

**South Holland District Council
Budget 2025-26
Consultation Report
Published**



Introduction to this consultation

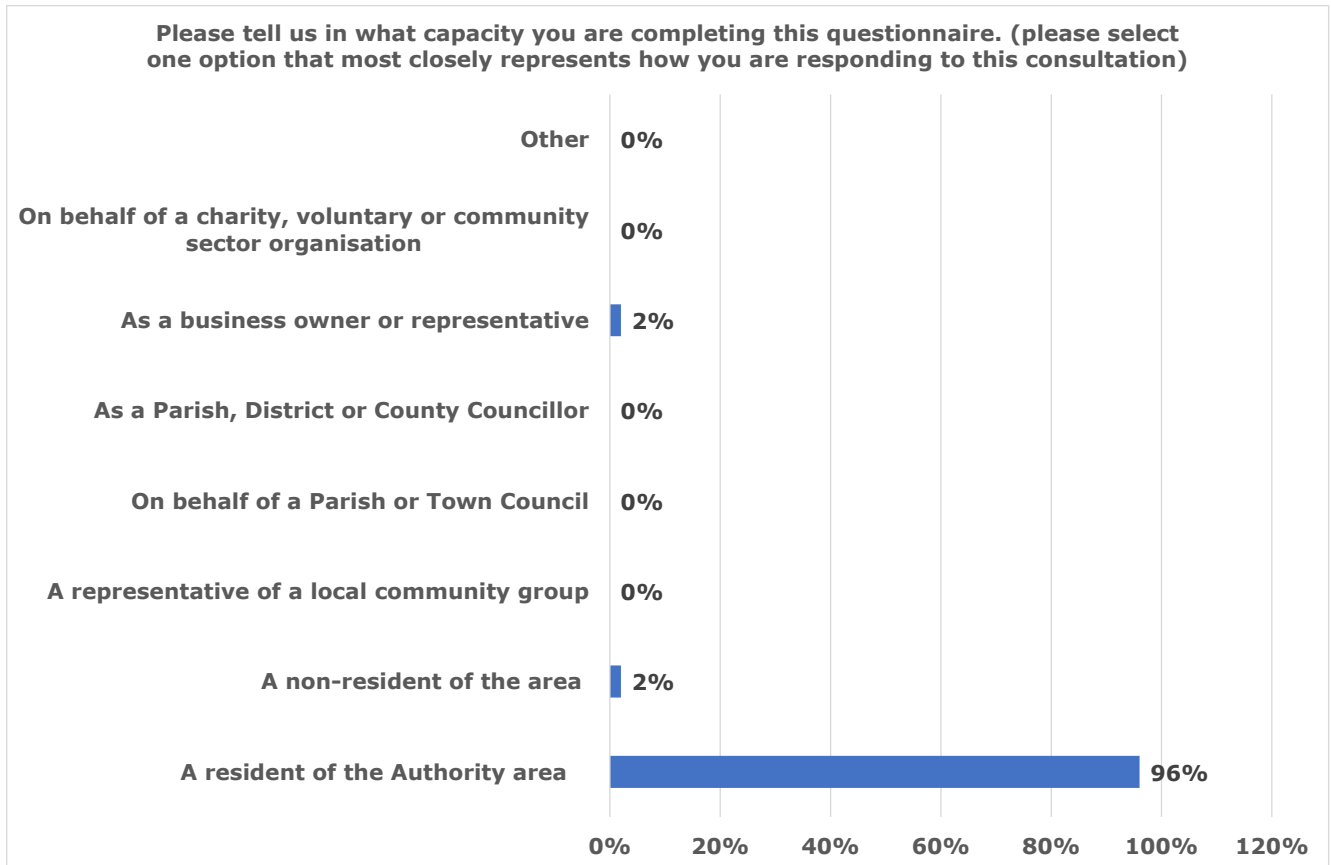
1. This report details the responses received for the Budget 2025/26 consultation undertaken between 5th December 2024 to 6th January 2025.
2. The exercise was performed to seek residents' views on the Council's Budget proposals for 2025/26.

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.
5. It should be noted that base data has been rounded to the nearest number (so may add up to between 99% and 101%).
6. No comparisons have been made to the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2023/24 as the questions in this survey were not the same.
7. Response Rate
8. 51 electronic responses were received; an increase of 1 response when compared with the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2023/24.

Results and Analysis

9. All respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. The chart below shows that nearly all respondents (96%) responded as 'A resident of the Authority area'. It also shows that the remaining 4% of all respondents had responded either 'As a business owner or representative' (2%) or 'A non-resident of the area' (2%).



10. All respondents were advised that to deliver on the agreed priorities, both financial and non-financial; and to help direct and manage resources effectively and efficiently, the Council set an annual delivery plan (a link was provided to the current version on the partnership's website). They were then advised that following a period of high inflation and financial pressures that both residents and businesses were experiencing, the Council was looking to find different and innovative ways of working. With that in mind, all respondents were given the opportunity to state what changes they thought the Council could implement in order to support this. A number of suggestions were made such as attracting businesses and shops to the town centre by reducing rates and rent, encouraging, and enhancing Spalding market, encouraging more groups to assist with cleaning up the district and being transparent and honest with residents. Two respondents suggested the Council should abandon the installation of EV charging points and let the private sector install them instead. Two other respondents suggested increasing the number of CCTV Cameras across the district including live monitoring and another suggested working with other South Lincolnshire Councils to share middle

management thus saving money. A couple of other suggestions made related to housing; these were charging landlords more for licencing multi occupancy properties and moving from six monthly boiler checks to yearly. A full list of suggestions are included below.

- Charge landlords more for licencing multi occupancy properties. Improve safety compliance, waste management, and deter rogue landlords. Use web income collection and service request more.
- Ensure the council is getting value for money as part of the SELCP. Review the refuse and recycling rounds again as they have not worked since the last review. Attracting businesses and shops to the town centre, the high street and market are depressing!
- Stop pension contributions at 23%+
- Be more open and transparent with constituents and actually listen to their views. Regarding monies paid to the Drainage Authority all local authorities should contribute fairly not just Lincolnshire in this way more money would be available for policing and other investment in the area.
- Encourage and enhance both the Tuesday and Saturday markets in SPALDING etc. Increase the number of cameras deployed across the district including live monitoring. Encourage more groups to help clean up the district including removal of graffiti.
- Abandon installation of EV charging facilities, the sale of EV's are declining and other fuel sources are coming to the fore, i.e. hydrogen. Abandon carbon capture, it does not work.
- Cut the opportunity to retire early on 3/4 salary. Stop working from home . Abolish flexi time
- Reduce the amount of waste on non-essential projects in and around the area. Reduce the number of taxi's, often with one child in them, provided to schools.
- Ask the government for funding reform and help
- Actually, collect money from those not paying their share rather than write it off
- Work with other south Lincolnshire councils to share middle management, thus saving money. Encourage business to the town centre by lowering rents/rates. Transparency and honesty by the council.
- Stop wasting money on vanity projects like the bypass (road to nowhere.).
- Look to the town and how it can be improved, think long term and not immediate business rate income.
- Getting a better return on all monies paid to third parties in making sure that all obligations are met fully.
- There are a number of initiatives in the document, however they have been talked about for some time. Progress reports are needed to understand how these are being progressed. How many of these are carried forward from last year?
- Let the private sector implement EV charging points. Give up on the room booking, why is this even being listed? Drop the Electric Renewables for the Fleet replacement program, not practical in Lincolnshire at the moment given the lack of range and EV points. Get a centralised IT co-ordinator across the

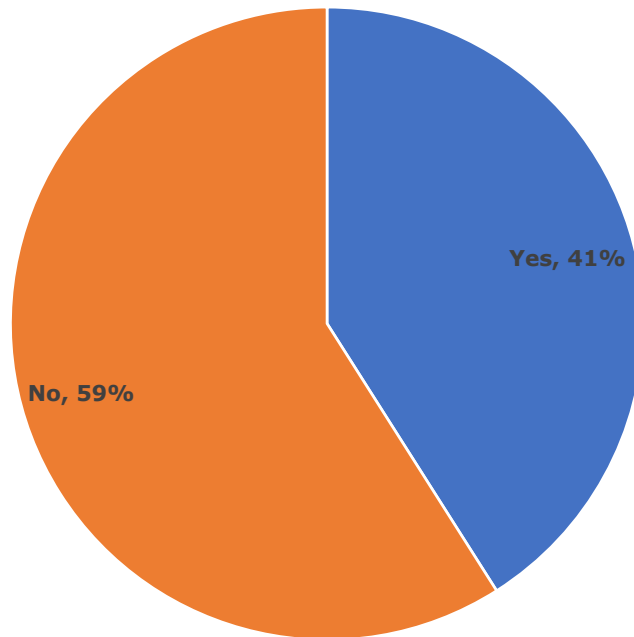
Councils, too much overlap seems to be occurring. Wouldn't the Trusted Volunteer scheme be better organised by LCC, avoid duplication of efforts.

- Can we have more space for our reply? One line isn't enough, makes it look like you don't want in-depth feedback from the residents.
- Have the drainage boards been subject to scrutiny in the same way in which councils have to explain expenditure? What economies and efficiency savings are they attempting to make?
- Remove the distribution of black and recycled bins. No longer offer council tenants a six-monthly boiler service (move to yearly)
- Lower Council Tax
- Deploy more CCTV systems, further assist local groups who litter pick, reduce / deter graffiti in our towns and villages, engage more with LCC to report and repair potholes in our roads etc.
- Waste bins for rubbish

11. All respondents were informed that at times of high river and canal levels, pumping stations played a vital role in reducing the impact of flooding to homes, businesses, and farmland. Furthermore, these stations and some waterways were managed by public bodies called Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs). Like households and businesses, the IDBs have seen their costs and utility bills increase significantly, with these expecting to rise more next year. This would mean that even less money may be available for services through the money collected from Council Tax.

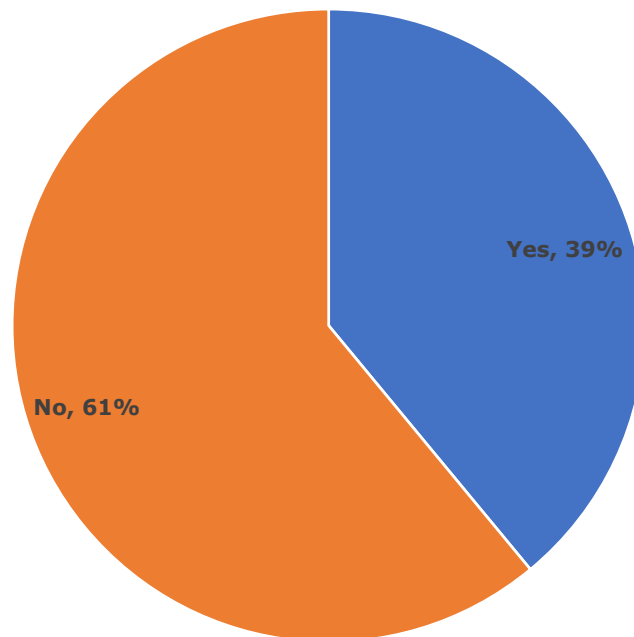
All respondents were asked if they were aware that for the equivalent of every £10 of the Council Tax charged to properties, South Holland District Council only received £0.94p and of that the equivalent of £0.52p was passed on to the Internal Drainage Boards? The pie chart below shows that 41% of all respondents were aware of how much was passed on to the Internal Drainage Boards, with the remaining 59% stating that they were not aware.

Are you aware that for the equivalent of every £10 of the Council Tax charged to properties, South Holland District Council only receives £0.94p and of that the equivalent of £0.52p is passed on to the Internal Drainage Boards?



12. The pie chart below shows that 39% of all respondents were aware that the annual increase levied by Internal Drainage Boards had taken the majority of or been in excess of the additional amount collected from the Council Tax increase, with the remaining 61% stating that they were not aware.

Are you aware that the annual increase levied by Internal Drainage Boards has taken the majority of or been in excess of the additional amount collected from the Council Tax increase?

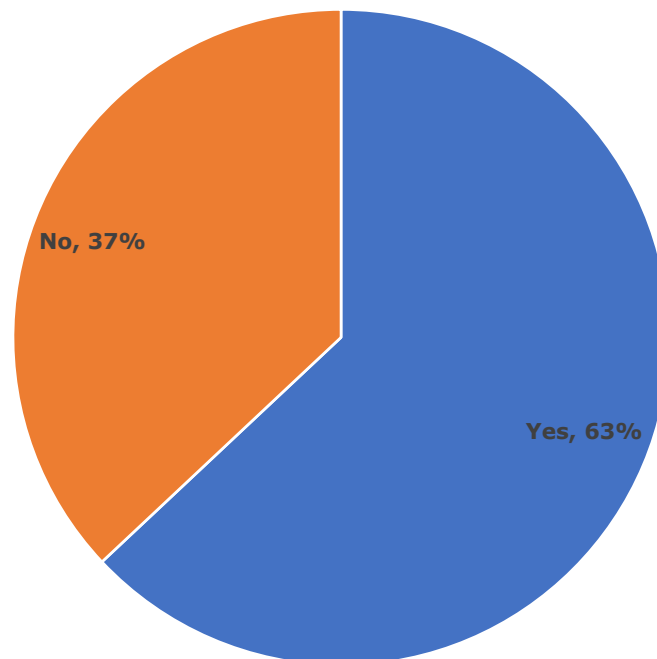


13. All respondents were advised that the Council Tax Support Scheme provided financial assistance through a reduction in Council Tax bills for households on a low income or receiving certain benefits. South Holland's scheme for working-age applicants was means-tested, with special consideration for vulnerable groups, including families with children, individuals with disabilities, and those with caring responsibilities. Additionally, the scheme protected War Disablement Pensioners, War Widows, War Widowers and Care Leavers.

They were also advised that since 2013, the Council had offered a support scheme that covered up to 75% of Council Tax for working-age households on low incomes. Currently, the scheme supported around 4,950 households at a cost of approximately £4.9 million annually. A link to the Council Tax Support Scheme web page was provided in case respondents needed more information.

All respondents were then asked if they were aware that the Council directly funded the additional support to its vulnerable residents? The pie chart below shows that 63% of all respondents were aware; with the remaining 37% stating that they were not aware that the Council directly funded the additional support to its vulnerable residents.

Are you aware that the Council directly funds this additional support to its vulnerable residents?



14. All respondents were given the opportunity to make any comments. Numerous comments were made; some respondents felt that the consultation had not been promoted enough as they wouldn't have known about it if it wasn't for others passing on the link. One respondent considered that there would be more individuals getting caught in the poverty trap and another thought that the Council should review the amount directly funded to certain residents as financial need should not be based on the 'worthiness' of a person. A full list of comments are included below.
- Universal Credit should be decreasing not increasing. Enough is enough. Too many abuse the system.
 - Reduce the number of Councillors and any budgets they have.
 - More and more individuals will ultimately get caught into the poverty trap so even less money will be available for use within the community. So clearly things need to change. With the present system local authorities will end up bankrupt so action is needed now!
 - Encourage the internal drainage boards to become more efficient with their spending including appointing as many councillors as possible to their governing bodies.
 - Why should immigrants and spongers get reduced or free Council Tax
 - Please liaise with utility companies who want to dig up the roads to ensure the same piece of road is not dug up multiple times. Our newly resurfaced road was dug up only a short time after it was finished.

- How much is this subsidised by charging housebuilders full Council Tax on homes awaiting sale?
- Far too much money is wasted on over provision and on projects that are non-essential. Sadly, there seems to be little trust in the Council to run our services efficiently. The town centre is dead, and I know of many residents who prefer to avoid it.
- If it wasn't for picking up a copy of the voice, I wouldn't have known anything about this survey nor would my friends who I have passed the link too. One link from your own site came up as error unknown site. This survey like all other SHDC surveys need better publicity unknown.
- I truly feel that if the suggestions, concerns, and ideas of the general public were truly listened too, more money could be saved, and the right funding would be going to the right places . It's so frustrating . Let the people have a voice. Let's make Spalding a town for the people.
- Die more due diligence on applicants for support. Look down Queens Road and Royce Road at the amount of Christmas lights/ Halloween decorations outside of houses. Employed persons can't afford it!
- This consultation is not widely publicised and was difficult to find. The link on the web page said the resource couldn't be found. I think the Council is out of touch with the residents. Funding needs to be focussed on those things that will benefit the residents. Get the weekly market regenerated. Ensure that public transport is fit for purpose (e.g. the IT1 and IT2 run in both directions as they used to. Ensure your staff are in the office and available to take calls. Working from home should no longer be an option. Rough sleeping should not be happening in this day and age - sort it out. This survey is not comprehensive enough.
- Why, in 2025, is the SHDC seeking approval for an Environment Policy? Give up on the relief road, let it become a monument to inefficient Government.
- Again, not enough space to provide feedback. How can we comment on all three councils and then our own council in such a small space? Oh, and the links you published for the survey on the SHDC website are broken. The first link on the Facebook media platform is broken. You need to invest in co-ordinated and functioning IT systems.
- Lincolnshire County Council have consistently received underfunding from government for many years, and until this is addressed properly, S.H.D.C. will be struggling financially.
- Review it!! War widows (for e.g.) aren't necessarily in a worse financial situation than many other people paying Council Tax. This should be based on financial need - not 'worthiness' of a person
- Continue to support our vulnerable residents whenever possible.