

Budget 2020/21
Consultation Report
Published 17th February, 2020

“You Said, We Listened”



Introduction to this consultation

1. In 2019 the Council introduced a 'You Said, We Listened' approach to consider feedback received through public engagement activities. This report details the responses received for the Budget 2020/21 consultation undertaken between 16th January, 2020 and 13th February, 2020.
2. The exercise was performed to seek residents' views on the Council's Budget proposals for 2020/21.

Methodology

3. A media release was issued to local newspapers to promote the consultation and social media activity was ongoing throughout the consultation period.
4. A link to the electronic questionnaire was made available on the Council's website and was included in the Council's e-Messenger, e-business brief and the Town and Parish Newsletter. An email was sent to groups that represent those individuals with the characteristics identified in the Equality Act. Paper copies of the questionnaire were made available at all the Council's Customer Access Points.
5. It should be noted that base data has been rounded to the nearest number (so may add up to between 99% and 101%). Where available this report details comparisons with the previous Budget Survey undertaken in 2019/20.

Response Rate

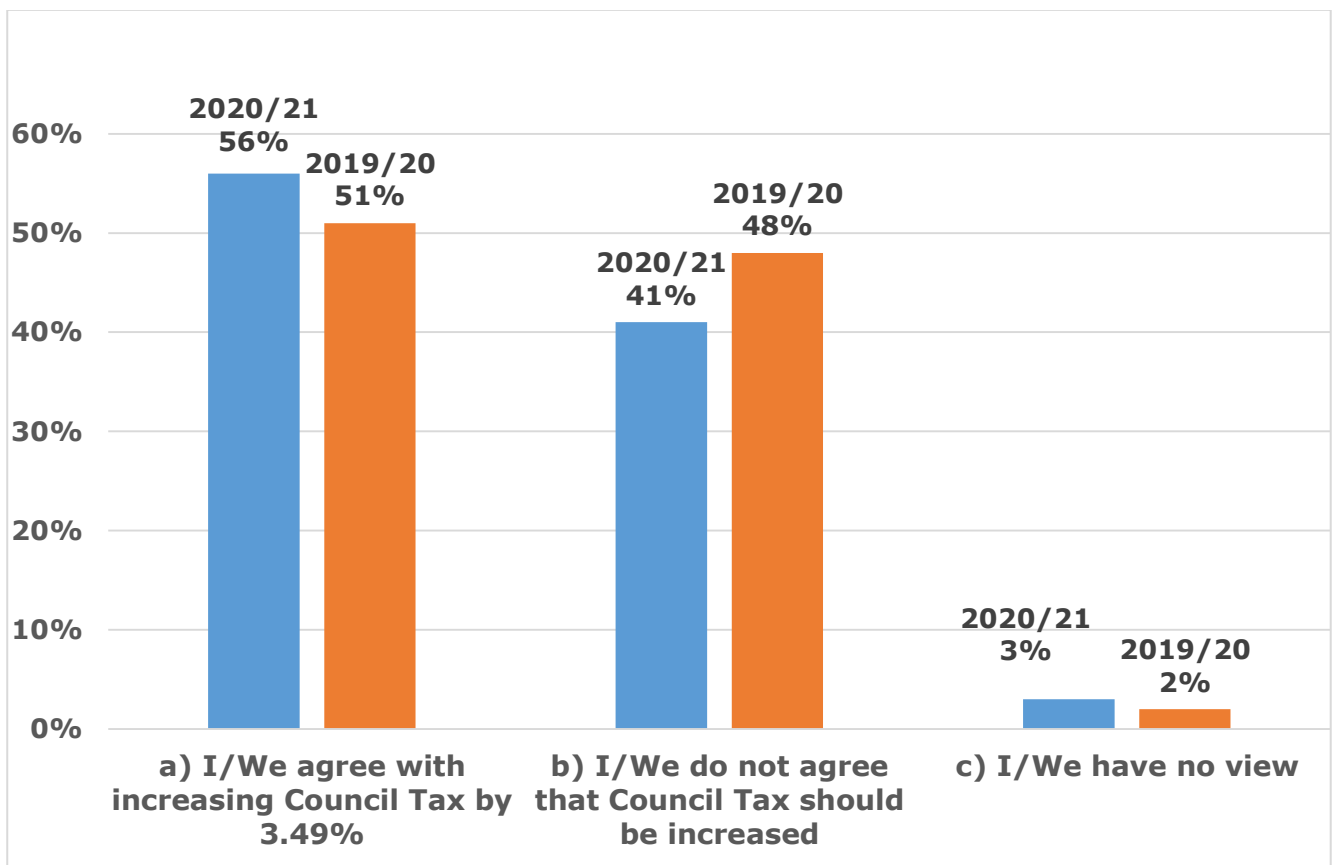
6. A total of 40 electronic responses were received. A decline of 23 responses when compared to the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2019/20.

Results and Analysis

7. 97% of all respondents responding to the consultation responded as 'A Resident', with the remaining 3% responding as 'A Business'.

Council Tax

8. All respondents were advised that, at £141.84, East Lindsey District Council's current Council Tax level for a Band D property was one of the lowest in the country. The Government was allowing the Council to put its Council Tax up by a maximum of £5 next year (based on a Band D property). The Council was therefore proposing a £4.95 (3.49%) increase for 2020/21 – an extra 9.5p per week for a Band D property. All respondents were asked their views on the proposal. The comparison chart below shows that 56% of all respondents agreed with increasing Council Tax by 3.49%. This is an increase in support of 5% when compared with the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2019/20 when 51% of respondents agreed with increasing the Council Tax by £4.95 (N.B. in 2019/20 this equated to a 3.62% increase).



9. Those respondents that did not agree with the proposed increase in Council Tax were asked why they did not agree. A couple of respondents considered the increase was higher than the rate of inflation. Two respondents commented about the Council spending £8.5m on the public sector hub project at Horncastle. Some respondents considered that they were not getting value for money and did not see the benefits from paying more Council Tax. A full list of their views are detailed below:

- Higher than the rate of inflation. Earnings aren't and haven't been increasing much over the last few years. 1.9% is more affordable.
- This is unjust when ELDC are intending to spend £8.5 million pounds on a contentious move to Horncastle
- Quite simply this is double the rate of my pay increase for the year, on top of a CT increase for the previous year, and the PCC consulting on an 11% increase to fund the policing shortfall.
- Continuous increases in Council Tax and no visible improvement anywhere across the district. Road qualities are shocking (irrespective of 'improvements'), drainage is without doubt diabolical and from what I see across the district, land drainage is not cleared, leaving water to move slower and logging the land.
- Why are we consulted on this but NOT on the £8.5m unnecessary move of ELDC to Horncastle, with what is public money? (There was a public consultation re the Louth Cattle Market). Is this because the budget setting is a legal requirement? A very dissatisfied member of the public!
- As a business owner I can assure you that there is no visible benefit from the business rates to my business. Refuse etc. has to be paid separately as another cost.
- Whilst it may seem like a small amount the problem is that cost of living is rising and wages are shrinking. Also the Council needs to be seen to be giving value for money across the whole of the area. I live in a new estate where we have to pay to maintain our green areas and street lighting and drive on what I would consider very bad roads. Also the refuse collection services are a joke and should be fully reviewed. I pay for a green bin but very little can go in it for composting. Consider promoting home composting and a wholesale review of waste collection.
- Council Tax should not be increased
- I do not see why the Council implemented a rule for disposal of caravans over 20 years on caravan park residents and how this can be part of a sustainability strategy and that due to this the investment levels from councils to caravan private parks. Why should local residents pay for this? In addition the increase provision into Council workers' pensions is way above the national average and again why should we pay for this? I am not clear how you can blame lower centralised budgets you should give more information on this. Local residents should have a say into the future environmental strategic and improvement investment areas that benefit all local residents. Residents should not be paying for imposed regulation on caravans and investment in caravan parks. As an employed resident each year all utility and Council Tax increases and I feel more should be done to keep this at a sustained level as one small cost here and there no service provider ever thinks is unreasonable however overall these costs are increasingly demanding on residents that have little choice.
- Rise is above rate of inflation - most rises are and hurt normal residents. Yes cuts have been made but there has been so much waste in local government. Happy to support a rate of inflation rise
- Council Tax has consistently increased at a greater rate than wages. This is unfairly increasing the burden on the tax payer.

- East Lindsey waste Council Tax payers funds at present and should make efficiencies instead of increasing taxes and continuing to waste funds received
- Times have changed since Council Tax was introduced and we now have a large swathe of people between the ages of 18-40 still living at home with their parents. They pay nothing towards the services they use whilst homeowners and renters have to continually pay more. It is time to introduce a community tax where everyone contributes a percentage of their income to spread the pain. If this was collected direct from pay it would save the Council having to chase up debtors. Also I am aware of a number of people who live in caravans that do not pay council tax even though the caravan is their only place of residence. Irrespective of this there should be a small community tax paid by all caravaners and collected by caravan site owners to help with the costs of running Skegness.
- Poor value for money at current rate.
- I don't believe the money is spent as it should be. I don't want to pay more money, when I see so little evidence of it.

Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

10. All respondents were asked if they had any comments to make in respect of the draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, including the proposals for a re-distribution of revenue funding in 2020/21. Some respondents considered it important that the Council supported small local businesses and to provide financial assistance with business rates. There were a mixture of comments made; a full list is detailed below:
- Don't fund a Police and Crime Commissioner or anything else that doesn't have a real impact on the district.
 - The Medium Term Financial Strategy will be impacted by the new ELDC HQ at Horncastle which despite what you say has not been thought through. Why spend millions of ratepayers money on what is essentially an office block.
 - I would be wary of just targeting market towns as other areas may need regeneration.
 - Everything goes up in price and such a small increase is well worth it, especially for the services we get. Carry on!
 - We have been promised an end to austerity and a golden Elizabethan Age, we should at this stage be talking about increased investment in infrastructure and services.
 - It is important to ensure small local businesses are supported in the small towns. Retain or improve public transport links.
 - I agree with the Council Tax rises but believe that in order to give much needed help to local small retailers/businesses in towns such as Horncastle (nearest town to my home) you must start looking keenly into giving help/financial assistance with Business Rates. Plus perhaps giving Local Councils help to allow shoppers to park free of charge in market squares on days when "trade" suffers via low footfall. This should help local retailers increase their sales. We are all on the same side really, we want to see regeneration within our local towns and villages - BUT we need "initiatives" such as this otherwise they will die.

- Look at investment in green energy
- Seems fair small towns do need help to keep going and its nice they're not just like high streets everywhere
- I agree with all proposals listed, with a note of caution regarding local adoption of business rates. I trust that some mechanism will be put in place to guard against large business failures impacting upon tax payers.
- The Council needs to ensure that support against health inequalities stays in place or increases. Only 42% of two year old in Lincolnshire currently complete a two year check with the health visiting team.
- If the Council cannot generate a reasonable return from assets, it should sell them and use the proceeds to defray costs. Additional investment in an asset is unlikely to be the answer given the Council's poor track record at managing assets without losing money. The common denominator the poor performance is ELDC.
- People would love an indoor swimming facility. Shop and business owners such as small shop on Quebec road, Mablethorpe should be encouraged to take care of the frontages and the areas surrounding them. The cigarette butts and rubbish must be a haven for rats. Money spent on these would be good for our community.

11. All respondents were given the opportunity to provide any ideas that they might have that could help the Council to reduce its expenditure or increase its income to support local services. Some ideas did not fall under the remit of the District Council but under the County Council and some were comments as opposed to ideas. There were a number of comments made about highly paid officers at the Council and a couple of comments about the Council spending £8.5m on the public sector hub project at Horncastle. A full list of ideas and comments are detailed below:

- Too many high earners in the Council not working hard enough for the money they receive
- The Council should not be spending £8.5 million pounds on a move to Horncastle. This money should have been directed into local services to improve infrastructure and to readdress the cutbacks to public services in order to improve the area.
- Amalgamate District Councils with County Council. This would produce significant savings in salaries for the current 7 District Council Senior Management teams and Chief Execs, and it would also remove 1 layer of councillors, saving money in expenses.
- Council 'bosses' to take a reduction on their salaries. Why keep stinging hard working families?
- I feel investment in coastal towns is significant. I believe that by using these areas to develop shopping (such as a centre like Springfields) the winter economy in these areas will improve. The deprivation in areas such as Mablethorpe is unacceptable in this day and age. The community needs investment and enhancements to their facilities.
- The reduction and subsequent increase can be made by not moving and investing in the current site.

- Introduce electric vehicles across the Council, look at how composting is carried out and advertise where residents could purchase compost ideally in paper sacks and not plastic.
- Make sure all green waste is composited and used on farms; the technology is already available. Continue to support markets such as Louth by making it a venue where people will stay, providing music and support businesses to provide fresco seating areas to eat and drink. Support those on lower incomes to switch to green energy. Reintroduce the Louth Art Trail and add a Heritage Trail to encourage increased tourism. Find ways to encourage Council run waste disposal areas instead of fly tipping. Look at ways at keeping more expenditure within the East Lindsey area by asking schools etc. spend as much as possible to support the 'Foundation' economy.
- Please make sure that road repairs are carried out to a good standard. An impression is given at times that it is done with initial price in mind and the quality and durability of the repair is in question.
- Allowing more homes to be built on edges of rural market towns in East Lindsey - therefore expanding population, Council Tax coffers and potentially increasing local business incomes. Have a "programme" for 2020/2021 for mending/re-instatement of roads within East Lindsey.
- Look at each section within ELDC, are they fit for purpose, are there too many managers. Does everyone have written procedures to follow? Is sickness being properly monitored? Are companies who provide services directly to ELDC offering flexible working arrangements for all their staff?
- Not give high pension contributions to your staff that is above average paid sector. Councils are public services so should be paid and benefits the same. Not invest in the caravan park scheme. Insignificant information is being provided on this. Review its own cost structure for expense and overheads utilise technology where possible to prevent addition costs of needing offices/building costs and unnecessary travel i.e. meetings etc. why not use dial in meeting technology etc. Not clear why higher investment is needed in rental housing in this area as suggested from area information report. I often see many buses with no one on the bus. The Council should revisit these services to establish supply and demand and look to implement a more dial service demand approach with slightly increased fees to support the aging population requirements
- Look at the productivity of teams on the ground. Review weekend working. Review car parking wardens - reduce collection costs. Sell land for property development. Use landscaping/gardening teams on commercial contracts. Reduce expenditure on coastal fringe projects - there is more to ELDC than the coast
- If you offered free collection of large items it would save money on cleaning up fly tipping
- The green waste and black domestic waste bins become soiled. I can put my domestic waste into a black bag, tie it and leave it in the bin. If I do not do this, in warmer months there are maggots. The green waste bin was once cleaned and disinfected every two weeks by a private individual, who stopped the service due to family reasons. I would pay for this to be done and I know my neighbours would. Would the Council consider this?

- Look at funding. Support residents to support themselves better, less long term costs by earlier health interventions. Don't move Council buildings to Horncastle, make do with what you have.
- Less highly paid senior management. Stop rewarding failure!
- Reduce office staff at Tedder Hall.
- See previous comments. Also, why can't we introduce a small extra charge on all visitors to our area as they benefit as much as residents from the service residents pay for. Specifically, add 5% to Hotel and Guest House bills, Meals in restaurants etc. This could be billed as visitors' community charge and used to improve the facilities for visitors.
- Can't believe the ludicrous short sighted vision of spending OUR money on transferring Manby base to Horncastle....strongly opposedPoor infra structure, access...majority of workforce specifically in Louth vicinity...why someone hasn't blown the cover on the management hierarchy there I do not understand....
- Provide for separate food waste collection. We have lived in various places over the last 30 years and this is the first one that has not had a food waste collection. 2. We need a more efficient street, drainage ditches (dykes) and drainage throughout Mablethorpe. The drains are blocked, the dykes are full of rubbish. If I came on holiday and stayed at Haven or Holivans I would be disgusted at the rubbish, balls and mess in the ditches. Also need to employ people to keep the paths to beach in the north end of Mablethorpe, the hedgerows and the dunes clean. They are full of cans, bottles, plastic waste and gunge. I could cry when I see the way this lovely place is being spoilt for residents, visitors and wildlife by this. If you took better care of the environment, visitors and residents would be more inclined to do the same.
- Divert funding from vanity projects to frontline service delivery.
- Consider returning the management of public toilets from Danflo back to the Council to benefit from the profits from the 20p charge which Danflo currently enjoy. Free parking in Skegness would enable visitors to spend more money in the town & may encourage day visitors to choose Skegness as their destination.
- Stop paying for hedges to be cut during the nesting season. This happens in Louth at the recreation ground and I have been informed it happens elsewhere. It's a stupid, potentially illegal thing to do and an utter waste of money.

12. All respondents were advised that whilst capital resources are limited, the Council is keen to invest what resources it does have available to improve the local economy. All respondents were asked if they believed that capital resources should be used to achieve this objective. There were numerous comments about the Council investing in businesses, local infrastructure and in coastal areas. A full list of comments are included below:

- What's the point you never take any comments or ideas on board
- The Council has huge reserve funds and should be looking to cut employee costs and wastage in order to improve resources.

- Invest in road networks and farms. Use the money to boost local businesses opposed to investing it in tourism and the like.
- As mentioned I believe investment could be focused on coastal areas. New ideas and modern ideas need to be introduced into these areas to ensure the tourist industry survives. Such as indoor shopping centre like Springfields, Meadowhall. This area also lacks theme parks. I feel an Alton towers type of tourist attraction on the coast would encourage holiday makers. The young people in the area should support the council with investment ideas. They are knowledgeable on trends and what people in the modern society are looking for!
- How can a new office block improve the economy?
- Invest in local commercial properties to offer cheaper and fairer rents to encourage growth from independent traders in our towns.
- A feasibility has already been commissioned and published for a Multi User Path from Louth to join the new Coastal path along the Louth Navigation. This is meant to be progressed to pre-implementation stage, a small amount of investment could make this project a reality.
- Energy improvement schemes, transport links.
- Ensure that buildings that are not required are disposed of. Have planned maintenance for others buildings. Invest in IT to enable staff to be able to carry out their jobs effectively
- Just get the basics right, policing, waste disposal etc. and provide better understanding of sustainability investment requirements
- Local economy best supported by making it easy for residents to access and use local facilities - that means available car parking and free for up to 2 hours. Need more investment in car park availability in large villages. Focus needs to be across the whole community - not just supporting the seemingly sacred cow coastal fringe
- Mablethorpe needs a boost money always seems to go to Skegness or Cleethorpes
- An improved highways service. Our roads are subject to pot holes and uneven surfaces. The area is expanding rapidly, the new industries on the Humber are generating more and heavier traffic. Village roads are becoming dangerous, especially along the A157. The A16 would definitely benefit from some stretches of dual carriage way, to cope with slow, heavy traffic from the Humber ports. I feel that a reinstated rail service from Louth to Grimsby would take a great deal of pressure from roads, but I understand that this would be very costly. In view of the HS2 scheme benefiting the Northeast and northwest, can any pressure be applied at government level to include the forsaken East?
- Support local businesses to take on more apprenticeships. Offer incentives to self-employed and small businesses starting up in the local area. Help eliminate zero hour contracts to help increase job security. Invest in education.
- Infrastructure improvements.
- Development of industrial estates and employment land for sale.

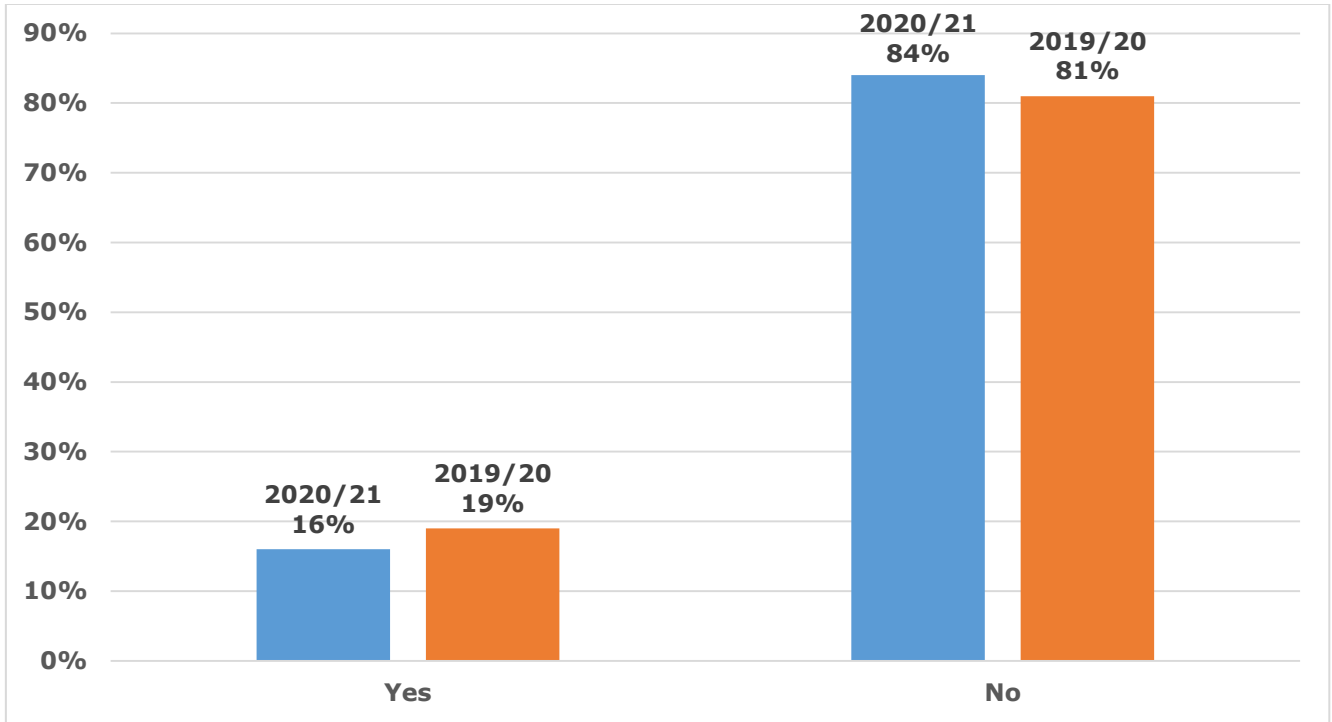
- If capital resources are to be used it should be with caution. Under no circumstances should capital resources be significantly depleted. Max usage should not exceed 25% of what is available
- Not by moving base...road networks....rural community support.
- If investment was made to stop fly tipping, rubbish accumulating in bins and around shops etc. more visitors would be inclined to use the businesses and buy locally. Encouraging businesses such as Tesco to communities such as Mablethorpe or Alford would boost local economies.
- Projects that have a direct and positive impact on the East Lindsey economy, such as proposals for Sutton on Sea and Skegness Foreshore.
- Any investment in infrastructure would improve the local economy. Roads, rail & bus services are very poor.
- I thought it was all being spent on your move to Horncastle?

13. All respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other comments; a full list of these are detailed below:

- There was not enough public consultation re the relocation of ELDC
- Statistics from the Lincolnshire Research Observatory show that East Lindsey has the highest index of deprivation in the county. I feel desperately sorry for the young people in our district from poor families. They have little opportunity to improve their life chances. After 10 years of austerity their prospects are bleak indeed.
- As a business owner who has to invest his own money I don't have a public purse to keep dipping into so therefore need to think more about what I invest in first.
- Louth is suffering from inappropriate and over-development in housing. East Lindsey should support a moratorium on any more housing until the other infrastructure and services have been invested into and caught up from the years of austerity.
- Be more commercial, use external consultants where you can. Are all the sections at ELDC cost effective? Deliver what you have a duty to deliver? Look at doing more with less
- I applaud the Council for communicating with residents in preparing this consultation. Thank you.
- ELDC should challenge themselves as to whether they are actually best places to deliver this (or anything else). Consider that ELDC have already presided over a huge decline in the local economy and have had no positive impact whatsoever to date.
- I think the development of the Fairfield industrial estate in Louth is a shining example of what local government can do to positively influence the local levels of business

Respondent Profile

- 14. 55% of all respondents were male, with the remaining 45% being female.
- 15. The comparison chart below shows that 16% of all respondents considered they had a disability, a slight decrease of 3% when compared with the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2019/20.



- 16. The comparison chart below shows that the most popular age groups to respond to the consultation were the '45 to 64' and 'Over 65' age groups, as was the case when the previous consultation exercise was undertaken in 2019/20.

