



**Corporate Policy and
Resources Committee**

24 July 2025

Subject: Budget Consultation and LGR Engagement Proposal for 2025

Report by:	Director of Finance and Assets and Section 151 Officer
Contact Officer:	Peter Davy Director of Finance and Assets and Section 151 Officer peter.davy@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To present the proposed Budget Consultation and Local Government Reorganisation Engagement process for 2025.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That Corporate Policy and Resources Committee agree the Budget Consultation process for 2025.
2. That members note the intention to run a public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation alongside the 2025 Budget Consultation.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

This consultation complies with legislation including The Local Government Act 1999, The Equality Act 2010, The Localism Act 2011 and the Data Protection Act 2018 as well as legal case law as appropriate for consultation. This includes the Gunning Principles as established in case R v London Borough of Brent ex parte Gunning 1985.

Financial : FIN/43/26/MT/SL

None from this report although the outcomes from this proposed consultation and engagement may have financial implications.

Staffing : None from this report

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

An equality questionnaire will be available to complete at the end of the budget consultation survey and an EIA will be completed for any possible projects or changes coming from the consultation and engagement exercise.

Data Protection Implications :

The residents and businesses 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 :

Risk Assessment :
We will undertake risk assessments for all events held.

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 West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) undertake all consultations 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 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.

1.2 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. Budget Consultation

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The main objectives of this consultation are to raise awareness of the financial challenges facing the council to ensuring transparency and accountability in the budget setting process and allow for our residents and businesses to express their priorities and concerns. This all supports a budget which reflects the needs and values of our communities.

3. Local Government Reorganisation Public Engagement

- 3.1 Like all district councils in two tier areas of governance, West Lindsey District Council is currently going through the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Both the Statutory Invitation, and the interim feedback received from government make clear that, in developing proposals for LGR, councils should "engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way with residents, voluntary sector, local community groups and councils, public sector providers, such as health, police and fire, and local businesses to inform your final proposal(s)."
- 3.2 On 7th July, Council resolved to "undertake supportive engagement, working across all final LGR proposals being developed for Greater Lincolnshire." Whilst the council is not submitting a standalone proposal, in engaging with the proposals that are in development, there is a need for public engagement across West Lindsey in order to keep our residents, businesses and key stakeholders informed, and so that these groups have an opportunity to have their say on the future of local government.
- 3.3 To comply with the government's LGR timeline, it is recommended that the Council's Budget Consultation process is used in part to meet the requirement to engage with residents.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 To undertake this work it is proposed that multiple routes are taken to consult with our stakeholders for both the Budget Consultation and the LGR Engagement.

- 4.2 We will be holding face to face events, producing an online and paper survey and accepting any written submissions. The responsible officers for this work are Peter Davy, Director of Finance and Assets and Section 151 Officer for the Budget Consultation and Rachael Hughes, Head of Policy and Strategy for the LGR Engagement. The day to day running of these exercises will be undertaken by Katy Allen, Corporate Governance Officer.
- 4.3 The timescale for the exercises and future reporting is included as Appendix A.
- 4.4 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 questionnaire and written submissions.
- Online and paper questionnaire –To ensure there are as many views on the subjects as possible we would have an online and a matching paper questionnaire which would be available to those on the citizen panel and any other resident that wishes to take part through requesting a questionnaire, completing a questionnaire on our website or through an invite from the Citizen Panel.
 - Events – This will include Workshops, Face to Face meetings and Market Stalls. Previously face to face events have taken place in Gainsborough, Nettleham and Caistor. Over the last 5 years the numbers attending these events has decreased and during 2024 no residents attended the Caistor event and only 2 attended Nettleham. However, since the decline in the numbers attending these events, the market stalls have been introduced and get a greater response. A market stall will be held in each of the market towns (Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor), weather permitting. For the LGR engagement additional events are being planned for West Lindsey businesses and other public sector providers.
 - 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.
- 4.5 The communications strategy will include;
- Social Media – on all available platforms
 - Emails to specific organisations
 - Citizens' Panel and Registered businesses will be contacted and asked to participate
 - Parish/Town Council, Resident and Business newsletter

- Public Events
- Press release
- Minerva

- 4.6 The proposed questionnaire for the Budget consultation is attached as Appendix B, whilst the proposed questionnaire for LGR engagement is attached as Appendix C.
- 4.7 Conducting the LGR survey alongside the Budget Consultation will provide valuable insight into what is important to people in respect of their sense of place and how local government services are delivered. The interim results of this engagement exercise will be reported back to Full Council as part of an LGR update paper on 8th September. An item will be added to the next available members newsletter to ensure all members are aware of the engagement that is taking place, should they receive any questions from residents.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee accept the budget consultation process, timeline and questionnaire for 2025.
- 5.2 That members note the intention to run a public engagement exercise on Local Government Reorganisation alongside the 2025 Budget Consultation.

Appendix A – Proposed Timeline

Surveys launched	4 August
Caistor Market Stall	9 August
Gainsborough Market Stall	19 August
Market Rasen Market Stall	2 September
Interim reporting of LGR to Full Council:	
MT	18 August
Chairs Brief	27 August
Council	8 September
Gainsborough Event	
Final cut off	9 September
EIA on budget consultation	15 September
	30 September
Final reporting for LGR engagement:	
Feedback through Member newsletter, social media and website	
Final reporting for Budget consultation:	
MT	13 October
Prosperous Communities Chairs Brief	16 October
Prosperous Communities	4 November
CP&R Chairs Brief	30 October
CP&R	13 November
Feedback through Member newsletter, social media and website	

Appendix B – Proposed Budget Consultation 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.

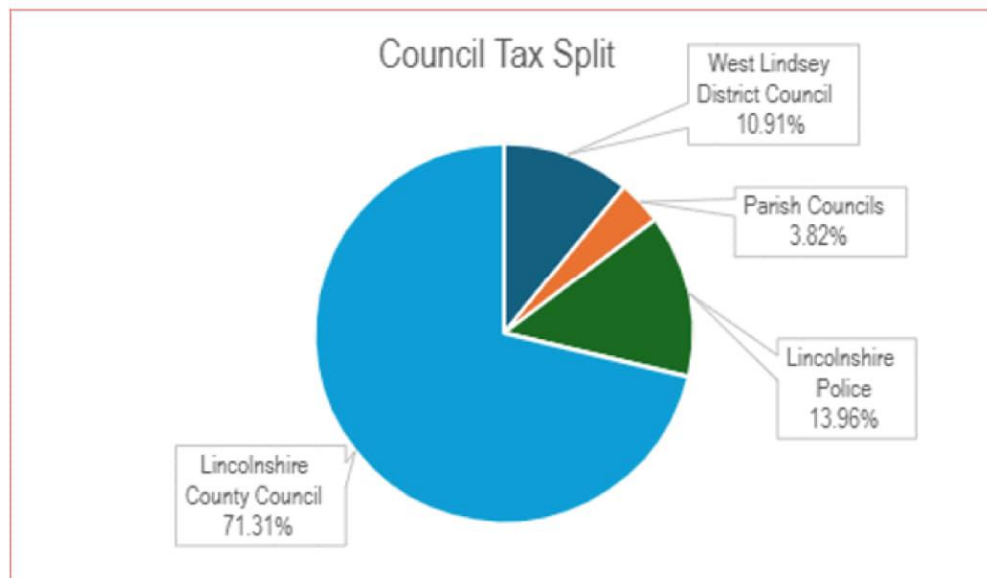
Please insert your name or panel reference number:

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.

2. Any comments you wish to make around the level of Council Tax:

Fees and Charges

3. Historically the Council has increased its fees and charges by inflation or costs of delivery which are impacted by inflation. Which of the following options do you feel would be the best option for 2026/27? **Please tick one box only**
- ☐ Cap fees at a lower rate than inflation (1%)
 - ☐ Pause fees at the current level and increase by inflation next year
 - ☐ Increase fees by inflation only and review next year

4. 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.

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

6. 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

7. Do you feel the current charge is value for money?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. 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

9. Is there anything else you feel the Council can do for Garden Waste?

Other comments relating to this consultation

10. 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.

11. Are you willing to answer these questions?

- ☐ Yes - Please go to question 12
- ☐ No - Please go to the end of the survey

12. Are you?
- ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Transgender
 - ☐ Non-Binary
 - ☐ Any other gender
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
13. 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
14. What age are you?
- ☐ 16-25
 - ☐ 26-35
 - ☐ 36-45
 - ☐ 46-55
 - ☐ 56-65
 - ☐ 66-75
 - ☐ 76 or over
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
15. 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
16. 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
17. Which of the following statements best describes your sexuality?
- ☐ Heterosexual/Straight
 - ☐ Lesbian/Gay
 - ☐ Bisexual
 - ☐ Any other sexual orientation
 - ☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you very much for your time completing this questionnaire.
Please return in the enclosed pre-paid envelope by 9am on Monday 21 September 2025.



Have your say on the future of West Lindsey

The future of your Council is changing. Earlier this year, the government announced plans to reorganise the way local government services are delivered to local people. Currently, Lincolnshire exists in a 'two-tier' system with some services, such as waste collection, planning and street cleaning delivered by your district council while other services, such as waste disposal, social care and highways delivered by Lincolnshire County Council. Under the government's plans, the two-tier system will be replaced with one single, 'unitary' council which will deliver all local government services in one place. You can find out more about Local Government Reorganisation and how this may affect you [<here>](#) (insert link to microsite once live)

Councils across Greater Lincolnshire are currently working up final proposals for what the future of local government services should like for the area. To help shape these plans, we would like to hear your views on what is important to you in terms of place identity, and how you access local services. Please fill out the short survey below, which will take no more than 5 minutes to complete, to have your say on the future of local government in your area.

The survey will close on 15 July 2025 at 9am. If you have any questions, or if you would like to request a copy of this survey in an alternative format, please email corporate.plan@west-lindsey.gov.uk or contact Customer Services on 01427 676 676. Thank you.

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 contact the Engagement Team on engagement@west-lindsey.gov.uk.

1. Are you responding as: **Please tick all that apply**

- ☐ a resident
- ☐ a Parish or Town Councillor
- ☐ a WLDC Councillor
- ☐ a County Councillor
- ☐ on behalf of a business
- ☐ a community representative
- ☐ WLDC Staff
- ☐ non West Lindsey resident

2. Where do you live? **Please tick one box only**

- ☐ Bardney
- ☐ Caistor and Yarborough
- ☐ Cherry Willingham
- ☐ Dunholme and Welton
- ☐ Gainsborough
- ☐ Hemswell
- ☐ Kelsey Wold
- ☐ Lea
- ☐ Market Rasen
- ☐ Nettleham
- ☐ Saxilby
- ☐ Scampton
- ☐ Scotter and Blyton
- ☐ Stow
- ☐ Sudbrooke
- ☐ Torksey
- ☐ Waddingham and Spital
- ☐ Wold View

Other - Please specify:

3. The following two questions help us to understand what you value most about your local area. Which of the following statements is most applicable to you? **Please tick one box only**

- ☐ I feel part of my local area
- ☐ I feel part of the district of West Lindsey
- ☐ I feel part of the County of Lincolnshire
- ☐ I feel part of the Greater Lincolnshire region
- ☐ I feel part of the East Midlands
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Other - Please specify:

4. What do you value about your local area? **Please tick all that apply**

- ☐ Job opportunities in my local area or surrounding area
- ☐ Proximity to family
- ☐ Proximity to friends
- ☐ Proximity to your local town
- ☐ Natural environment
- ☐ Transport links
- ☐ None of the above

Other - Please specify:

5. What ties your local community together? **Please tick all that apply**

- ☐ Accessibility of local services
- ☐ Variety of local services
- ☐ Common interests
- ☐ Common meeting places
- ☐ How people interact with each other
- ☐ Natural environment
- ☐ Shared experiences
- ☐ Shared identity
- ☐ Willingness to help others
- ☐ Heritage
- ☐ None of the above

Other - Please specify:

6. Which town centre do you visit most frequently? **Please tick one box only**

- ☐ Barton-upon-Humber
- ☐ Boston
- ☐ Bourne
- ☐ Brigg
- ☐ Caistor
- ☐ Cleethorpes
- ☐ Gainsborough
- ☐ Grantham
- ☐ Grimsby
- ☐ Holbeach
- ☐ Horncastle
- ☐ Immingham
- ☐ Kirton-in-Lindsey
- ☐ Lincoln
- ☐ Louth
- ☐ Mablethorpe
- ☐ Market Rasen
- ☐ Scunthorpe
- ☐ Skegness
- ☐ Sleaford
- ☐ Spalding
- ☐ Stamford

Other - Please specify:

7. District Councils and the County Council deliver a number of services including housing, planning, leisure, libraries, children's services, adult social care, waste collection and recycling, and car parking. Under the government's plans, district and county councils will be abolished and replaced with one larger unitary council which will provide all local government services in a given area.

Do you have any concerns about council services being delivered by a single, larger council? **Please tick one box only**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

8. If you answered "Yes" to question 7, what are your main concerns about council services being delivered by a single, larger council?

9. Do you have a preference on which local areas West Lindsey should be grouped with in the future?
Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Boston Borough
- ☐ City of Lincoln
- ☐ East Lindsey District
- ☐ Lincolnshire County
- ☐ North Lincolnshire
- ☐ North-East Lincolnshire
- ☐ North Kesteven District
- ☐ South Holland District
- ☐ South Kesteven District
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ None of the above

Other - Please specify

10. When thinking about proposals for local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire, what should the priority be? **Please tick all that apply**

- ☐ Accountability
- ☐ Access to services
- ☐ Democratic representation
- ☐ Service Quality
- ☐ Value for Money
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ None of the above

Other - Please specify

11. Please share any views or concerns you may have about local government reorganisation:

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. Please click submit and then you will be taken to our website. Once this happens your response will have been submitted.