

**East Lindsey District Council
Budget 2024-25
Consultation Report
Published**



East Lindsey
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction to this consultation

1. This report details the responses received for the Budget 2024/25 consultation undertaken between 15th January 2024 and 2nd February 2024.
2. The exercise was performed to seek residents' views on the Council's Budget proposals for 2024/25.

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 in the e-Messenger. Paper copies of the questionnaire were available on request. Two people provided comments via email and these have been included in the results.
5. It should be noted that base data has been rounded to the nearest number (so may add up to between 99% and 101%).

Response Rate

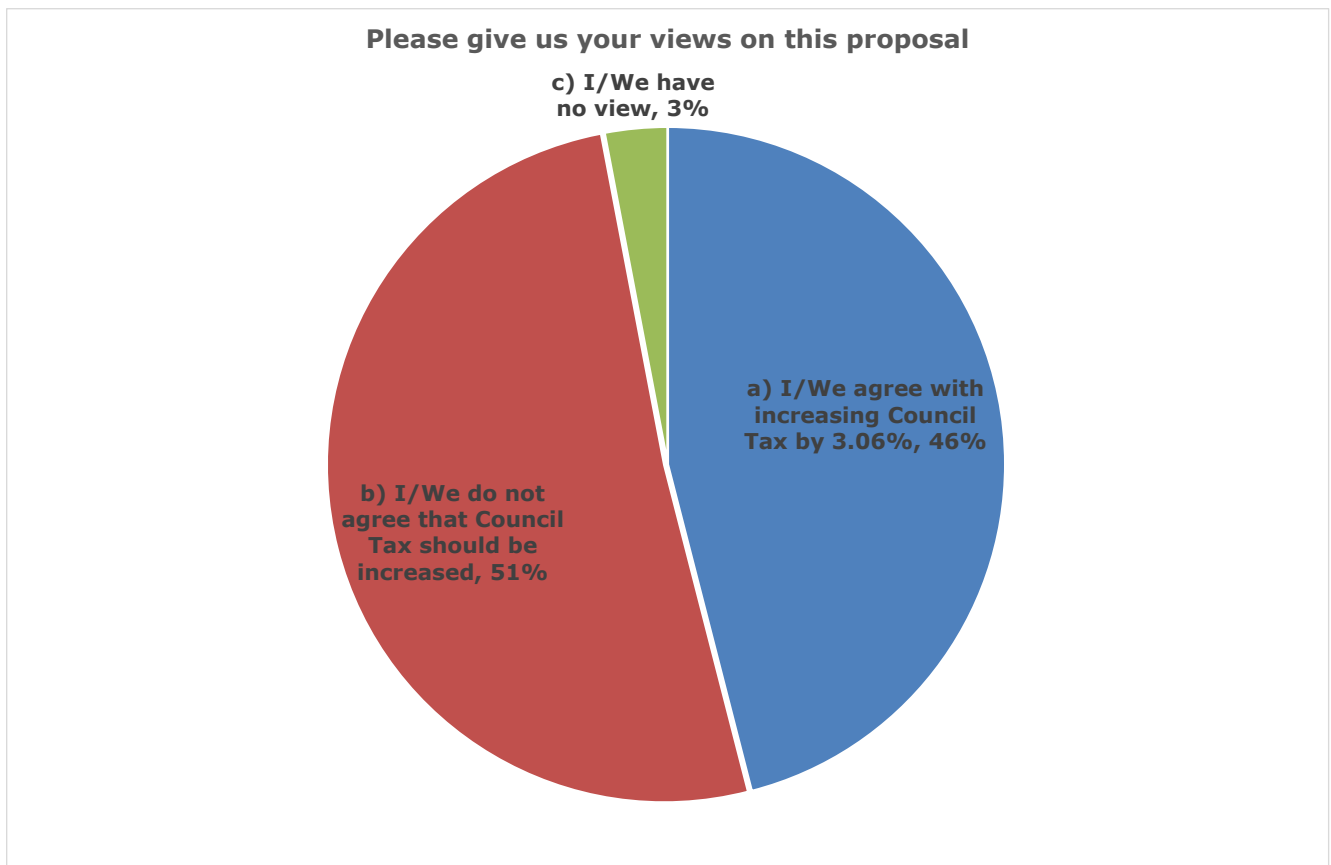
6. 37 electronic responses were received.

Results and Analysis

7. 96% of all respondents responding to the consultation responded as 'A resident', with the remaining 4% responding as 'Other'. The respondent that responded as 'Other' stated that they responded as 'someone who works within the East Lindsey boundary.'

Council Tax

8. All respondents were advised that the Government was allowing the Council to put up its Council Tax by a maximum of £5 next year (based on a Band D property). The Council was therefore proposing a £4.95 (3.06%) increase for 2024/25 - an extra 10p per week for a Band D property. A 3.06% increase was proposed for all Council Tax Bands. All respondents were asked their views on the proposal. The chart below shows that 46% of all respondents 'agreed with increasing Council Tax by a maximum of £5 next year (3.06%)', 51% 'did not agree', with the remaining 3% of all respondents 'stating that they had 'no view' about the Council Tax being increased by a maximum of £5 next year (3.06%)'.



Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

9. All respondents were asked if they had any comments to make in respect of the proposed Budget and associated papers. A mixture of comments were made: a couple of respondents felt that despite Council Tax rising annually, the services provided had reduced. Two respondents expressed their surprise at the amount of

reserves the Council held and suggested that they should be used to help those in the community that were struggling. A number of respondents stated that rising the Council Tax would have a financial impact on those residents that were already struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis. Furthermore, they could not afford to pay more money. One respondent said they had been unaware of how much money the Internal Drainage Board were given although flood prevention and mitigation were a priority. A further respondent felt that an increase of £5 was reasonable as emergency services would inevitably need additional money for modern equipment. They also commented that they did a great job with the resources they had. A full list of comments is included below:

- Just cut back to the minimum you have to legally provide, cut your councillor allowances to get them out of the trough and stop using residents as cash cows.
- Would like to see more information on how future inflationary pressures will be managed and which services are likely to become vulnerable if this methodology is continued.
- I find the contents of the news release most interesting. I was unaware that, of a projected total ELDC income for 2024/25 of £10,760,000, some £5,158,000 will be spent on Internal Drainage Board expenses, mainly the energy that is required to keep pumps pumping. Clearly, with rainfall likely to continue above the historic average, flood prevention and mitigation must be a priority. But I would question whether the source of energy needs to remain diesel power and (presumably mains) electricity. I am not an expert on land drainage, but I presume pumping stations have accompanying sluice gates. Could water-powered turbines be installed and employed when water is falling through them, and stored either in pumped water reservoirs or in static batteries, or as a last resort exported to the grid? Alternatively, or perhaps in addition, are the pumping station rooftops big enough to accommodate solar panels, or is there enough nearby land to accommodate a wind turbine? I realise that these investments would cost money, but they would pay for themselves in a few years, and might be appropriate for finance by loans.
- Note the increase in reserves. This is wrong. The people are hurting with services dwindling. Use that money.
- Council Tax always rising but services get reduced or cut.
- Please could you provide information on the cost to other bands of property, is it 3.95% for all bands?
- The Council sits on fairly large reserves which should be there to help the struggling community. Several Town Councils take some of the highest charges in the country whilst providing a very poor return
- No prices ever stay the same and I'm unsure of the demographic of those who are over 65 in the area but would assume it is high. If this is the case, more money is being taken out of the system than put in. £5 seems fair to me. The refuse, fire service, police sides will always want more money and the latest equipment. Some of these do a great job with what they have, there are a lot of areas in these that are flippant as well. I have seen how London councils bidding for contracts works and feel it can be open to

corruption/fraud. Which is not always easy to track, virtually impossible. But things can be put in place to help stop this flow.

- Why waste money on so-called decarbonisation and green initiatives when there are budgetary constraints? This is not where money should be going when there are other priorities. Environmental activism is not the job of the council, and these acts are being imposed on people without due consultation.
- Residents are already suffering the cost-of-living crisis and cannot afford more on Council Tax as it's hard to see what we get from the current rates
- As a working resident all I ask for is value for money and support for our local economy
- Please review the Rowntree foundation latest work on poverty and note that 1 in 3 children in East Lindsey now live in poverty. A rise in Council Tax will exacerbate that.
- We get nothing for Council Tax, why increase it
- Given the restriction of raise to the maximum of £5 this draft budget does the best it can.
- I don't see why you do not make the maximum increase allowed (£5). The 5p difference would not make much difference to the taxpayer but would help the council
- Budgets are already stretched at home, increases across Council, Parish, policing etc is normal every year yet we see services downgraded. Enough is enough, I'm taxed on my pension, my fuel, tv, alcohol.
- Failed politics, failed councils, failing services, incompetence, and serial mismanagement of funds. But our taxes are rising despite worse services

10. All respondents were advised that in view of the cost-of-living crisis and financial pressures that both businesses and individuals were experiencing, the Council was looking to find different and innovative ways of working. The Council asked all respondents what changes they thought the Council could implement in order to support that. A full list of suggestions are listed below:

- Abolish itself? Stop messing about with green/net zero nonsense. Let the market do everything else
- If by innovative the Council means competing with the private sector in non-public service areas than I disagree with this. I have concerns about the risk of trying to run as a private sector business without the relevant skills and knowledge. There are also increased risks in doing so but effectively using the public's money as collateral. I believe that the Council should focus its energies on public sector services.
- Councils have made huge errors in the past in going down routes of investing in projects that end up going wrong. Councils do not have the right to play the field with our money.
- Cut down the salaries, perks, and golden handshakes to officers.
- Lincs has a reputation for being stuck in the past. The tag line for Skegness should be "Skegness is embracing..." and we should lead the way in adopting innovative, green solutions for our services. Link up with Lincoln uni to find cheaper, greener solutions for the area
- Use more common sense over money spent

- Take into account people's heating and water costs when calculating whether they are eligible for council tax relief, council tax and energy and water costs take most of a single person's wages if they are on minimum wage leaving them with little to invest in the local economy, that would be a massive help to people, and you could save money on other initiatives. Stop wasting money on vanity projects. Stop building on flood plains, stop allowing building in areas where there are few jobs and infrastructure.
- Do not kill off tourism to the area by implementing second home council tax uplift. Those who rent out properties would not be required to pay extra anyway and therefore it would only penalise those who own a second home but do not rent it out. Studies have shown that implementing this does not increase income for a council nor free up housing. The government sold off council houses and are now looking to punish homeowners for their past failures to plan ahead.
- The council needs to prioritize spending our money locally using local trades and suppliers along with concerted efforts to get the fit to work off benefits and making a contribution to society.
- Get rid of management, reduce the amount of expenses at meetings, it was interesting to see refreshments at a full council meeting, not something Louth town has, they are frivolities, councillors who don't earn their expenses should not get paid, that would save money too.
- Reducing council tax
- I see little to no point in investing in further housing projects unless and only if additional community resources are also provided to accommodate the housing. By circumventing the fact that a large planning application with a school, shop, GP facilities was refused but by then agreeing to several smaller allocations of housing (eventually amounting to the same number of properties) in exactly the same place without the facilities is clearly wrong and not advantageous to the residents who live in the community. Residents / Constituents are not stupid.
- Finding better ways to stop wasting money where is it not needed. Too much money gets wasted, services get reduced or cut and not always for the better usually makes it worst.
- Reduce to 4-day week for office employees and close offices with strict energy saving.
- Make sure that you focus on key statutory services
- Loaded questionnaire
- To pay towards drainage of dykes etc. why not put a level of £10 on all holiday homes. They don't pay water rates.

11. The table below shows the investment areas all respondents supported. As can be seen from the table the majority of respondents did support the proposed investment areas as follows:

- 84% of all respondents supported 'Market Towns and rural areas'
- 70% of all respondents supported 'Driving and supporting Economic Growth'
- 81% of all respondents supported 'Supporting the vulnerable'

There were four investment areas that all respondents were not very supportive of. These are, as follows:

- 41% of all respondents supported 'Supporting healthy living'
- 35% of all respondents supported 'Decarbonisation and continued investment in green initiatives'
- 43% of all respondents supported 'Invest to save initiatives'
- Just under half (49) of all respondents supported 'the delivery of affordable housing'

Do you support the following investment areas?			
	Yes	No	Don't know
Market Towns and rural areas	84%	8%	8%
Driving and supporting Economic Growth	70%	19%	11%
Supporting the delivery of affordable housing	49%	38%	14%
Supporting the vulnerable	81%	14%	6%
Supporting healthy living	41%	41%	19%
Decarbonisation and continued investment in green initiatives	35%	46%	19%
Invest to save initiatives	43%	32%	24%

12. All respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other comments. One respondent felt that a lot of money was wasted on healthy living, yet another supported it. Two respondents commented that new housing especially affordable housing should not be a priority due to the demand on services not meeting their needs. A couple of respondents felt that market and coastal towns needed investing in and a further couple suggested reducing higher tier management at the Council. There was one comment about improving the bus services however this was not under the remit of the District Council's but under Lincolnshire County Council. A full list of comments are included below, including those received via email:
- It's hard to disagree with the statements as written and I would like to see how these are prioritised. I would also like to see coastal towns which are often more deprived included within the priorities. they invest to save depends on the individual investment context.
 - Above all, I support decarbonisation and continued investment in green initiatives. As a professional meteorologist for 40 years, having analysed and predicted weather worldwide, now retired from my last position as Met Office Chief Defence Forecaster, I understand atmospheric processes and the grave dangers of inaction in this respect.
 - What about coastal? Markets should be inclusive including Mablethorpe even though ELDC do not count Mablethorpe as a market town. Get rid of some of the executive positions. Coastal/ inland should be combined into one. Slime down the executives to one in the community's remit. Put more into looking after service for residents and stop pandering to businesses who very often take out of the area without investing back.

- A lot of money is wasted on things like supporting healthy living, this should be an individual responsibility not a burden on council taxpayers who follow a healthy regime.
- Reducing high management. Less unnecessary meetings
- New housing should not be a priority when current services cannot meet the needs of the current population. Brownfield sites should be used before any agricultural land is built on It appears that the budget for services is dropping from £249k to £39k, given the cost of running services is going up how will services be delivered on this much reduced budget
- Too much upper management on elevated salary who don't seem to provide what is needed for the community they're meant to serve
- As above, demographic of East Lindsey is over 65 and low income. Affordable housing should be of low priority as most own their houses and low income are the service and seasonal people who travel in or are already in the area. Green initiatives for such a council should be held to a minimum everyone is doing enough already. Market Towns need investment to bring seasonal holiday money to the areas so in the Winter they can just tick over. Healthy living is always worthwhile long term as long as it is used, keep people out of the hospital and doctors more. Vulnerable in our society can be preyed on with ease they should always be supported.
- Improved Bus Services
- ELDC needs to invest in the replacement/ purchase of sand removal equipment for the areas affected by substantial sand ingress with the notification that the Environment Agency are pulling out of this activity. This ingress has an effect not only on the residents of the areas affected as it reduces their ability to exercise, but also to Businesses as it affects their ability to trade, but also increases their maintenance costs. Also, to fauna and flora affecting availability of light and moisture.
- All I ask is that you do your best to support the working council taxpayers in our area and spend our money wisely on things that are needed to support regional growth and not vanity projects.
- Economic growth matched with carbon reduction and efficiency.
- None
- Worthless, loaded questionnaire