those who do not subscribe, they were asked what the reasons were for this.

I dispose of my garden waste another way	54%
The cost	30%
I don't have a garden	18%
I require less collections than currently provided	8%
I share a bin with someone else	3%
I require more collections than currently provided	1%

Table 7: Reason for non subscription

All respondents were asked if they felt the current service is value for money. Out of all the respondents to this question, 76% believe that it is value for money as shown in figure 2.

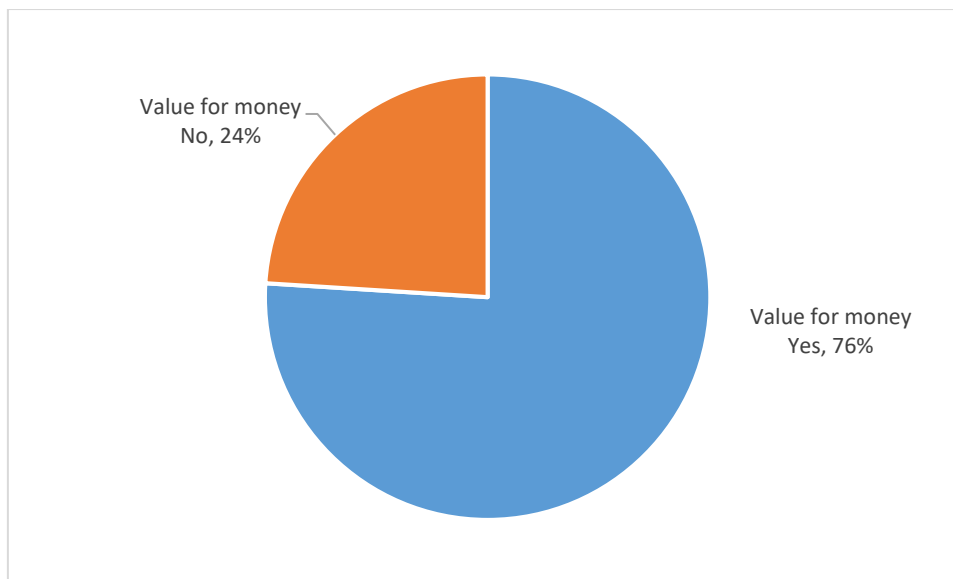


Figure 2: All respondents, value for money

This has been split to show the difference between those who do currently subscribe and those who don't. It can be seen that those who do subscribe, feel that this is a value for money service.

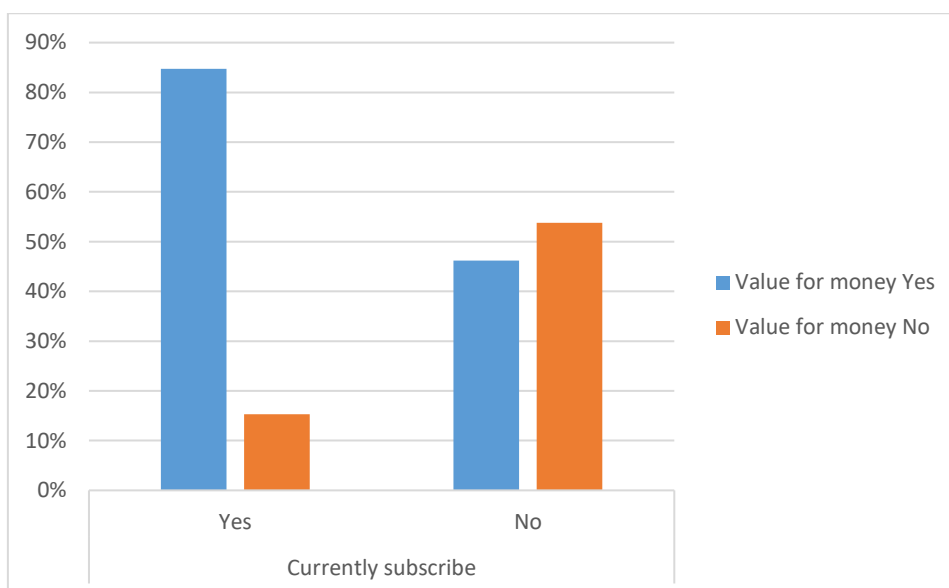


Figure 3: Split of satisfaction against subscription status

For those who currently subscribe we asked how satisfied they are with the service that they receive.

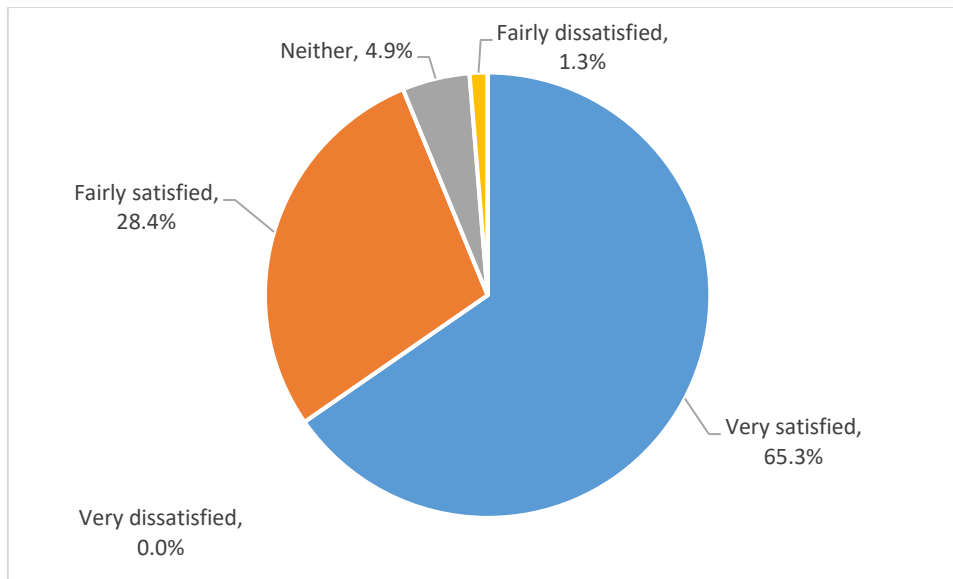


Figure 4: Satisfaction of Garden Waste Service for subscribers

And to follow on from this what the respondents felt the council could do for the Garden Waste service:

- Increase the number of collections
- Monthly collections during the winter months
- Offer jumbo bins
- Offer reduced compost for those residents on the service
- Put charge into Council Tax
- Keep the cost static
- Second bin at reduced cost
- Pay for bin collection service

2.4 Other comments relating to this consultation

Respondents were asked if there were any other comments they would like to make which has not already been covered. The comments were:

- Keep any increases to a minimum
- Excellent council
- Stop wasting money

3 Conclusion

3.1 Response

Response rates this year were lower than last year with 369 responses compared to 410 in 2024. This is partially down to the number of consultations undertaken with a short period of time.

3.2 Council Tax

These figures show the favourite option is a 3% increase with 32.2% of the votes.

3.3 Fees and Charges

No overall option was an overall winner. All 3 options received around a third of the votes.

3.4 Garden Waste

Three quarters of the respondents do subscribe to the service with the main reason for the other quarter not responding is that they dispose of their garden waste another way. Nearly three quarters of respondents also felt that this is good value for money and 93.7% of respondents are satisfied with the service they receive.

3.5 Next Steps

The following actions are recommended for 2026 budget consultation:

- Continue to undertake the consultation and try to make the process as easy as possible for stakeholders to take part.
- Undertake the consultation during the summer to ensure where possible the weather is not as much of a problem.
- Try to ensure the consultation is available to as many residents as possible through numerous routes so that a wide range of views can be considered.
- Include an example of the fees and charges

4 Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

West Lindsey District Council Budget Consultation 2025

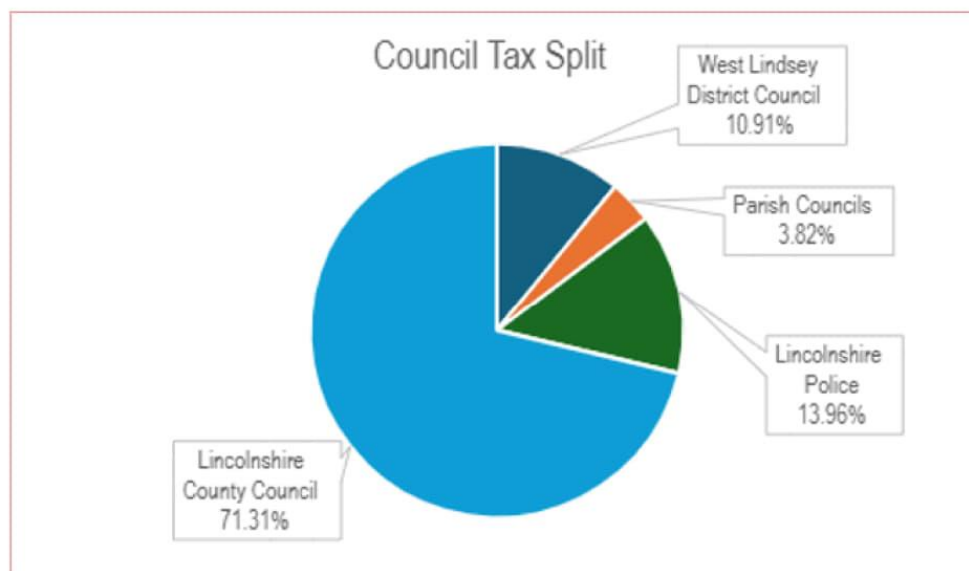
HELPFUL HINTS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE Please read each question carefully. In most cases you will only have to tick one box but please read the questions carefully as sometimes you will need to tick more than one box, or write in a response. Once you have finished please take a minute to check 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.

Are you responding as: **(Please tick all that apply)**

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

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 10.91% (excluding Parish/Town Council Precepts) and funds around 39% of our overall budget.



1. With the customer price index 3.5% and the retail price index at 4.1%, what level of council tax increase would you support for 2026/27? **Please tick one box only**
- ☐ 0% change - A 0% change would give West Lindsey a total level of council tax income of £8.3m.
 - ☐ 1% increase - A 1% increase would mean a 5 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 £8.4m.
 - ☐ 2% increase - A 2% increase would mean a 10 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 £8.5m.
 - ☐ 3% increase - A 3% increase would mean a 14 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 £8.6m.
3. Any comments you wish to make around the level of Council Tax:

Fees and Charges

4. Historically the Council has adjusted its fees and charges in line with the inflationary costs of service delivery. Which of the following options do you feel would be the best for 2026/27? **Please tick one box only**
- ☐ Increase fees by lower than inflation at an amount of 1% and review annually
 - ☐ Increase fees by lower than inflation at an amount of 3.2% and review annually
 - ☐ Increase fees at the current level of inflation (Retail Price Index 4.4% and Customer Price Index 3.6%) and review annually
5. Any comments you wish to make regarding the fees and charges options:

Garden Waste Collection Service

The Council currently charges £46 for this subscription service per bin which includes 18 collections per annum. This equates to £2.56 per collection, per bin. The Council does not make a profit from providing this service and with increases in costs which has meant the actual cost of running the service is now in excess of what we charge.

6. Do you currently subscribe to the service? **Please tick one box only**
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

7. What are your reasons for not subscribing to the service? **Please tick all which apply**
- ☐ The cost
 - ☐ I don't have a garden
 - ☐ I dispose of my garden waste another way
 - ☐ I share a bin with someone else
 - ☐ I require more collections than currently provided
 - ☐ I require less collections than currently provided
8. Do you feel the current charge is value for money?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
9. How satisfied are you with the current garden waste collection service that you receive? **Please tick one box only**
- ☐ Very satisfied
 - ☐ Fairly satisfied
 - ☐ Neither
 - ☐ Fairly dissatisfied
 - ☐ Very dissatisfied
10. Is there anything else you feel the Council can do for Garden Waste?

Other comments relating to this consultation

11. 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.

12. Are you willing to answer these questions?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
13. Are you?
- ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Transgender
 - ☐ Non-Binary
 - ☐ Any other gender
 - ☐ Prefer not to say

14. Do you have any long term illness, health problems or disability which limits your daily activities or the work that you do?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
15. What age are you?
- ☐ 16-25
 - ☐ 26-35
 - ☐ 36-45
 - ☐ 46-55
 - ☐ 56-65
 - ☐ 66-75
 - ☐ 76 or over
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
16. Which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?
- ☐ White
 - ☐ Black, Black British, Caribbean or African
 - ☐ Asian or Asian British
 - ☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
 - ☐ Any other ethnic group
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
17. Which of the following best describes your faith/religion/belief?
- ☐ No religion
 - ☐ Christian (all denominations)
 - ☐ Muslim
 - ☐ Buddhist
 - ☐ Sikh
 - ☐ Hindu
 - ☐ Jewish
 - ☐ Any other religion/faith/belief
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
18. Which of the following statements best describes your sexuality?
- ☐ Heterosexual/Straight
 - ☐ Lesbian/Gay
 - ☐ Bisexual
 - ☐ Any other sexual orientation
 - ☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking part. Once submitted you will be taken to our website.

**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](mailto:customer.services@west-lindsey.gov.uk)**

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