

Results of the Council's LGR Engagement Exercise

Context

In developing a final proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), one of the key requirements is for public engagement across the whole area concerned, in this case, the 10 local authority areas that make up Greater Lincolnshire.

Whilst West Lindsey has not developed its own LGR proposal, at a meeting of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 24th July 2025, members resolved to undertake a West Lindsey based public engagement exercise to run alongside the Council's budget consultation over a six-week period from 25th July to 15th September.

The aim of the engagement exercise, branded "Have Your Say on the Future of West Lindsey," was to understand what is important to West Lindsey residents in respect of place identity and future priorities for how local services are delivered.

This paper presents in full the results of the survey to inform and support decision-making. If you have any questions on this, or any aspect of LGR, please contact the Policy & Strategy Team via corporate.plan@west-lindsey.gov.uk

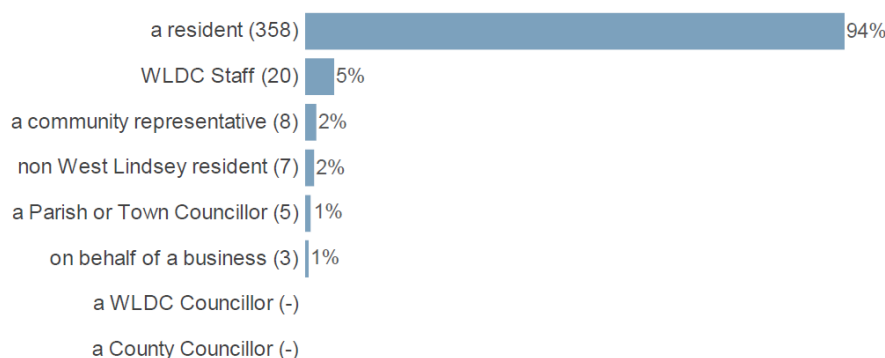
Methodology and Response Rate

The survey was open online to all West Lindsey residents between 25th July and 15th September 2025 with alternative formats available on request. A communications plan ensured the survey was promoted weekly on all of the Council's social media channels, as well as utilising all available newsletters (e.g. Parish newsletter and Business eBrief).

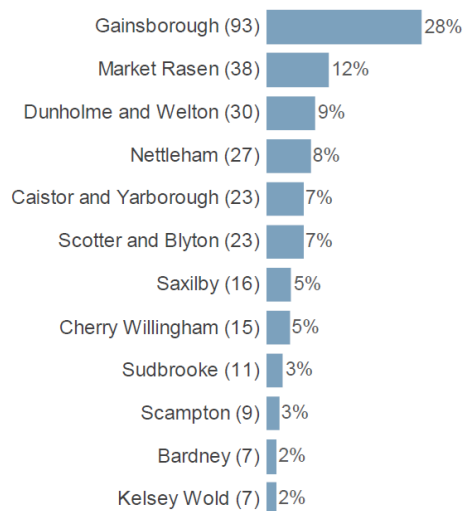
Additionally, officers were present at each of the in-person Budget Consultation events that took place in Gainsborough, Caistor and Market Rasen over the summer to conduct the survey in-person and to answer any questions on LGR.

A total of 381 respondents completed the survey, representing a response rate of 0.38% based on the district's total resident population. A breakdown of respondents by type, and by geographical area is detailed below:

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



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

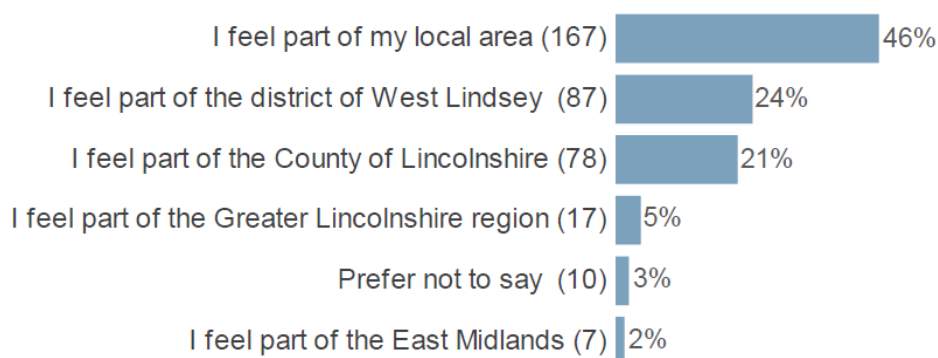


PLACE IDENTITY

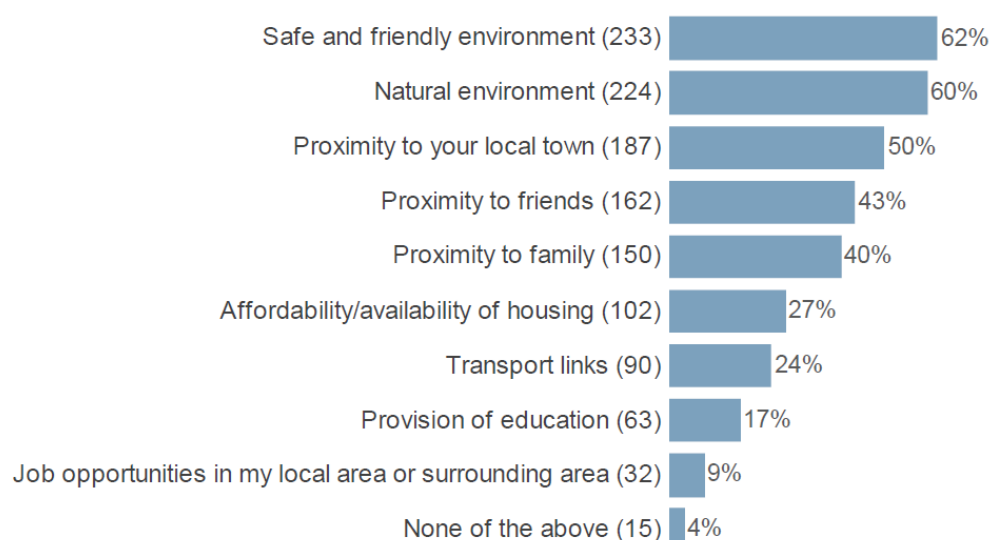
Questions 1, 2 and 3 sought to understand what people value most about where they live. The results are shown in the graph below. In terms of place identity, the majority of respondents (46%) identify with their local area, compared to 24% who identify most closely with West Lindsey district, and 21% who identify with the county of Lincolnshire.

In considering what people value most about where they live, being in a safe and friendly environment ranked highest at 62%, followed by the natural environment (60%). Provision of education and job opportunities ranked lowest at 9% and 4% respectively.

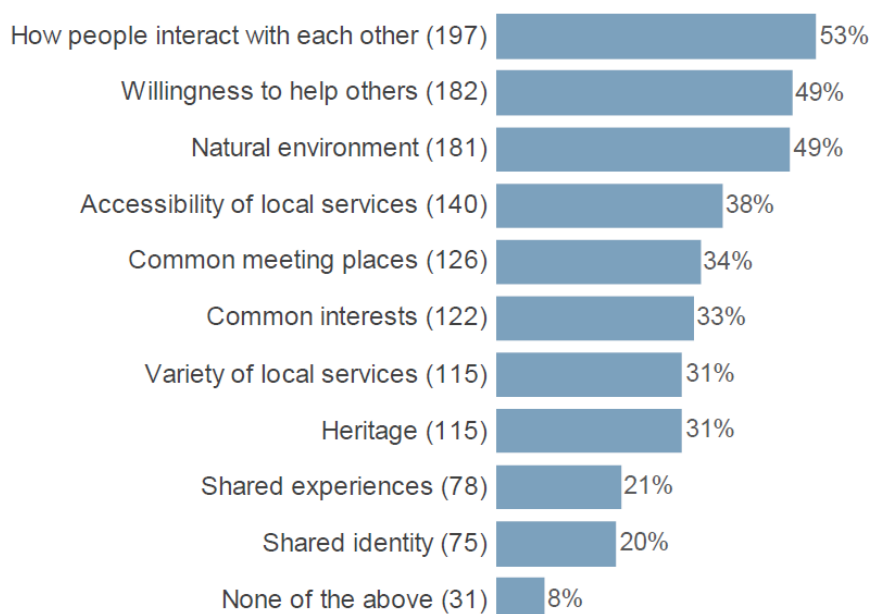
When asked “what ties your local community together?” respondents particularly valued how people interact with each other (53%) and people’s willingness to help others (49%). Shared experiences and a shared sense of identity ranked lowest at 21% and 20% respectively.



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

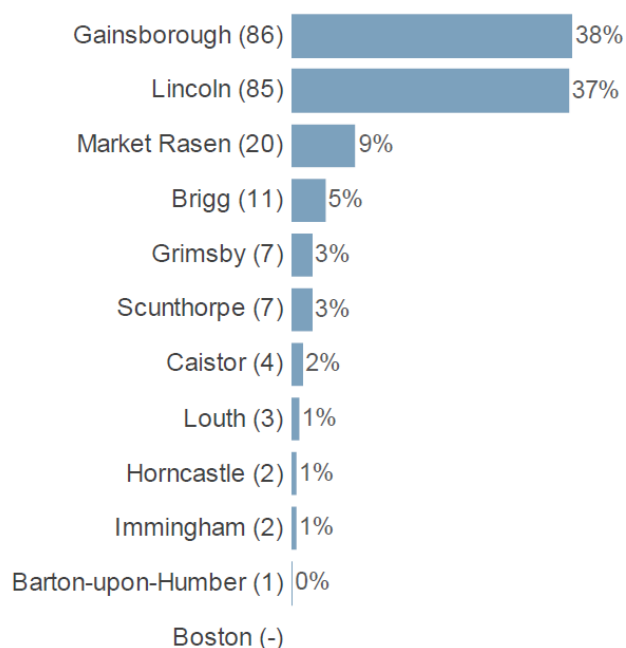


What ties your local community together? Please tick all that apply



Respondents were asked to state which Greater Lincolnshire town centre they visited most frequently. Gainsborough is the most frequently visited (38%), followed by Lincoln (37%) and Market Rasen (9%). Immingham (1%), Barton-upon-Humber (1%) and Boston (0%) were cited as the least frequently visited town centres.

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



DELIVERY OF LOCAL SERVICES

The second part of the survey reminded residents of the services currently delivered by district and borough councils and asked respondents what they consider to be important with regard to service delivery in a new unitary authority.

When asked to rank services in order of highest and lowest priority, the following responses were received:

Service	Rank (based on number of responses)
Supporting the local economy and creating job opportunities	Top (43)
Rubbish collection	2 nd (41)
Protecting the environment and keeping it clean	3 rd (40)
Helping people stay healthy and safe	4 th (24)
Availability of affordable housing, including provision of homelessness services	5 th (12)
Open spaces including parks and play areas	6 th (10)
Building related services, including planning applications, Building Control, enforcement, protecting our heritage	7 th (9)
Local facilities like public toilets and leisure centres	8 th (8)
Working to mitigate the impact of climate change	9 th (4)
Support for Council Tax and Benefits	10 th (3)

The final question asked to respondents to state what concerns they have, if any, about Council services being delivered by a single unitary Council. This was a free text question and the responses have been grouped into the following themes:

- **Centralisation of services and concerns regarding loss of access to services in rural areas** – respondents raised concerns that resources will be focused on larger urban areas, with smaller towns, villages and rural areas left behind. Concerns were also raised regarding the ability to meet the diverse needs of communities across a larger geographical area. Many respondents were complimentary about the service received from WLDC, and feared this level of service would not be replicated in a new and larger authority. Concerns related to centralisation of services, and inability to access services at the local level constituted the majority of responses.
- **Weakened democratic representation** – concerns were expressed regarding a lack of ability to access local councillors, or that decisions would be made across a larger geography by people who have a lack of knowledge or awareness of the needs and priorities of local communities.
- **Increased financial cost** – some respondents expressed concern that LGR would result in increased financial costs of running services, poor value for money, or an increase in Council Tax.
- **Loss of local identity** – some responses pointed to concerns about the loss of local identity, particularly in rural areas and villages which some respondents felt would be ignored in favour of larger urban centres.

Finally, respondents were asked what the priority should be when thinking about proposals for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire. The following responses were received:

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

