Leicestershire County Council

Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-2029

Public consultation results

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Key findings

In total, 384 responses were received to the consultation survey, of which 69% were residents of Leicestershire and 57% were employees of Leicestershire County Council (LCC) (multiple-choice question).

Council Tax

Excluding any adult social care precept, just under a fifth of respondents (19%) said they would be prepared to pay a core Council Tax increase of above 3% to fund County Council services and just over a quarter (27%) said they would be prepared to pay an increase of 3%. Around a sixth (17%) said they would be prepared to pay an increase of 2% and around another sixth (15%) would be prepared to pay an increase of 1%. About a tenth (11%) thought Council Tax should not be increased and another tenth (10%) thought it should be reduced.

Over a quarter of respondents said they would be prepared to pay an increase of 2% (28%) or 1% (29%) to specifically fund adult social care in Leicestershire (the adult social care precept), whilst a similar proportion (30%) favoured no additional increase. A smaller proportion (13%) indicated that they would be prepared to pay above 2% for a social care precept.

By combining the responses to the questions about core Council Tax and the adult social care precept, over a quarter (30%) said they would be prepared to pay a 5% increase or above in overall Council Tax (including the adult social care precept). A tenth of respondents (10%) said they would not be prepared to pay any increase in any Council Tax and a similar proportion (9%) said they thought all Council Tax should be reduced.

Respondents were asked what impact an overall 5% increase in Council Tax (the proposed total of core Council Tax and adult social care precept) would have on their household finances. A slightly higher proportion of respondents said this would have a moderate impact (30%) on their household finances compared with the proportion who said this would have significant or slight impact (27% and 29%, respectively). A smaller proportion (15%) said this would have no impact.

When asked to provide views regarding the impact of an overall 5% increase in Council Tax on household finances, many comments reflected concerns about the cost of living and the impact of such an increase, including references to specific groups being affected. Other comments highlighted concerns regarding whether value for money was being provided, with some reference to specific areas of spend such as staffing. Although many respondents raised concerns or highlighted issues, a number of respondents showed support for an increase and others adopted a neutral tone, which broadly acknowledged that the rise was required and that personal impact would be manageable.

Growth and Savings

When respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with how the growth and savings had been allocated across services, 46% agreed and 18% disagreed (35% neither agreed nor disagreed).

Open Comments

Comments regarding savings included those who disagreed or raised concerns about specific savings proposals, including social care and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), whilst others questioned spending in these areas. Flood prevention and highways were highlighted as areas for attention; alongside cultural services. These were sometimes referenced as being reduced to pay for other services. A number of respondents were concerned about inefficiencies at the council across various areas including staffing. A few respondents expressed support for and confidence in the process, whilst a few others noted that they did not have sufficient knowledge or detail to comment.

Respondents were asked if there were any other areas where the council could make further savings. The most common themes were efficiency and value for money, followed by council staffing. Suggestions included those related to internal processes, human resources, office space and the use of consultants. Some suggestions referenced specific service areas including social care, SEND and Environment and Transport. Other themes noted amongst suggestions were the use of LCC property, reducing non-statutory services and introducing charges or further income generation activities. Several comments also mentioned devolution and unitary councils in the context of savings.

When asked to comment on the areas identified for growth or capital investment, a significant number of comments had a negative or critical tone. These included concerns indicating that there should be more investment in specific areas such as environment and flood prevention, highways maintenance and economic growth. A slightly smaller amount of comments were neutral and made suggestions whilst a smaller number were supportive. The use of existing buildings and in-house services were some specific areas where efficiencies were suggested. Expenditure on vulnerable groups, particularly SEND, attracted several comments, including concern over expenditure and suggestions for further efficiencies. Although some queried specific departmental allocations, a number of comments expressed general support for the areas identified for growth or capital investment, with some mention of the fairer funding campaign.

Respondents were asked to provide any further comments or suggestions about the council's budget proposals and the response was mixed with similar numbers making comments that were supportive or neutral and slightly more with a negative tone. The LCC government funding allocation, and associated lobbying, was the subject of several comments, including those who were supportive of further lobbying and others who were more critical or sceptical. Many comments provided suggestions for further savings in specific areas such as staffing, or highlighted other priorities, for example housing and support for vulnerable groups.

Several comments expressed scepticism or were critical of the consultation process, whilst others reflected an air of resignation about the proposals.

Funding Reform

When asked about funding reform, the majority of respondents (93%) agreed that the council should continue lobbying Government to review the way funding is distributed between councils.

Background

Councils across the country are grappling with extremely challenging financial pressures. A firm grip on our budget means we're not at a crisis point but rapidly rising demand for services, plus inflation, is set to increase costs by £216m by 2029. This compares to expected extra income and savings of £120m over the same period.

Innovative initiatives and a reduced back office are driving down costs by £33m. This, combined with a Council Tax rise, means the books will balance next year but relentless pressure on services could create a £96m budget gap by 2029.

Key budget pressures include:

- Children's social care – a 60% rise in demand and a 33% increase in prices for placements have pushed up costs by £15m over the last two years
- Special educational needs and disability support - with 90% more children having education, health and care plans compared to five years ago
- Construction price rises – costs for infrastructure schemes have been driven up significantly with inflation

We're one of the highest performing county councils and have saved £276m since 2010, meaning we're very lean.

Our yearly net budget totals £616m (excluding schools). The county council is one of the biggest organisations in Leicestershire, spending around £10m every week on crucial services for our residents.

District councils, police, fire and parish and town councils all make up portions of residents' total Council Tax bills.

The consultation exercise on the budget plan provided an opportunity for residents, staff, businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders to have their views heard and taken into account when the budget plan is considered and finalised by the County Council.

Methodology

Following the publication of the detailed budget proposals, a consultation summary and survey form were made available on the County Council's website for the duration of the consultation period of 18th December 2024 to 19th January 2025.

This provided the opportunity for residents and other stakeholders to have their say. Paper copies of the survey and copies in alternative formats were available on request.

Communication

A range of communications activity was used throughout the consultation period to encourage people to have their say, including: newsletters, online content, social media (X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Next Door), intranet content, online briefings, media releases and direct emails to residents, staff, parish councils, businesses and other stakeholders. This generated engagement across social media platforms and wide-ranging press coverage in print, online and broadcast media, which ultimately helped to generate 384 responses.

Questions

The survey asked respondents about Council Tax levels (including the Government's proposed adult social care precept) and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with how the budget had been allocated across services. It also asked a number of open-ended questions about the budget and the way the council works. These are listed below:

- What impact, if any, would an overall 5% increase in Council Tax have on your household finances? Why do you say this?
- Are there any savings you disagree with?
- Are there any areas where you think we could make further savings?
- Do you have any comments about the areas identified for growth or capital investment?
- Do you have any other comments about our draft budget proposals?

For each question, all comments were read by analysts, and a summary of key themes for each open-ended question was produced. All comments have been passed on to the council's Finance Department, in full, for further consideration.

A range of demographic questions were also asked, namely: gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, postcode, whether the respondents are parents or carers of a young person aged 17 or under, or a carer of a person aged 18 or over. See Appendix 1 for the full questionnaire.

Analysis

Graphs and tables have been used to assist explanation and analysis. Question results have been reported based on those who provided a valid response, i.e. taking out the "don't know" responses and no replies where relevant.

The responses of different demographic groups were analysed and statistically significant differences are highlighted within the relevant sections of this report. See Appendix 3 for the full statistical analysis.

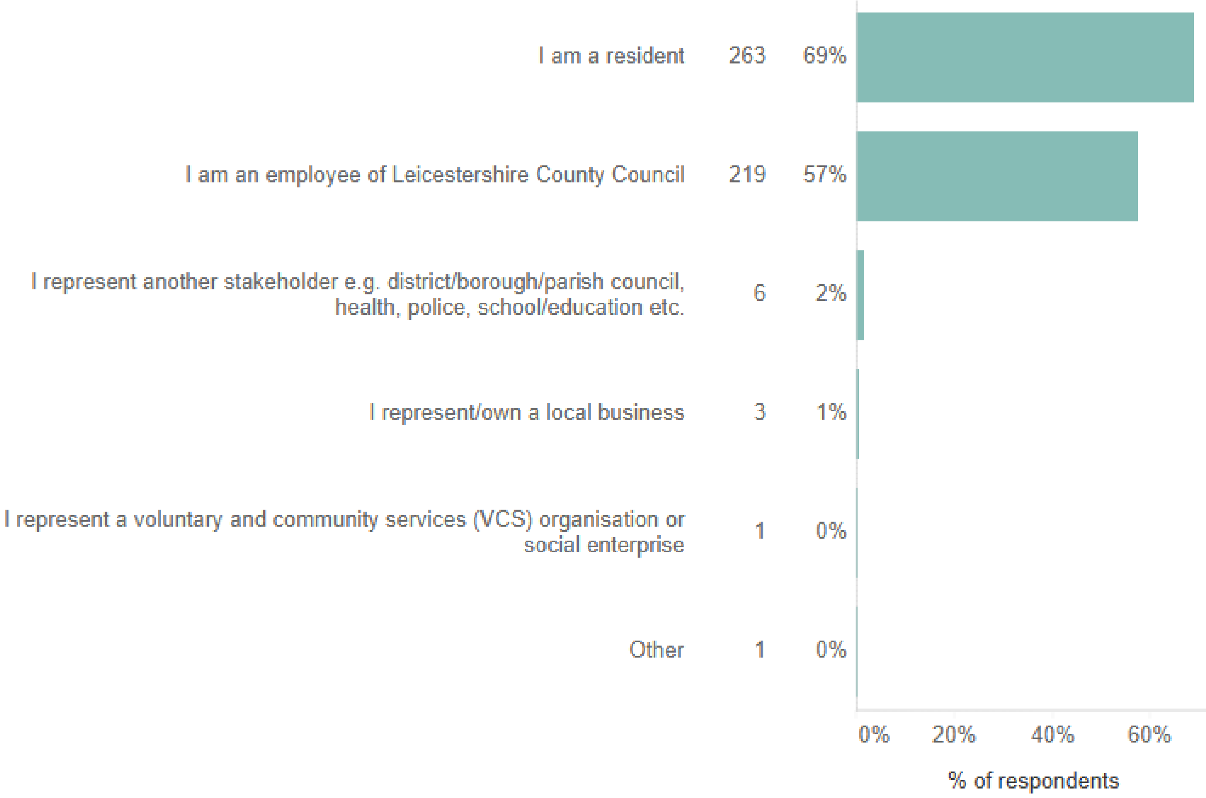
Results

In total, 384 responses to the survey were received. A full respondent profile can be found in Appendix 2.

Question 1 - Role of Respondent

Respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the survey. Chart 1 shows that 69% of people who completed the survey were responding as residents and 57% were employees of Leicestershire County Council (LCC). This question was multiple choice.

Chart 1 - Role of Respondent (multiple response)

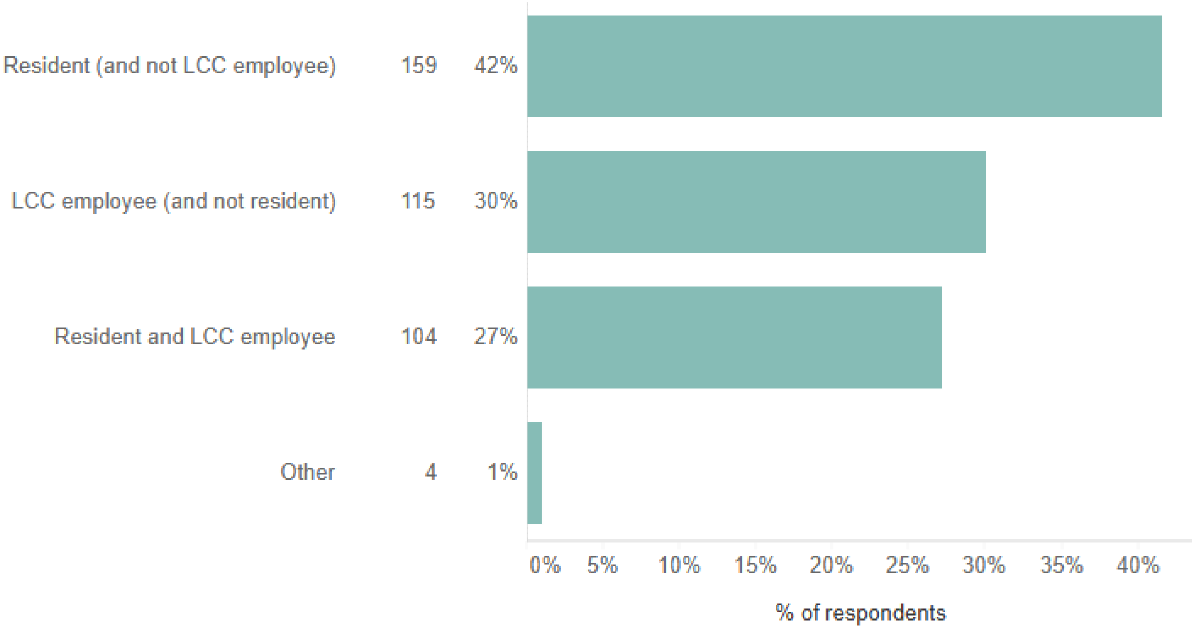


Base = 382

Chart 2 shows 42% were residents and not employees of LCC, 30% were LCC employees and not residents, and 27% were both.

Throughout the analysis that follows, a comparison has been made between the views of residents who are not LCC employees (159 respondents) and the views from LCC employees (219 respondents).

Chart 2 - Role of Respondent (single response)



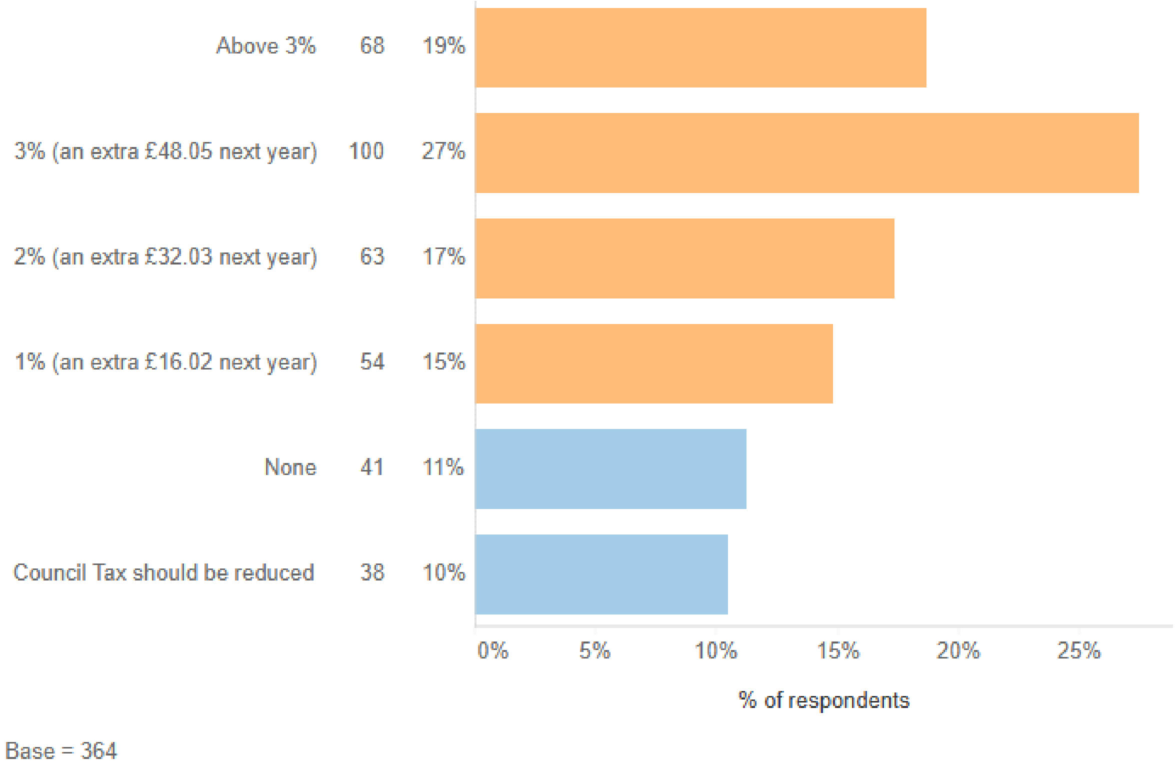
Base = 382

Question 4 - Core Council Tax increase (excluding any adult social care precept)

Respondents were asked what core Council Tax increase they would be prepared to pay to fund County Council services, excluding any adult social care precept.

Chart 3 shows just under a fifth of respondents (19%) were prepared to pay an increase of above 3% and just over a quarter (27%) were prepared to pay an increase of 3% (the current proposal). Around a sixth (17%) said they would be prepared to pay an increase of 2% and around another sixth (15%) would be prepared to pay an increase of 1%. About a tenth thought Council Tax should not be increased (11%) or that it should be reduced (10%)

Chart 3 - Core Council Tax increase (excluding any adult social care precept)



Statistical analysis shows that respondents aged 45 to 54 (28%) were significantly more likely and respondents aged under 35 (6%) were significantly less likely to be prepared to pay a core Council Tax increase of above 3% when compared to the average (19%). Respondents who identified with a White ethnic group (21%) were also significantly more likely to be prepared to pay this amount compared to the average (19%).

Those who identified with a White ethnic group (30%) or those who said they lived in Blaby (41%) were significantly more likely to be in favour of a core Council Tax increase of 3% when compared to the average (27%), whereas Charnwood residents (18%) or those identifying with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (9%) were significantly less likely to be prepared to pay this increase.

Results indicate that a 2% increase was favoured by a significantly higher proportion of female respondents (21%) compared to the average (17%).

Respondents who said they were a carer of a person aged over 17 (26%) were significantly more likely to favour an increase of 1%, compared to the average (15%).

Residents (17%) were significantly more likely to favour no increase in core Council Tax compared to the average (11%). Those who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (25%), those with a long-standing disability, illness or infirmity (16%) or those who identified with a non-Christian religion (21%) were also significantly more likely to favour no increase in core Council Tax compared to the average (11%).

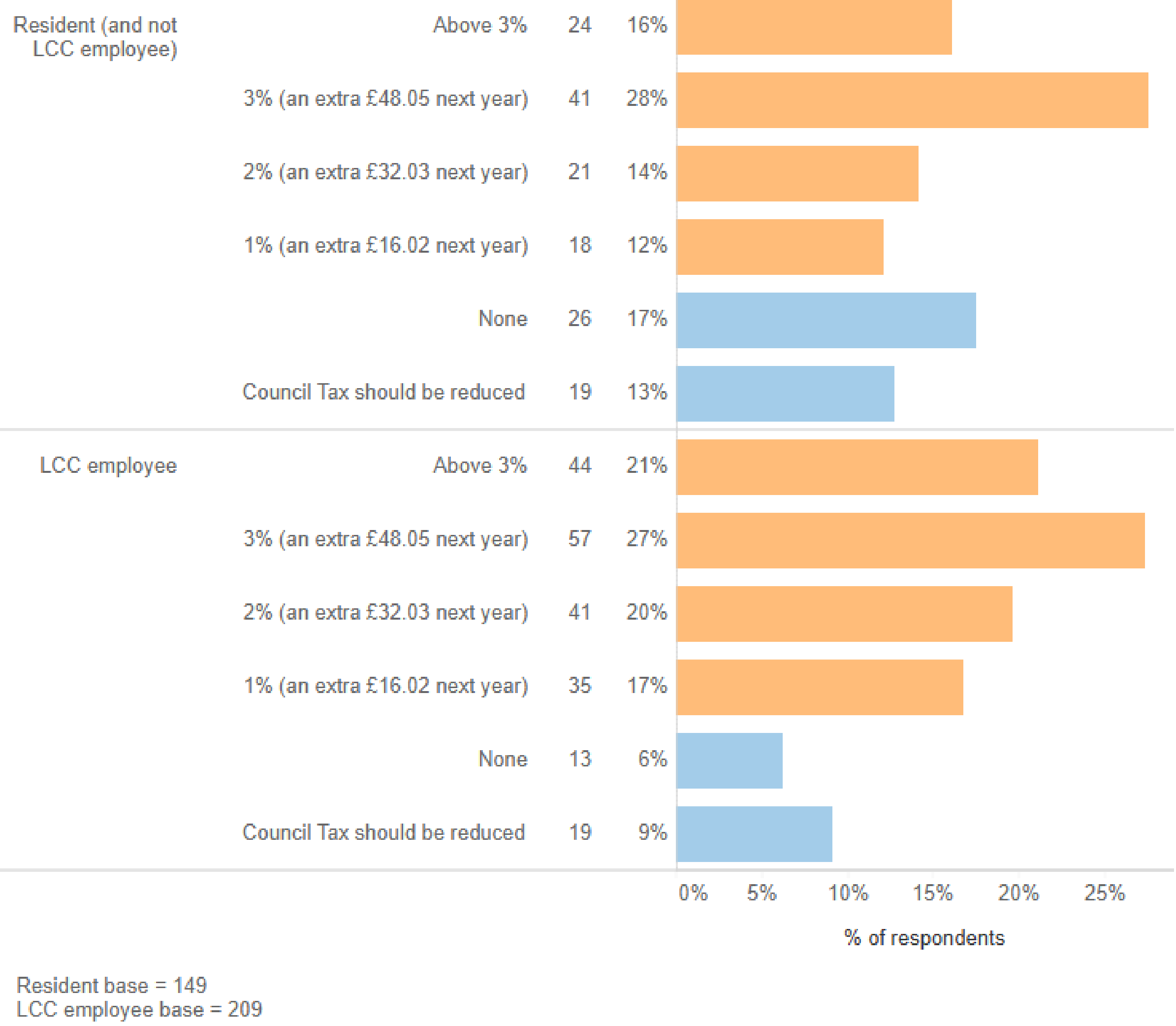
Respondents aged 35-44 (18%), those who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (28%) or those that identified with a non-Christian religion (24%) were significantly more likely to say they wanted Council Tax to be reduced, when compared to the average (10%).

Chart 4 shows a comparison between residents and LCC employees. A higher proportion of LCC employees said they were prepared to pay an increase of above 3% in core Council Tax (21%) when compared to residents (16%). A similar pattern is also seen in the percentage prepared to pay 2% (20% LCC employees, 14% residents).

A similar proportion of residents and LCC employees said they would be prepared to pay a 3% increase in core Council Tax (28% and 27%, respectively).

A larger percentage of residents said they thought core Council Tax should not be increased (17%) compared to LCC employees (6%). A larger percentage of residents (13%) also said that core Council Tax should be reduced when compared to LCC employees (9%).

Chart 4 - Core Council Tax increase (excluding any adult social care precept) - by role



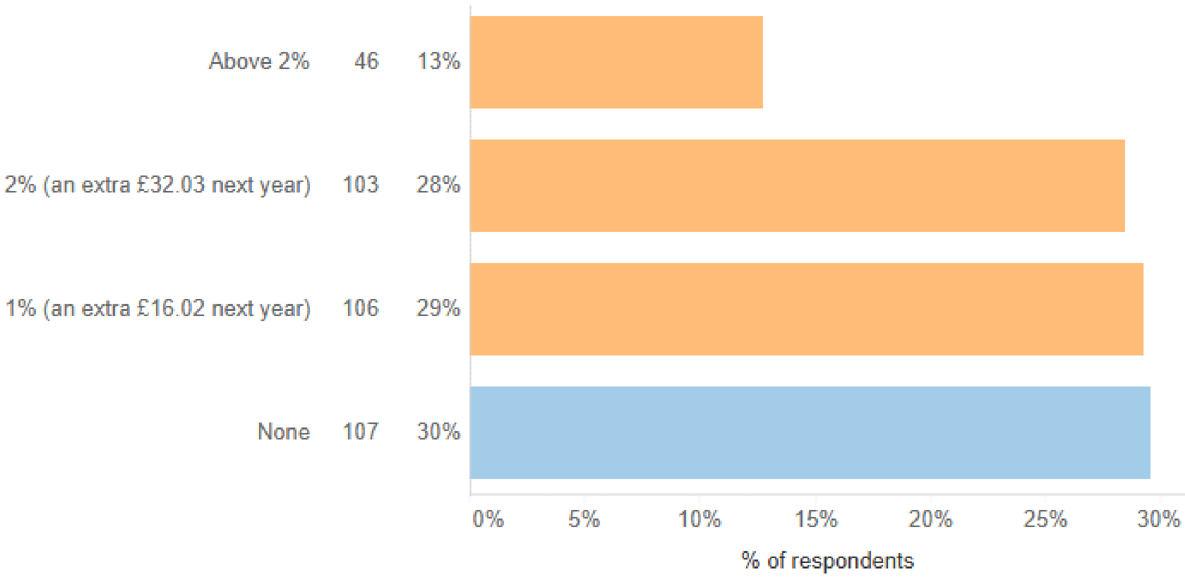
Question 5 - Additional adult social care precept

Respondents were asked whether they would be prepared to pay an additional increase in Council Tax as a separate social care precept to be used exclusively for the funding of adult social care in Leicestershire.

Chart 5 shows that the majority (70%) would be prepared to pay an additional increase, but just under a third of respondents (30%) did not want any additional increase in Council Tax for this purpose.

Overall, 13% said they would be prepared to pay above 2%, 28% said they would be prepared to pay 2% (the current proposal) and 29% said they would be prepared to pay 1%.

Chart 5 - Council Tax increase for the adult social care precept



Base = 362

Statistical analysis showed that male respondents (18%) were significantly more likely to be prepared to pay an adult social care precept increase of above 2%, when compared to the average (13%).

Female respondents (33%) or respondents that identified with a White ethnic group (32%) were significantly more likely to be prepared to pay an increase of 2%, than the average (28%). Respondents who were parents/carers of a child or young person aged 17 or under (22%) or those who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (13%) were significantly less likely to support an increase of 2% when compared to the average (28%).

When compared to the average (29%), female respondents (35%) or those who said they were a carer of a person aged 18 or over (40%) were significantly more likely to be prepared to pay an adult social care precept increase of 1%.

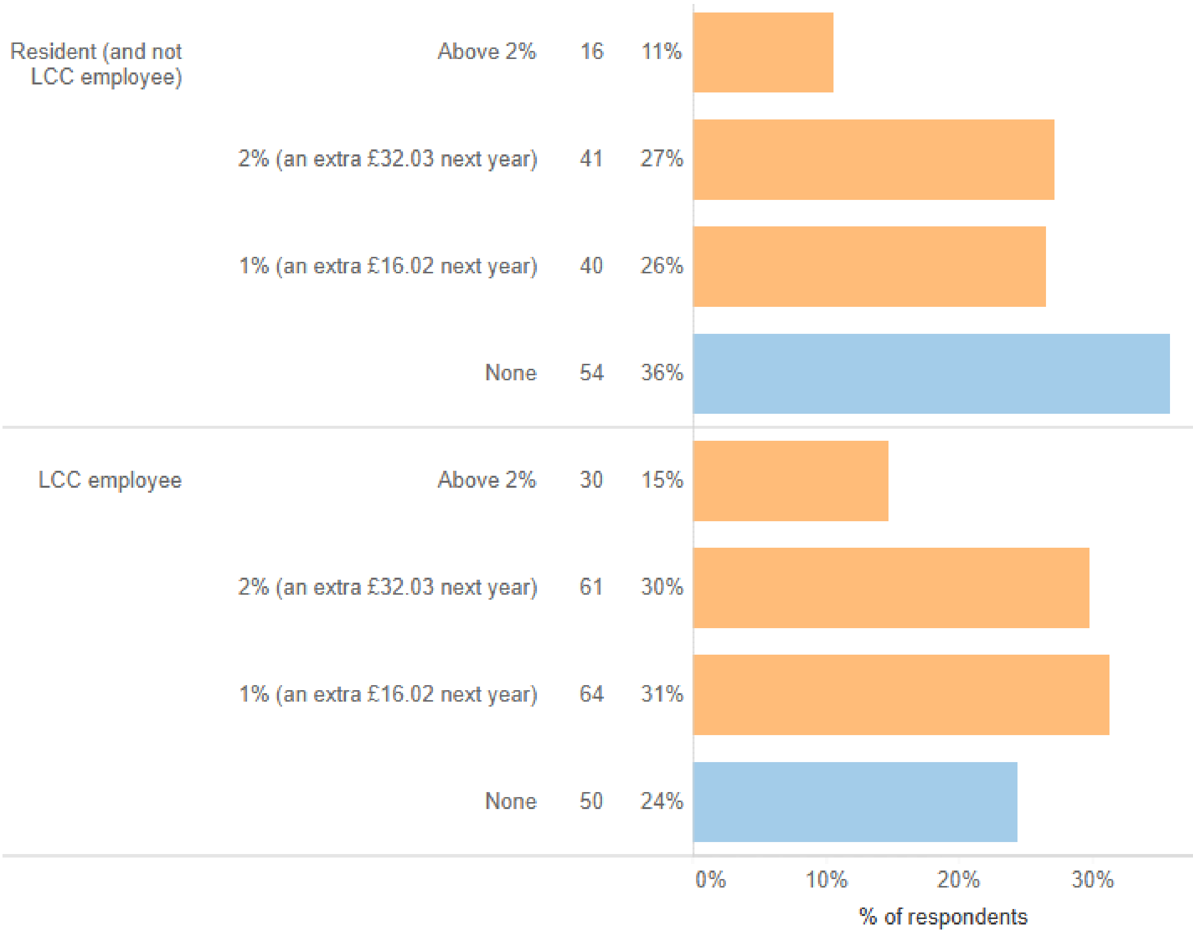
Residents (36%) were significantly more likely and LCC employees (24%) were significantly less likely to say they did not want an increase in Council Tax for the adult social care precept when compared to the average (30%). Female respondents (21%) were significantly less likely and male respondents (42%) were significantly more likely to say that they did not want an increase. Respondents aged 35-44 (40%), those who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) ethnic group (48%) or respondents who identified as LGB+ (43%) were also significantly more likely than the average (30%) to say they did not want this increase.

Chart 6 shows a comparison between residents and LCC employees. A higher proportion of LCC employees (15%) said they would be prepared to pay an increase of above 2% in Council Tax for the adult social care precept, compared to residents (11%).

Under a third of LCC employees said they would be prepared to pay a 2% increase (30%) or a 1% increase (31%) compared to residents (27% and 26%, respectively).

A notably larger proportion of residents said they would not be prepared to pay any increase in Council Tax for the adult social care precept (36%) compared to LCC employees (24%).

Chart 6 - Council Tax increase for the adult social care precept - by role



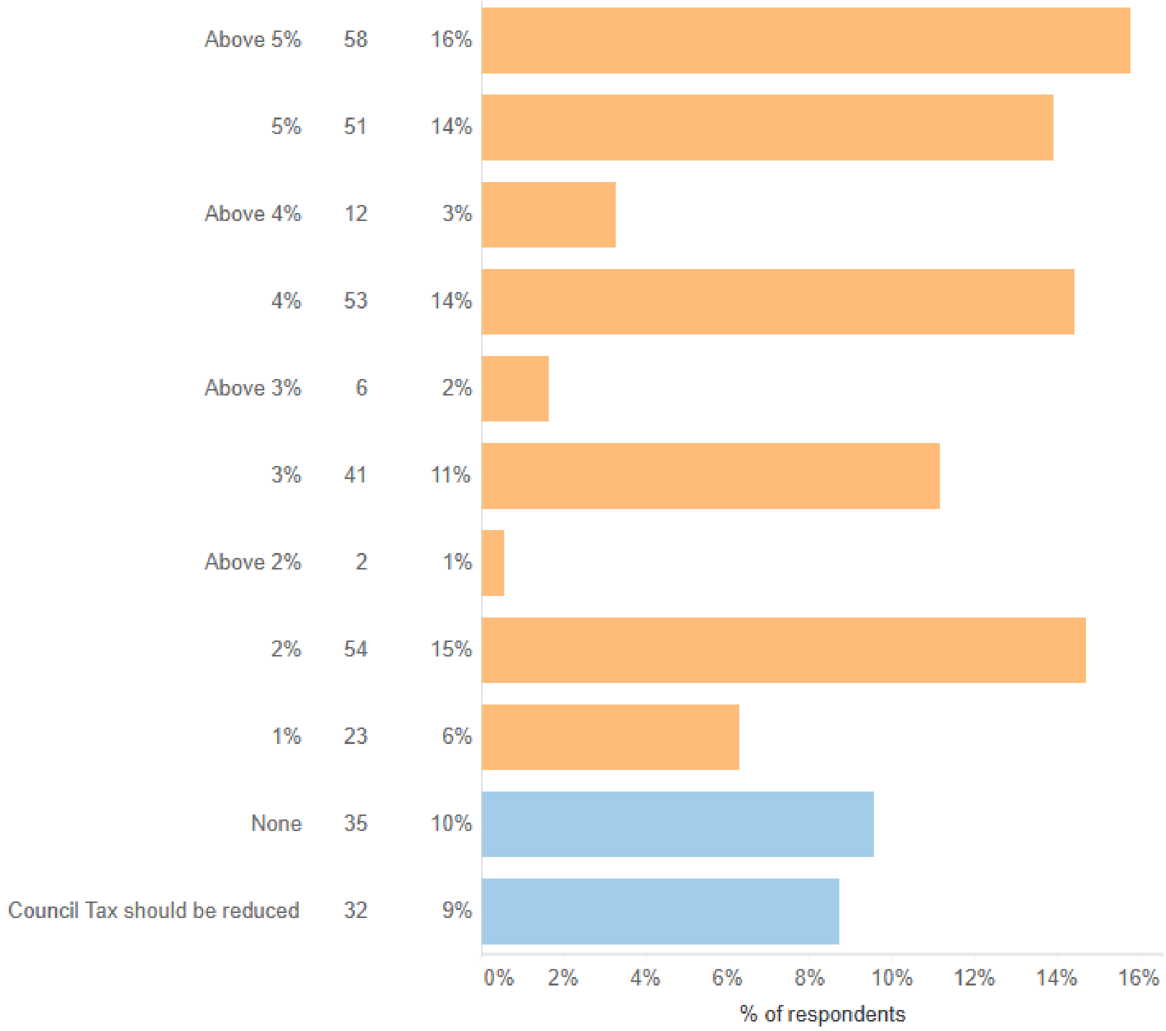
Resident base = 151
LCC employee base = 205

Total Council Tax increase

By combining the responses to the questions about core Council Tax and the adult social care precept, Chart 7 (which is a summary of Table 1 on page 15) shows that 82% were prepared to pay an increase in Council Tax (including any adult social care precept). Over a quarter of respondents (30%) were prepared to pay an overall increase of 5% or above.

A tenth of respondents (10%) said they did not want any increase in Council Tax and a similar proportion (9%) said they thought Council Tax should be reduced.

Chart 7 - Total Council Tax increase (including any adult social care precept)



Base = 367

Note this chart excludes 6 cases where people indicated they wanted core Council Tax to reduce but an increase in social care precept.

Table 1 - Question 2 by Question 3 - Total Council Tax increase (including any adult social care precept)

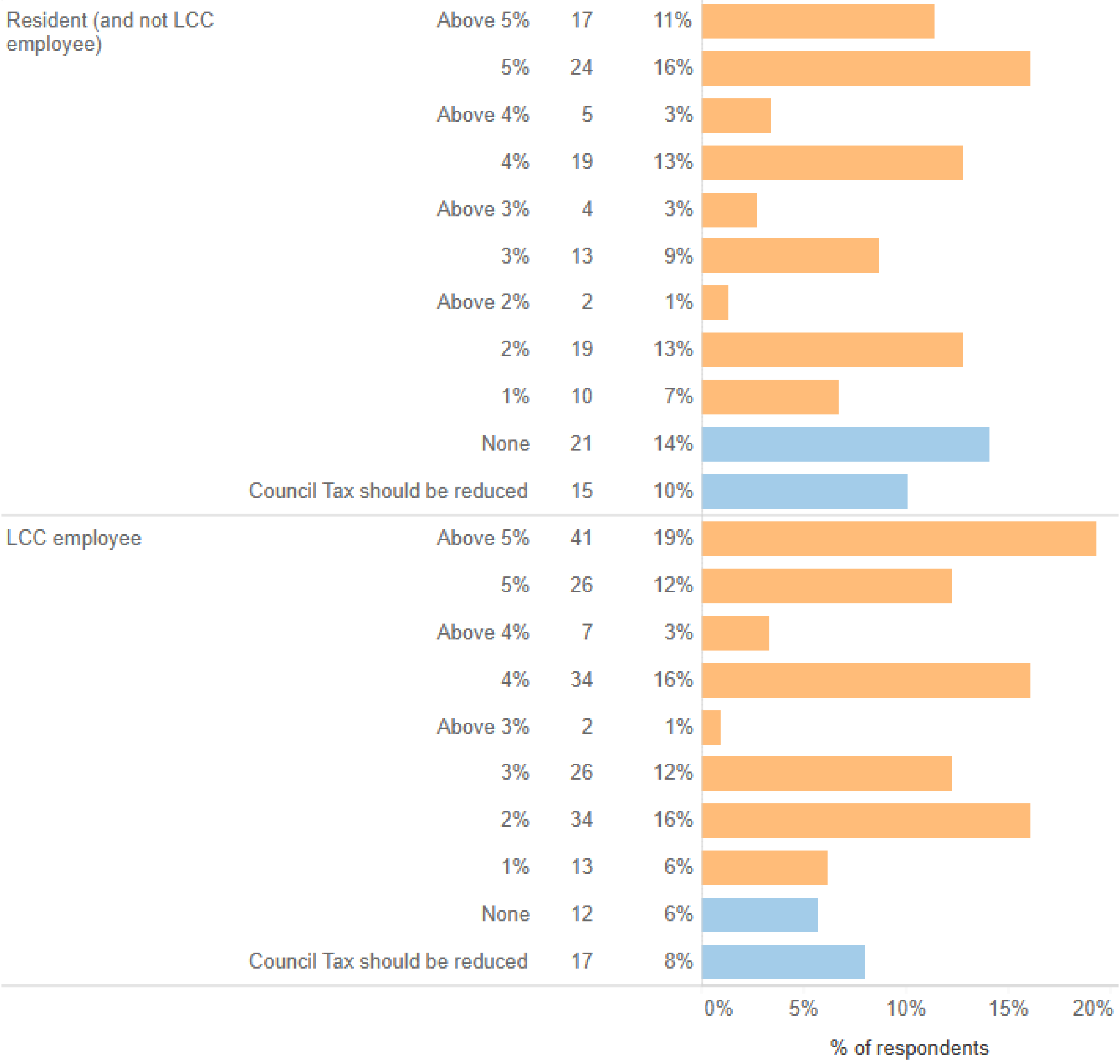
Core Council Tax increase (excluding any adult social care precept)	Adult social care precept increase: Above 2%	2% (an extra £32.03 next year)	1% (an extra £16.02 next year)	None	Don't know
Above 3%	36 10%	17 5%	10 3%	3 1%	2 1%
3% (an extra £48.05 next year)	5 1%	51 14%	26 7%	14 4%	4 1%
2% (an extra £32.03 next year)	2 1%	27 7%	20 5%	14 4%	
1% (an extra £16.02 next year)	1 0%	3 1%	36 10%	11 3%	3 1%
None		1 0%	7 2%	32 8%	
Council Tax should be reduced		1 0%	5 1%	31 8%	1 0%
Don't know		3 1%	2 1%		9 2%

Base = 442

Chart 8 shows the comparison of responses between residents and LCC employees for a proposed total increase in Council Tax (including any adult social care precept). A higher proportion of LCC employees were prepared to pay a total Council Tax increase of 5% or above (31%) compared to residents (27%).

A larger proportion of residents were not prepared to pay any increase in Council Tax (14%) or thought Council Tax should be reduced (10%) compared to LCC employees (6% and 8%, respectively).

Chart 8 - Total Council Tax increase (including any adult social care precept) - by role



Resident base = 149
LCC employee base = 212

Note this chart excludes 6 cases where people indicated they wanted core Council Tax to reduce but also wanted an increase in adult social care precept.

Statistical analysis showed that LCC employees (19%) or those that identified with a White ethnic group (17%) were significantly more likely to agree with a total Council Tax increase of above 5%, when compared to the average (16%).

Those who resided in Harborough (30%) were significantly more likely to agree to a total Council Tax increase of 5% compared to the average (14%).

Female respondents (19%) were significantly more likely and male respondents (7%) were significantly less likely to agree to a total increase in Council Tax of 4% compared to the average (14%).

Respondents who resided in Hinckley and Bosworth (5%), male respondents (2%) or those classified as living in rural areas (2%) were significantly more likely to agree to a total Council Tax increase of above 2% when compared to the average (1%).

When compared to the average (15%), respondents who were carers of an adult aged 18 or over were significantly more likely (30%) to agree to a total Council Tax increase of 2%, whereas respondents who were not carers of an adult aged 18 or over were significantly less likely to agree (10%).

Of those who indicated a preference for no increase in total Council Tax, residents (14%), male respondents (13%), those with a long-term illness or disability (17%), or those who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (20%) were significantly more likely to agree when compared to the average (10%).

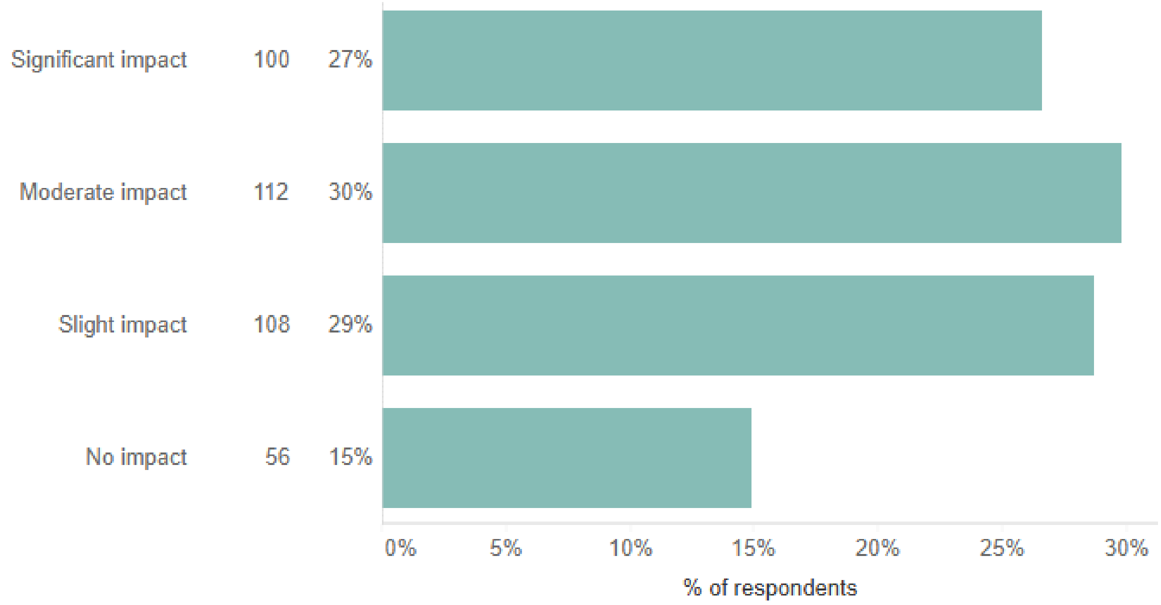
Respondents aged 35-44 (15%) or those that identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (23%) were significantly more likely to be in favour of reducing Council Tax than the average (9%).

Question 6 - Impact of an overall 5% increase in Council Tax on household finances

Respondents were asked what impact an overall 5% increase in Council Tax (the proposed total of core Council Tax and an adult social care precept) would have on their household finances.

Chart 9 shows that a slightly higher proportion of respondents said this would have a moderate impact (30%) on their household finances compared with the proportion of respondents who said this would have significant or slight impact (27% and 29%, respectively). A smaller proportion (15%) said this would have no impact.

Chart 9 - Impact of an overall 5% increase in Council Tax on household finances



Base = 376

Statistical analysis shows residents (35%) were significantly more likely and LCC employees were significantly less likely (20%) to say that an overall 5% increase in Council Tax would have a significant impact on their household finances, compared to the average (27%).

Respondents who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (57%) were significantly more likely and respondents who identified with a White ethnic group (23%) were significantly less likely to say that an overall 5% increase would have a significant impact compared to the average (27%). Respondents who identified with a non-Christian religion (41%), or those with a long-standing illness or disability (42%) were also significantly more likely to say that an overall 5% increase would have a significant impact when compared to the average (27%).

Respondents who were parents or carers of a child or young person aged 17 or under (39%) or carers of a person aged 18 or over (45%) were significantly more likely to say that an overall 5% increase would have a moderate impact compared to the average (30%).

Those who identified with a White ethnic group (33%) or those who were not a parent or carer of a child or young person aged 17 or under (34%) were significantly more likely to indicate that such an increase would have a slight impact when compared to the average (29%).

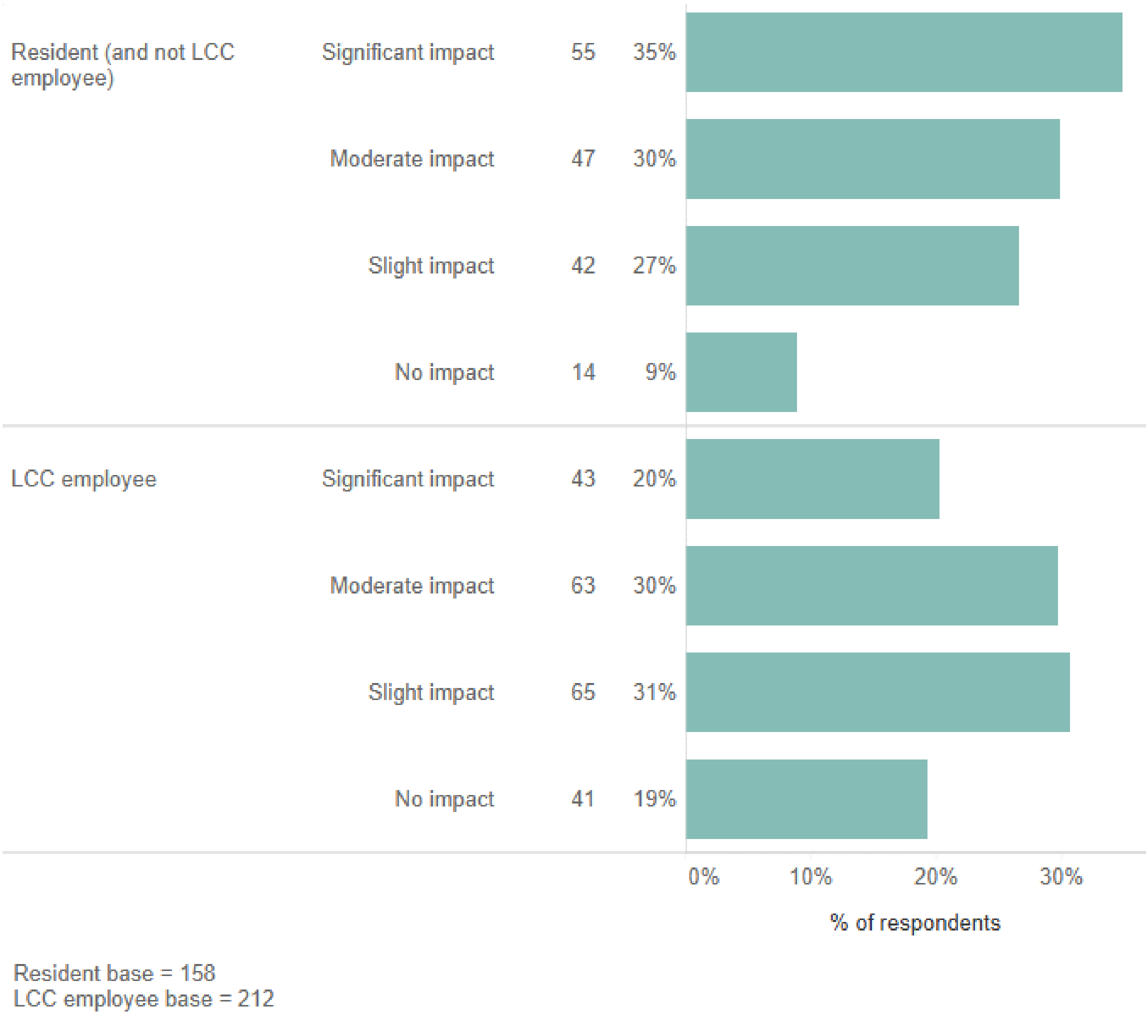
LCC employees were significantly more likely (19%) and residents were significantly less likely (9%) to say that this overall increase would have no impact on their household finances compared to the average (15%).

Those who said they had a long-standing disability, illness or infirmity (6%) were significantly less likely to say that an overall 5% increase in Council Tax would have no impact on their household, when compared to the average (15%). Conversely, those who said they did not have a long-standing disability, illness or infirmity (16%) were significantly more likely to indicate that an overall 5% increase would have no impact compared to the average (15%).

Chart 10 shows a comparison between residents and LCC employees. Just over a third (35%) of residents said an overall 5% increase in Council Tax (the proposed total of core Council Tax and adult social care precept) would have a significant impact on their household finances compared to a fifth of LCC employees (20%).

The same proportion of LCC employees and residents said a 5% increase would have a moderate impact (30%). A higher proportion of LCC employees said a 5% increase would have a slight impact (31%) or no impact (19%) when compared with residents (27% and 9%, respectively).

Chart 10 - Impact of an overall 5% increase in Council Tax on household finances - by role



Question 6a - Why do you say this?

Respondents were then asked why an overall 5% increase in Council Tax would make this impact on their household finances. In total, 205 answered this question (53%).

More than half of those who commented expressed concerns about the increase with many mentioning the broader cost of living and the fact that utility bills, food prices and other essential living expenses were also rising. For some respondents, the rise was seen as unmanageable and would lead to financial hardship.

Several respondents criticised the increase, viewing it as an above inflation tax rise when compared to pay rises, pensions or 'fixed incomes.' Within these comments, many respondents referred to personal circumstances, for example pensioners and single person households were both visible in the group expressing concerns about the impact of the council tax rise.

A handful of respondents had concerns about the impact on others rather than themselves. Groups mentioned as vulnerable by others included the unemployed, pensioners and those on other benefits. A couple of respondents suggested that the cost of living is contributing to an increase in mental health issues which will increase demand on other public services.

Another common theme for negative comments was perceived poor value for money. This was often comparing the rise in costs to the reduction in services. This sentiment was reflected by many respondents. There was also a view that bureaucracy was being prioritised over community need.

The value for money theme continued with comments about the chosen areas of spend. This included references to staffing, management and other related areas, with the sentiment that money was being wasted.

Regarding poor value for money, specific services were referenced. For example, a couple of comments mentioned clearing drains and gullies whilst several non-council public services were criticised such as the Police, NHS and use of other taxes such as car tax, stamp duty and inheritance tax.

The concept of council tax itself was commented on by a small number of respondents. This was seen as unfair for single people and in need of reform with a suggestion of changing it to reflect income.

A notable number of answers adopted a neutral tone, which generally acknowledged that the rise was required and that personal impact would be manageable. This included several who mentioned that there would be some financial impact, for example having to 'budget accordingly.' Another group indicated that the increase would not have a significant impact or they could afford the increase.

Several people expressed more actively positive support for the rises, often citing the need to support vulnerable groups.

A small number of comments took the opportunity to mention other issues not directly linked to the proposed council tax rise. This included comments about utility bills, standing charges, clubs for children or young people and devolution.

Sample comments

"The wage increase of not even 1% does NOT cover a realistic increase of 5%. I am already having difficulty with affording to heat my home during the winter. I am working from home cold. With the added increase to cost of fuel, food and general living costs increasing, i would get further in debt. This would not be sustainable and, or affordable."

"Would not be able to afford it."

"A rise in council tax will follow other rises as well so the cumulative impact has to be considered. Big rises are forecast on other household costs such as electricity and gas, water rates, insurance etc on top on general inflation rises and tax/NI rises, so the council needs to think about these as well as residents are really struggling. Wages/pay hasn't kept up with the overall cost of living and most people I suggest are now just about coping. Those on fixed incomes such as pensioners or unemployed or in receipt of income benefits will really struggle with any rise no matter how justified."

"cost of living rising faster than wages. This increase would make our monthly budget even tighter."

"All bills are increasing, whilst my wage isn't. I work full time and struggle to make ends meet as it is. I don't see why I should be paying in part for staff wage increase and national insurance contributions for those working at the Council!"

"An increase in Tax without a significant increase in wages is making the cost of living crisis worse for not only myself but everyone within the county. Any increase will put more pressure on workers, service users and we will see a massive increase in vulnerability of all. All household bills are increasing in price as well as daily living with food/amenities increasing as well. £80.08 is a fair chunk of money that many can not afford to lose now."

"We would be fine as we are a household of two well paid professionals. However. I worry for other families who are not so well off."

"This would cause financial hardship in a already struggling financial year for people."

"Cut waste at the council. Teams are far too inflated and too many staff members for not enough work. People are already struggling with the cost of living crisis and charging extra council tax just deepens that when every other bill is increasing as well."

"We are constantly paying more Tax and yet receive less 'services'."

"With 2 full time workers at home, a 5% increase in council tax would be manageable for us, it would just mean less available income"

"It would leave us short but spread out over the year would be easier to accommodate. Understand things need to rise to allow services to remain in place."

"Social care needs to be paid for and a reasonable amount of increase needs to be looked at"

"Need to invest in these services to save on worse issues later down the line"

"Reasonable level of income and realise that services need to be financed."

Question 7 - Growth and savings allocation

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with how the growth and savings had been allocated across services. As summarised in chart 11, 46% agreed, 18% disagreed and a notable proportion of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (35%).

Chart 12 shows 38% of residents agreed with how growth and savings had been allocated across services, 24% disagreed and 38% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Over half of LCC employees (53%) agreed with how growth and savings had been allocated across services, 15% disagreed and 32% neither agreed nor disagreed (see Chart 13).

Chart 11 - Growth and savings allocation - All Respondents

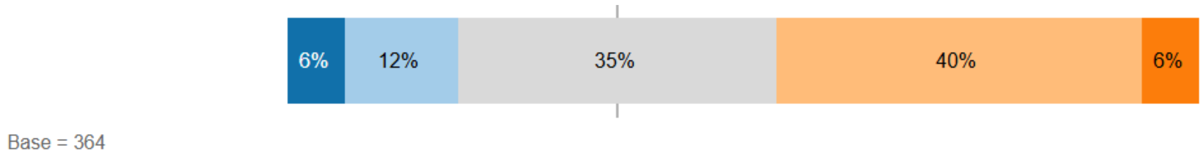


Chart 12 - Growth and savings allocation - Residents only

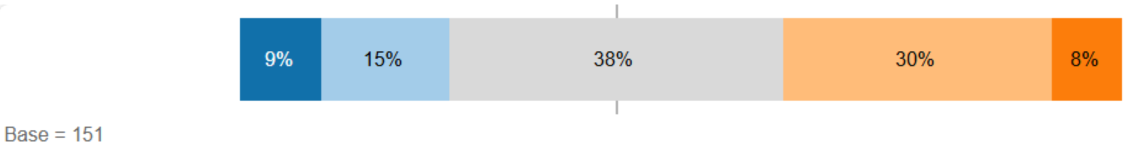
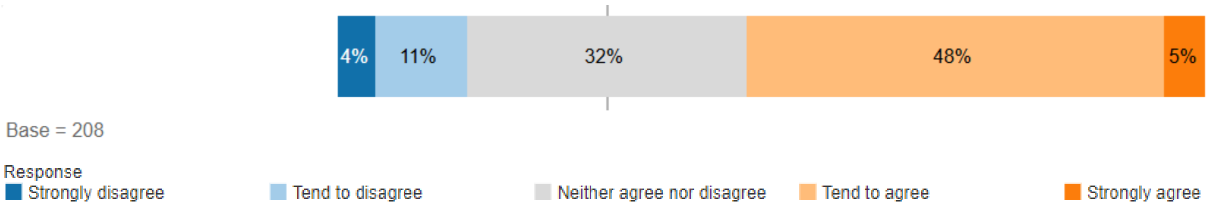


Chart 13 - Growth and savings allocation - LCC employees



Statistical analysis shows that LCC employees (53%), female respondents (52%) or those who identified with a White ethnic group (50%) were significantly more likely to agree with how growth and savings had been allocated across council services, compared to the average (46%). Residents (38%) were significantly less likely to agree than the average (46%).

A significantly higher proportion of those who identified with a Christian religion (40%) and a significantly lower proportion of those who identified with no religion (27%) neither agreed nor disagreed with how growth and savings had been allocated compared with the average (35%). Female respondents (30%) were also significantly less likely to respond 'neither agree nor disagree' compared to the average (35%).

Compared to the average (19%), LCC employees (15%), those aged 44-54 (9%), those who identified with a White ethnic group (15%) or those who identified with a Christian religion (11%) were significantly less likely to disagree with how growth and savings had been allocated across council services. On the other hand, residents (24%), respondents aged under 35 (31%) or those aged 35-44 (28%) were significantly more likely to disagree with how growth and savings had been allocated when compared with the average (19%).

Open-ended questions

This section of the consultation survey included four open-ended questions. These are listed below:

- Are there any savings you disagree with?
- Are there any areas where you think we could make further savings?
- Do you have any comments about the areas identified for growth or capital investment?
- Do you have any other comments about our draft budget proposals?

Question 8 - Disagreement with specific savings

Respondents were asked whether there were any savings they disagreed with. In total, 152 respondents provided a response to this question (40%).

A minority of respondents answered “No” or “N/A” and there were comments where respondents disagreed with or raised concerns about specific savings being proposed, as well as some simply saying they disagreed with ‘all of them’. Social care and SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) were both popular topics with comments both in favour and against savings in those areas. Some people called for extra funding for adult care services, whilst other comments suggested spending more on SEN (Special Educational Needs) and social care. Several comments criticised cuts to SEND spending, including reductions to SEND including transport. On the other hand, some respondents questioned the amounts spent in these areas with comments such as ‘I think SEND transport costs are too high’ and others suggesting different solutions to both SEND and social care issues such as bringing placements in-house, or improving support for parents. There was also the view that a 2% increase for adult social care felt quite high and a criticism of bonuses for children’s social care managers.

Other comments took a more neutral tone but still expressed concern, for example ‘the 90 per cent increase in children needing support seems horrific, and I suppose that's the one that concerns me most’ and ‘A lot of money seems to go to Social Care.’

A few comments reflected the feeling that SEND and social care increases were at the expense of smaller services, whilst another suggested a more equal split of funding, rather than child and adult social care taking the majority. Of services perceived to be missing out, cultural services and the impact of cuts in these areas, were mentioned a few times. Libraries were also the subject of other supportive comments. Other services where respondents would like more spending included flood prevention, street lighting and improved public transport (including bus services). Road and highway maintenance, including potholes and surfacing, was raised by some as a priority area and on occasions seen as being reduced to pay for other services.

Another strong theme for criticism was the perceived inefficiency of the council. A few comments referred to streamlining roles and teams, whilst productivity, waste, commissioning, competence and ‘too much management’ were also mentioned, along with concern over the use of agency staff and consultants. A couple of comments referenced the level of pension contributions and another two respondents suggested that only statutory services should be provided. However, a few comments objected to 'back office' savings due to the impact on front line staff and service users who wanted human interaction.

Some factors outside the direct control of the council were also mentioned, namely National Insurance and Minimum Wage payments, police budgets and winter fuel payments. Concern regarding the risk of increased social isolation and mental health issues was also noted.

Finally, a few comments expressed support and confidence for the process with comments such as 'a difficult set of decisions well considered and executed', 'the people doing the jobs know what's needed' and 'have to trust the experts on this matter'. A few more respondents noted that they did not have sufficient knowledge or detail to comment.

Sample comments

"I don't agree with the SEND saving. These children are already let down"

"You appear to be reducing the minor services at the expense of the major services (SEND and social care)."

"The cultural services are such a part of wellbeing and while I see that more needs to be spent on children and adult services, it is a shame that it always seems to be at their expense. So I see the rational behind the savings but…"

"My family have been flooded twice in 370 days - this is due to "savings" made and drainage and flood defences not being applied effectively. It is extremely disappointing. My family has been left in a poor situation twice with them now being expected to pay an increase in council taxes for service[s] that have and continue to let them down."

"Should be spending more on fixing roads"

"public transport"

"There should be more going to social care services."

"Seems the majority of funding goes into child and adult social care, I think there should be more of an equal split between areas."

"There aren't enough savings, I don't see any manpower reductions or pension contribution reductions."

"Not really. I just think there is so much waste within council departments that would help save so much cash."

"More back office savings by streamlining process and red tape. Empower the best staff to make faster decisions."

"No, a difficult set of decisions well considered and executed"

"No, although hard to really scrutinise with the little detail given."

"Not enough detail on what changes would be made to services to enact these savings, I have concerns about a 40k reduction for 'communities and wellbeing' as services like libraries, museums, and adult learning are some of the last truly open and accessible public services, so cuts to these services would have a massive impact."

Question 9 - Suggested areas for further savings

Respondents were asked whether there were any areas where the council could make further savings. In total, 191 respondents provided a response for this question (50%).

The most common themes were efficiency and value for money, followed by council staffing, with some overlap about the use of consultants. Social care and SEND was also a common theme, along with use of LCC properties, reducing non-statutory services and transport, roads and infrastructure.

There were suggestions that internal processes at LCC were too bureaucratic and that they should be streamlined. Contract management and procurement were mentioned as areas for improvement and there was a suggestion that IT should be outsourced.

A number of comments suggested that more remote working could decrease the demand for office space and also save on mileage. Other specific suggestions included reducing postage by more use of email and switching both Leicestershire Matters and Council Tax bills to digital versions.

Decreasing the use of consultants was mentioned several times, sometimes adding that existing staff should be asked to support work instead, with one respondent suggesting that this would also support staff retention.

Staffing was another key theme amongst suggested savings. Although a few comments recommended reducing the number of staff in general terms, a larger number specifically suggested reducing the number of managers and senior managers at LCC, with a few proposing that the highest paid staff should take a pay cut or not receive pay rises. Other comments suggested diverting management resources towards more frontline staff and spending on service users.

Other suggestions related to staffing included a recruitment freeze, 'redundancies', increased automation to reduce staffing levels and abolishing 'market premia.' Reducing pension contributions and savings related to staff sickness were also referenced. Others suggested that specific areas could benefit from efficiencies, for example independent project officers and Educational Psychology (such as keeping assessments in-house).

Social care and SEND attracted a variety of comments. Some were general e.g. 'less spent on social care' and 'SEND', whilst many others suggested how savings might be made. Using more 'in-house' services (including mainstream schools for SEND) was a common suggestion, as was improving preventative services, including a specific example of a successful Childrens Centre. Other suggestions included to 'streamline' services and efficiencies related to care placements via better partnership work, training and social care salaries. Some respondents suggested that other health services and the NHS should contribute more towards social care costs, whilst another respondent suggested greater personal responsibility should be taken.

Several comments were made about the use of the LCC estate, including County Hall. Suggestions included selling County Hall or repurposing it for residential use. Other ideas looked at making use of the perceived space at County Hall. This included sub-letting but also creating better conferencing and training space to avoid external venue hire. There were also some references to lighting and heating costs at County Hall as potential savings.

Many other comments referred to other LCC owned properties with suggestions to lease or sell unused and underused buildings. One suggestion was for council properties to be rebuilt or repurposed to provide training centres and housing. Some comments looked at using the properties more efficiently, for example 'smarter' libraries and co-location with other agencies. Using rural land owned by the council for development was also suggested.

Several comments were made regarding transport, highways and infrastructure. These included environmental concerns, with some suggesting more investment in 'green' and public transport solutions and / or less expenditure on road building. Less grass cutting to be 'nature friendly' was also suggested. There was a suggestion that residents could receive council tax reductions for greener gardens that helped prevent flooding, whilst another saw building as contributing to flooding. There was also an objection to spending on cycle lanes with a preference for pot holes to be fixed instead.

Suggestions on the subject of highways also referenced planning and efficiency. These included better co-ordination with partners when undertaking work (e.g. utilities) and more night work. Some comments suggested that better planned and quality maintenance, including pot holes and drains, would prevent more expensive issues in the future. Street lighting was mentioned a few times, both in terms of making it 'smarter' and reductions.

Non statutory services were mentioned by several respondents, both in general terms and more specifically in reference to certain service areas. Areas mentioned for potential savings included libraries (including mobile libraries), 'the arts', leisure and culture, public health, community services, grass cutting and floral displays, and grant funding. Not all of these references (such as swimming pools) necessarily relate to services provided by Leicestershire County Council. A couple of comments specifically suggested reducing or stopping Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.

The topic of devolution and unitary councils attracted several comments. All but one were in favour of merging local councils. Some comments simply reflected support whilst others mentioned the potential efficiencies, for example back office savings. Suggestions included bringing Leicester city into new arrangements or joining the new East Midlands combined authority. One respondent objected to unitary proposals, describing the benefits as 'exaggerated'. On a related theme, several respondents thought there were currently too many councillors, with cost of councillors, specifically expenses, mentioned a few times. Other suggestions were made related to benefits, including reductions in benefits and eligibility checks. The suggestion to reduce spending on the homeless by getting to the root cause was also made. Savings on spending related to Net Zero were also suggested, whilst the Police Commissioner and Police force were suggested areas for savings outside the council's control.

Finally, a number of suggestions to increase income were made. These included traded services to other councils, charges for using tips, increased developer contributions and charging students council tax.

Sample comments

“Use of business consultants to support decision making that could/should happen within the Council.”

“Automation to reduce staffing levels across the Council, reduce pension contributions.”

“streamlining internal council processes to reduce sign off's and the allow projects to move more quickly”

“Reduce process burden and free up more time for innovation and delivering optimising service changes/improvements.”

“Have less councillors and reduce the expenses package for senior staff. Merge with another council to save costs”

“Higher rate salaries of council workers i.e. management and above. Focus needs to be on overall management structure in all departments within the council. We struggle to employ and retain lower paid workers and frontline workers due to pay scales and these not necessarily being proportionate to the role and expectations of the role and working hours. More trained frontline workers and less managers!”

“Open further children's homes to reduce outsourcing residential homes.”

“SEND private school places and social care placements. Having more in-house places would save money

“You could look at what council buildings are actually in use and if not being used to fill potential , then either sell or rent out the space to bring in further income.”

“Road resurface and potholes”

“Potholes often appear and keep reappearing due to services digging up the road and making poor quality repairs which leave a legacy of returning potholes. Why not include a clause in contracts that if remedial repairs are required (say within 5 years), they will be responsible for the cost of repairs? Also potholes are often fixed quickly by LCC but at such a poor level that they reappear quickly and regularly. Fix them once properly, cheaper in the long run.”

“Stop all and every activity which does not serve the public.”

“The government's drive for unitary councils in two-tier areas will allow a major review of back-office services. It might not happen for the next couple of years but should produce significant savings when it can be implemented.”

Question 10 - Comments about the areas identified for growth or capital investment

Respondents were asked whether they had any other comments about the areas identified for growth or capital investment. In total, 119 respondents provided a response to this question (31%).

Apart from “No”, “None” or “N/A” responses, a significant number of comments had a negative or critical tone, a slightly smaller amount were neutral and made suggestions and a smaller number were supportive. Road maintenance, including pot holes, was mentioned by a few respondents, with suggestions that long term investment in roads would help to avoid recurring problems. Some respondents saw additional SEN and social care spending to be at the expense of road maintenance. Suggestions were also made to decrease expenditure on roads and increase spending on more sustainable modes of transport, including frequency of public transport.

Flooding was another key theme with several references to spending more on flood prevention, including cleaning drains and dredging rivers and advice not to build new houses in areas already impacted by flooding.

Expenditure on vulnerable groups, particularly SEND, attracted several comments. Some had a neutral tone, such as being keen to understand the increase in expenditure and concerns that demand on expenditure for vulnerable people and SEN was reaching a critical point. Others questioned the value for money of social care and SEN placements, including suggestions to bring more services in-house and making better use of mainstream schools. Some respondents advocated more expenditure on vulnerable groups, including SEND, describing SEN expenditure as a ‘must,’ that more SEN places were required and better support for the transition to adulthood. Also referenced were support for the homeless community and support to keep older people in their own homes.

A few respondents indicated support for local economic growth. This was in a general sense of investing in local businesses and infrastructure and also in the context of actively supporting the transition to a circular economy and providing more apprenticeships to support young people. Suggestions included partnering in regeneration projects, creating revenue from capital investment, and using old buildings, disused sites and brown belt land to develop housing. There was support for expenditure on cycling and footpaths although there was a concern that the amount was ‘still quite low.’

Efficiency was a theme noted within several comments. Suggestions included using ‘tech for efficiencies’ and better procurement for construction bids. Better use of existing buildings was mentioned, including specific suggestions for Market Harborough. Other recommendations to improve efficiency included concentrating on areas of council expertise and bringing more services in-house. Comments included a query about how income from office space is shown within growth. Concern over of the cost/benefit of local government reorganisation was also referenced.

Support for further investment in waste management included reference to reaching Net Zero, generating income from reusable items, and reducing waste by improving communications to support behavioural change. On the theme of environment, there was a suggestion to increase investment to improve air quality.

Aside from SEND and vulnerable groups, other aspects of education were mentioned. This included concerns that free choice of schools was exacerbating traffic issues, surprise at the growth in school crossing patrol service funding, and a concern that VAT on private school fees may cause an increase in school places required that has not been accounted for.

A theme amongst those who queried the plans was that there should not be any growth. This was both in general terms and also with reference to specific areas including housing developments, bypass schemes, and slowing growth to avoid problems with future developments.

A handful of negative comments were received for aspects of work the County Council is not directly responsible for. Examples of this were concerns about safety in Leicester city centre and criticism of the regeneration of Coalville market and town centre.

Other ways of financing council activities were mentioned by some respondents. One respondent suggested that capital expenditure for schools, roads and housing should come from housing developers rather than the tax payer, whilst another comment asked how developer contributions were managed. On the popular topic of pot holes, one respondent asked why this was not funded through car tax.

There were many comments expressing general support for the areas identified. Other comments were broadly supportive but included additional comments such as support for the fairer funding campaign, queries around specific departmental allocations with support for social care, concerns around employment costs and use of reserves.

Some comments were about specific issues. These included doing more for young people in general, the lack of investment in Castle Donnington, and a call to bring the Archives Collections and Learning centre into the capital programme.

Sample comments

"any capital spending required for schools, road infrastructure etc to support new housing should be covered by the housing developers as part of their planning approval not financed by tax payers"

"Potholes are a result. Key is efficient maintenance of highways Are we to reach at some point all monies needed for vulnerable people and SEN. We have to budget at some point."

"Invest in local businesses and infrastructure."

"SEND provision is a MUST"

"Roads and road building. That is really not the answer. Everyone can see that. It's not fixing the underlying issues of lack of transport that we have. All it's doing is putting more cars on the road and damaging our lovely countryside."

“Proper maintenance for roads instead of reactive maintenance approach.”

“More capital investment in maintaining roads properly would reduce revenue expenditure fixing potholes well into the future. It's not rocket science.”

“LCC needs to explore projects that can make a sustained revenue return to the Council through capital investment. Examples include building industrial units and partnering in land developments for regeneration purposes.”

“Start sorting out the flooding issues within Loughborough and surrounding areas. Clean the drains dredge the rivers and ditches”

“That further support needs to be offered to adults with mental health concerns especially those transferring from children's services. As those working in children's services have limited support to offer once they turn 18.”

“Expand on what the council already knows, not on areas we have no expertise in. Too many councils have made risky investments without expertise and it has come back to bite them. Bring more services in house to control spending, and not rely on expensive outsourcing.”

“I think LCC are doing the best that they can within the budgets - concerning that the tax increase will only cover employment costs increases as the reserves at LCC are being impacted every year.”

“I am in agreement: I know how many cuts there have been and how much leaner County Hall is these days!”

“All of the areas identified are valid and much need.”

“as the lowest funded council i fully support any challenge to the government about a funding review . Leicestershire can't keep just shaving bits off services and teams otherwise it will end up so diluted that people won’t be able to get the help they need.”

Funding Reform

The questionnaire explained that Leicestershire remains the lowest-funded county in the country and that funding levels are unfair for Leicestershire residents, when compared to other local authority areas. Although faced with an ongoing challenging financial situation, the council is continuing to call for local government funding reform and to look for opportunities to work more efficiently and effectively.

Question 11 - Council continue lobbying Government for fairer funding

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that the council should continue lobbying Government to review the way funding is distributed between councils. Chart 14 shows that the majority of respondents agreed (93%), 2% disagreed and 4% neither agreed nor disagreed.

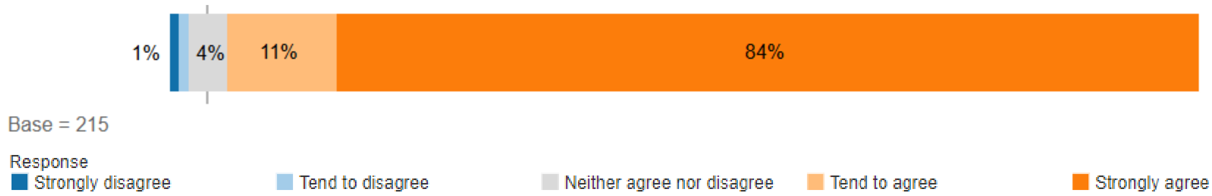
The majority of residents (93%) agreed that the council should continue lobbying Government, 3% disagreed and 4% neither agreed nor disagreed (see Chart 15).

Chart 16 shows a higher proportion of LCC employees (95%) agreed with this, 2% disagreed and 4% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 14 - Reviewing the funding distributed between councils - All Respondents

Chart 15 - Reviewing the funding distributed between councils - Residents only

Chart 16 - Reviewing the funding distributed between councils - LCC employees



Statistical analysis shows respondents aged 35-44 (87%) were significantly less likely to agree that the council should continue lobbying Government to review the way funding is distributed between councils, when compared to the average (94%).

Respondents who identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group (13%) were significantly more likely to respond ‘neither agree nor disagree’ when compared with the average (4%). Those aged 35-44 (6%) were significantly more likely to disagree when compared with the average (2%).

Question 12 - Other comments on the council's budget proposals

Respondents were asked to provide any other comments they had about the council's draft budget proposals. In total, 110 respondents provided a response to this question (29%). Apart from those who responded "No" or "None", the response to this question was mixed with similar numbers making comments that were supportive or neutral and slightly more with a negative tone.

The LCC government funding allocation, and associated lobbying, was the subject of several comments. A few comments were supportive of further lobbying, sympathetic of the current situation and thought local government funding as a whole should be overhauled. There was also support for extra funding in Leicestershire for infrastructure maintenance and repair. A greater number of comments were either critical or sceptical of lobbying for increased funding. Other comments asked where information on fairer funding could be found and whether council tax could be reduced if fairer funding lobbying was successful. Some respondents suggested spending more or less in various areas. SEND and vulnerable groups were a recurring topic with views expressing support for investment and also suggestions for efficiencies and further savings.

Other suggested areas for spending reductions or efficiencies included staffing (such as reducing market premia and salaries for higher paid staff), removing council tax exemptions, highways, service re-design, and services related to immigration. A few references were made to value for money, including the suggestion to 'stop wasting money' and the view that even when funds were available, the council struggled to engage effectively to make use of it. There was also a view that spending related to green initiatives and Net Zero needed to earn robust returns.

Suggestions to increase or maintain spending included to support staff retention and to 'sort out drains and roads'. Spending to support the community was suggested, including supporting education and employment for young people. Buying, building and renovating affordable homes was another suggestion, along with support for more low cost housing in the city.

Several comments expressed positive support for the plans and others included the suggestion that saving can go further, with an understanding that salaries have to rise. A couple of comments referenced recent plans to change the structure of local government, including disapproval of a 'super council' and a mayor for the area, and a desire to understand the impact of devolution on the MTFS.

There was some reference to staff pensions, including a comment querying a lack of reference to the increase in staff pension costs and the concern that pensions were not affordable.

Several comments were sceptical of the consultation process, whilst others reflected an air of resignation about the proposals. A couple of comments were critical about the layout of the proposals and the survey, with the concern that many may not understand some terms used.

#

Sample comments

"If you genuinely think we have a solid case then yes lobbying is important - but if you genuinely believe it is because other counties have bigger and more needs then let's stop the lobbying and get using the budget we have more wisely."

"I think there needs to be more collaborative work with schools on SEND establishments to help reduce costs arising from SEND transport."

"Why are so many more children on EHCPs? We need to look at tackling the root cause of this and other issues and not make more savings that are a false economy, e.g. cutting low level support e.g. through libraries and children's centres that wind up costing us a lot in high level support."

"Sort the roads and drains out"

"Please think very carefully about major roads. If you are not providing the alternative transport options with any road scheme, you shouldn't be doing it."

"Tax increases have gone up year after year, stop wasting money and stop using the same answer as the government, the tax payer will have to pay…"

"Doing an excellent job given the situation and lack of central government funding"

"none. The Council is doing a very good job under difficult financial circumstances."

"I can't see anything regarding the increase in pensions costs You're happy to talk about the NI and NLW increases"

"Doesn't matter what the public say, you will implement what you want."

"Is this consultation a tick-box exercise or are you actually going to take note of responses?"

"The survey for many people will not be easy to understand, either in layout, construction or some of the terms used (such as 'precept')"

Communications

Question 13 - How the respondents found out about the consultation

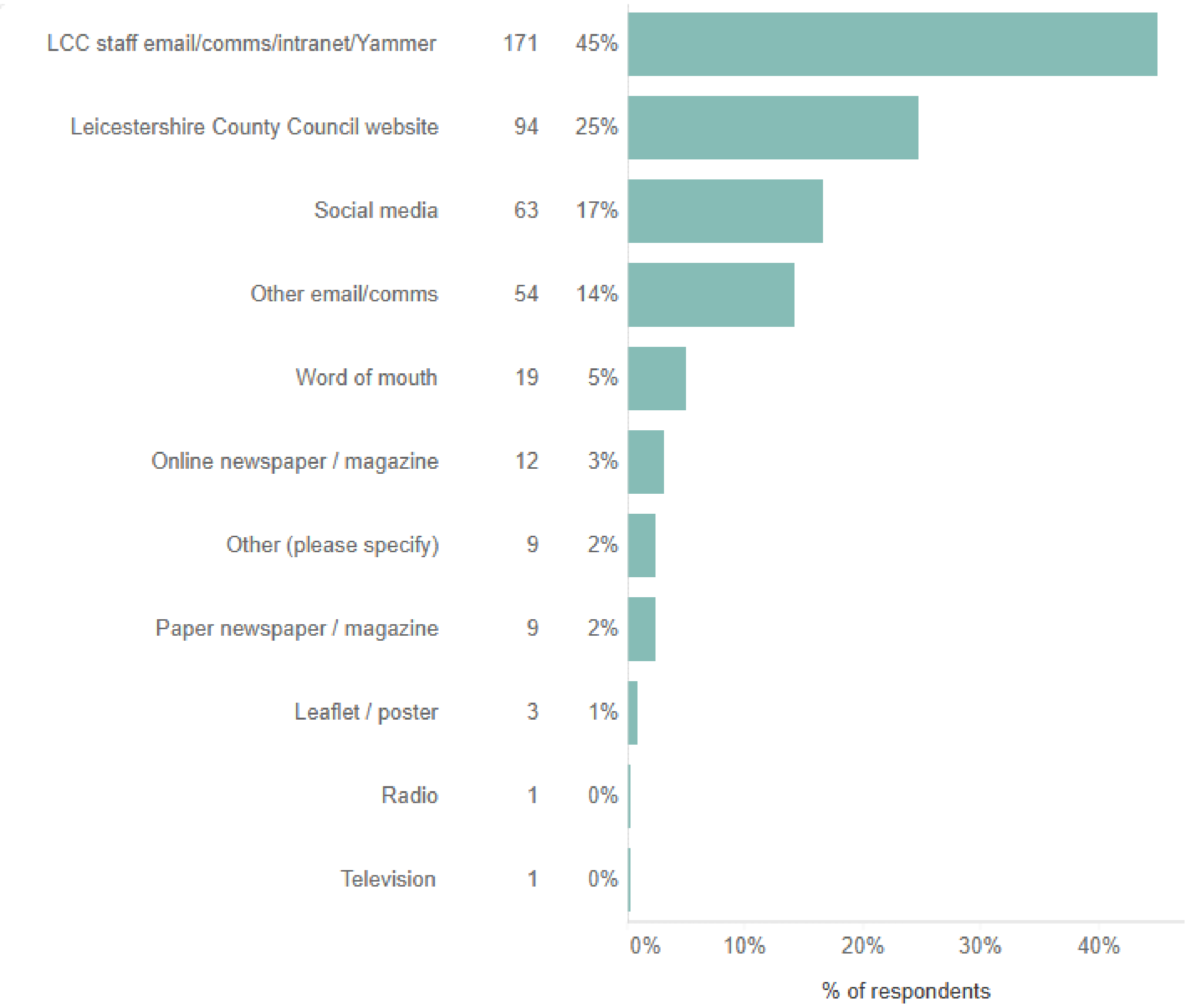
The questionnaire asked respondents how they found out about this consultation.

Chart 17 shows a little under half (45%) of respondents said they found out about the consultation through LCC staff email/comms/intranet/Yammer and a quarter (25%) found out through the Leicestershire County Council website.

Under a fifth of respondents said they found out about the consultation through social media (17%) or other emails or communications (14%). A smaller proportion said they found out through word of mouth, online newspaper/magazine, paper newspaper/ magazine, leaflet/poster, radio or television.

Some respondents said they found out about the consultation through other sources, including local news, a Parish Council, LinkedIn, other online articles and existing knowledge.

Chart 17 - How respondents found out about the consultation (multiple response)



Base = 380

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

Leicestershire County Council

Have your say on our draft budget plans 2025 - 2029

Background

Councils across the country are grappling with extremely challenging financial pressures.

A firm grip on our budget means we're not at a crisis point but rapidly rising demand for services, plus inflation, is set to increase costs by £216m by 2029. This compares to expected extra income and savings of £120m over the same period.

Innovative initiatives and a reduced back office are driving down costs by £33m. This, combined with a Council Tax rise, means the books will balance next year but relentless pressure on services could create a £96m budget gap by 2029.

Key budget pressures include:

- Children's social care – a 60% rise in demand and a 33% increase in prices for placements have pushed up costs by £15m over the last two years
- Special educational needs and disability support - with 90% more children having education, health and care plans compared to five years ago
- Construction price rises – costs for infrastructure schemes have been driven up significantly with inflation

We're one of the highest performing county councils and have saved £276m since 2010, meaning we're very lean.

Our yearly net budget totals £616m (excluding schools). The county council is one of the biggest organisations in Leicestershire, spending around £10m every week on crucial services for our residents.

The Council Tax you pay is shared between district councils, police, fire and parish and town councils in different proportions.

If you have any comments about the draft budget proposals, we would like to hear from you. Your views will be taken into consideration when the council finalises its spending plans.

We would encourage you to read the **budget proposals web page** before completing the survey.

Consultations on individual proposals will be brought forward in due course.

The closing date for this consultation is **midnight 19 January 2025**.

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

If completing on a phone or tablet do not use the back button on your device as you may lose your response.

Please note: Your responses to the main part of the survey (including your comments) may be released to the general public in full under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Any responses to the questions in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire will be held securely and will not be subject to release under Freedom of Information legislation, nor passed on to any third party. To find out more about how, why and what information we use please visit https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/data-protection-and-privacy

Your role

Q1 In which role(s) are you responding to this consultation? Please tick all applicable.

- ☐ I am a resident
- ☐ I represent/own a local business
- ☐ I represent a voluntary and community services (VCS) organisation or social enterprise
- ☐ I represent another stakeholder e.g. district/borough/parish council, health, police, school/education etc.
- ☐ I am an employee of Leicestershire County Council
- ☐ Other

Please specify 'other' below

Q2 If you indicated that you represent an organisation, business, community group, school/other educational establishment, please provide your details.

Name:

Organisation:

Q3 Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Our proposals

We have published our 2025-2029 spending plans for consultation.

These include earmarking just under £100m more to support vulnerable children and adults. An extra £12m of capital is also proposed to help fix potholes and repair roads, taking the total spend on roads, major schemes and tackling flooding to £125m over four years.

A proposed 4.99% Council Tax increase from April (including 2% for adult social care) will increase bills by £1.54 a week for a band D house.

The Council Tax bill for county council services in 2024/25 is currently £1,602 per year for a band D property. Every 1% increase in Council Tax generates an additional £4.0m of income each year and reduces the need to make savings.

The proposals at a glance:

- The books balance by using reserves to manage a small gap – with a budget gap of £42m in 2027, rising to £96m by 2029
- Just under £100m more to support vulnerable people – in response to huge increase in demand
- An extra £12m of capital to help fix potholes and repair roads - taking the total spend on roads, major schemes and tackling flooding to £125m
- A Council Tax rise of 4.99% from April – generating an extra £20m which covers only the National Living Wage and National Insurance increases
- £33m of savings – including redesigning services, reducing the cost of back-office support services by maximising digital technology and smarter procurement, plus £52m to bring spend on SEND more in line with Government funding
- A £380m four-year capital pot – to fund one-off costs of building roads, social care accommodation, new school places needed to support new housing, and more.

Please read the supporting information online for full details of the proposals.

Q4 What core Council Tax increase would you be prepared to pay next year to fund county council services (excluding any 'social care precept')?

The figures in brackets show what this increase would be next year for a household in a band D property.

- ◯ Above 3%
- ◯ 3% (an extra £48.05 next year)
- ◯ 2% (an extra £32.03 next year)
- ◯ 1% (an extra £16.02 next year)
- ◯ None
- ◯ Council Tax should be reduced
- ◯ Don't know

Q5 What, if any, additional increase to Council Tax would you be prepared to pay next year as a separate 'social care precept' to be used exclusively for the funding of adult social care?

The figures in brackets show what this increase would be next year for a household in a band D property.

- ◯ Above 2%
- ◯ 2% (an extra £32.03 next year)
- ◯ 1% (an extra £16.02 next year)
- ◯ None
- ◯ Don't know

Q6 What impact, if any, would an overall 5% increase in Council Tax (the proposed total of core Council Tax and precept) have on your household finances?

A 5% increase would be an extra £80.08 next year or £6.67 per month in a band D property.

- ◯ Significant impact
- ◯ Moderate impact
- ◯ Slight impact
- ◯ No impact
- ◯ Don't know

Why do you say this?

Q7 Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with how the growth and savings have been allocated across our services?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q8 Are there any savings you disagree with?

Q9 Are there any areas where you think we could make further savings?

Q10 Do you have any comments about the areas identified for growth or capital investment?

Funding Reform

Leicestershire remains the lowest-funded county in the country. If we were funded at the same level as neighbours Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, we'd have around £100m extra each year. If compared to East Sussex, we'd have more than £200m extra.

Q11 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should continue lobbying Government to review the way funding is distributed between councils?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

Any other comments

Q12 Do you have any other comments about our draft budget proposals?

Q13 How did you find out about this consultation? Please tick all applicable.

- ☐ Leicestershire County Council website
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Leaflet / poster
- ☐ Online newspaper / magazine
- ☐ Paper newspaper / magazine
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ LCC staff email/comms/intranet/Yammer
- ☐ Other email/comms
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Please specify 'Other' below

About you

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies, and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice, address the needs of all sections of the community and promote and advance equality of opportunity.

Many people face discrimination in society because of their personal circumstances and for this reason we have decided to ask these monitoring questions.

We would therefore be grateful if you would answer the following questions. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did.

Q14 What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ I use another term

Q15 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please enter your age in numbers not words)

Q16 What is your postcode? This will help us understand views in different areas.

Q17 Are you a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q18 Are you a carer of a person aged 18 or over?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help.

Q19 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Q20 What is your ethnic group? Please tick one box only.

- ◯ White
- ◯ Mixed
- ◯ Asian or Asian British
- ◯ Black or Black British
- ◯ Other ethnic group

Q21 What is your religion or belief?

- ◯ No religion
- ◯ Christian (all denominations)
- ◯ Buddhist
- ◯ Hindu
- ◯ Jewish
- ◯ Muslim
- ◯ Sikh
- ◯ Any other religion or belief

Q22 What is your sexual orientation?

- ◯ Bi
- ◯ Gay or Lesbian
- ◯ Straight/ Heterosexual
- ◯ I use another term

Please click the 'submit' button below to send us your response.

Thank you for your time. Your views will be considered before the budget is finalised in February 2025.

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the county council and its partners. Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected in this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the council's records management and retention policy. Information which is not in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Appendix 2 - Respondent profile

		Survey Responses		2021 Census (15+)
Age	384	% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
Under 15	0	0.0	0.0	16.4
15-24	6	1.8	1.6	11.7
25-34	31	9.2	8.1	12.0
35-44	81	24.1	21.1	12.1
45-54	90	26.8	23.4	13.7
55-64	84	25.0	21.9	13.3
65-74	32	9.5	8.3	11.2
75-84	11	3.3	2.9	7.0
85 or above	1	0.3	0.3	2.6
No reply	48		12.5	

		Survey Responses		2021 Census
Gender	384	% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
Male	116	31.6	30.2	49.4
Female	243	66.2	63.3	50.6
I use another term	8	2.2	2.1	
No reply	17		4.4	

		Survey Responses		2021 Census
Do you have a long-standing illness or disability?*	384	% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
Yes	79	22.0	20.6	16.2
No	280	78.0	72.9	83.8
No reply	25		7.6	

**2021 Census asks if respondents day-to-day activities are limited a lot*

		Survey Responses		2021 Census
Ethnicity	384	% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
White	318	90.9	82.8	87.5
Mixed	3	0.9	0.8	2.2
Asian or Asian British	20	5.7	5.2	8.2
Black or Black British	3	1.7	0.8	1.1
Other ethnic group	6	1.3	1.6	1.0
No reply	34		8.9	

		Survey Responses		2021 Census
Sexual orientation	384	% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
Bi	8	2.3	2.1	1.0
Gay or Lesbian	16	4.7	4.2	1.2
Straight/Heterosexual	308	90.1	80.2	91.1
I use another term	10	2.9	2.6	0.2
No reply	42		10.9	6.5

What is your religion?	384	Survey Responses % Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	2021 Census %
No religion	161	45.4	41.9	40.3
Christian (All denominations)	161	45.4	41.9	45.8
Buddhist	2	0.6	0.5	0.3
Hindu	10	2.8	2.6	3.7
Jewish	1	0.3	0.3	0.1
Muslim	6	1.7	1.6	2.3
Sikh	4	1.1	1.0	1.7
Any other religion or belief	10	2.8	2.6	0.5
No reply	29		7.6	5.5

Are you a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under?	384	Survey Responses % Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	2021 Census %
Yes	129	36.3	33.6	(Census data includes all people cared for regardless of age)
No	226	63.7	58.9	
No reply	28		7.6	

Are you a carer of a person aged 18 or over?	384	Survey Responses % Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	2021 Census %
Yes	73	20.5	19.0	(Census data includes all people cared for regardless of age)
No	283	79.5	73.7	
No reply	28		7.3	

District	384	Survey Responses % Ex M/O#	% Inc M/O#	2021 Census %
Blaby	67	23.8	17.4	14.5
Charnwood	57	20.2	14.8	25.8
Harborough	34	12.1	8.9	13.7
Hinckley & Bosworth	43	15.2	11.2	16.0
Melton	12	4.3	3.1	7.3
North West Leicestershire	48	17.0	12.5	14.7
Oadby & Wigston	21	7.4	5.5	8.1
Missing/ Invalid/ Non-Leics Postcode	102		26.6	

National IMD quintile 2019	384	Survey Responses % Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	2021 Census %
1 (most deprived)	4	1.4	1.0	1.6
2	32	10.9	8.3	10.7
3	52	17.7	13.5	16.6
4	94	32.0	24.5	33.5
5 (least deprived)	112	38.1	29.2	37.6
Null / No reply	90		23.4	

*NR = No reply
M/O = Missing/invalid or Other Authority postcode

Appendix 3 - Statistical Analysis

How to read these tables

These tables allow you to statistically compare a response by a specific demographic group against the overall respondent sample. The statistical test used to identify statistical significance is called chi-square.

Statistical significance using chi-square tests is determined by looking at the difference between the expected and observed proportion of respondents. For example if 50% of the whole sample said 'agree' for a given question, the expected proportion of any demographic (e.g. males) saying 'agree' is 50%. The expected proportion is then compared to the actual/observed proportion of the demographic who said 'agree', and a measure of statistical significance is calculated.

To maximise statistical reliability, responses were aggregated where appropriate. For example, Matrix 1 displays the statistical analysis for Question 4. Responses were aggregated into 'Agree' = ('Strongly agree' and 'Tend to agree') and 'Disagree' = ('Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree').

Matrix 1
Question 4: “What core Council Tax increase would you be prepared to pay next year to fund County Council services (excluding any ‘social care precept’?”

		Role (combined response)			Gender			Age				Disability		Ethnic group		Religion			Parent/ Carer u17		Carer o18		Sexual Orientation		District								IMD Quintile					R/U Classification	
Response	Avg %	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Other	Female	Male	I use another term	Under 35	35 - 44	45 - 54	55+	Yes	No	White	BME	No religion	Christian religion	Non-Christian religion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Straight/Heterosexual	LGB+	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Non-Leicestershire Authority	1 - Most deprived	2	3	4	5 - Least deprived	Urban	Rural
Above 3%	19	21	16	0	18	24	0	6	14	28	21	15	20	21	3	23	20	3	16	21	16	20	20	17	22	22	12	20	10	24	10	17	25	19	24	17	19	17	24
3% (an extra £48.05 next year)	27	27	28	33	28	28	13	30	24	28	30	25	29	30	9	28	30	18	28	29	23	30	28	30	41	18	39	30	20	30	19	17	0	34	24	33	29	31	25
2% (an extra £32.03 next year)	17	20	14	17	21	12	0	27	20	12	20	15	19	19	9	19	19	12	19	17	21	17	19	10	20	16	18	23	20	15	10	25	25	9	20	20	18	16	23
1% (an extra £16.02 next year)	15	17	12	17	14	12	25	12	14	14	14	15	14	13	25	13	14	21	13	14	26	11	15	10	8	20	15	8	20	20	19	8	0	6	16	16	15	15	13
None	11	6	17	33	7	15	50	12	10	8	9	16	8	8	25	8	9	21	10	10	6	11	9	20	3	11	9	8	20	9	29	33	25	16	14	7	10	12	8
Council Tax should be reduced	10	9	13	0	11	10	13	12	18	9	6	15	10	8	28	10	8	24	14	9	9	12	10	13	6	13	6	13	10	2	14	0	25	16	0	8	9	9	7

Significance
Very significantly higher | Significantly higher | Significantly lower | Very significantly lower | Similar | Suppressed

Matrix 2

Question 5: "What, if any, additional increase would you be prepared to pay next year as a separate 'social care precept' to be used exclusively for the funding of Adult Social Care?"

Response	Avg %	Role (combined response): LCC Employee	Role: Resident (and not LCC employee)	Role: Other	Gender: Female	Gender: Male	Gender: I use another term	Age: Under 35	Age: 35 - 44	Age: 45 - 54	Age: 55+	Disability: Yes	Disability: No	Ethnic group: White	Ethnic group: BME
Above 2%	13	15	11	0	11	18	0	6	10	19	14	11	14	14	3
2% (an extra £32.03 next year)	28	30	27	17	33	22	13	30	23	29	36	26	30	32	13
1% (an extra £16.02 next year)	29	31	26	33	35	18	25	30	26	28	29	27	29	28	35
None	30	24	36	50	21	42	63	33	40	24	22	36	27	26	48

Response	Avg %	Religion: No religion	Religion: Christian religion	Religion: Non-Christian religion	Parent/ Carer u17: Yes	Parent/ Carer u17: No	Carer o18: Yes	Carer o18: No	Sexual Orientation: Straight/Heterosexual	Sexual Orientation: LGB+
Above 2%	13	13	16	3	13	13	13	13	13	10
2% (an extra £32.03 next year)	28	33	29	15	22	34	26	31	30	23
1% (an extra £16.02 next year)	29	25	29	42	32	26	40	25	30	23
None	30	29	25	39	33	27	21	31	26	43

Response	Avg %	District: Blaby	District: Charnwood	District: Harborough	District: Hinckley & Bosworth	District: Melton	District: North West Leicestershire	District: Oadby & Wigston	District: Non-Leicestershire Authority	IMD Quintile: 1 - Most deprived	IMD Quintile: 2	IMD Quintile: 3	IMD Quintile: 4	IMD Quintile: 5 - Least deprived	R/U Classification: Urban	R/U Classification: Rural
Above 2%	13	12	20	12	15	10	20	5	11	25	13	8	15	18	12	20
2% (an extra £32.03 next year)	28	37	25	45	32	20	27	24	22	0	31	33	29	32	31	31
1% (an extra £16.02 next year)	29	29	35	21	29	20	24	33	22	0	19	35	35	24	30	24
None	30	22	20	21	24	50	29	38	44	75	38	24	21	26	27	24

Significance
Very significantly higher
Significantly higher
Significantly lower
Very significantly lower
Similar
Suppressed

Matrix 3
Question 4 and Question 5 Combined: Total Council Tax Increase

		Role (combined response)			Gender			Age				Disability		Ethnic group		Religion			Parent/ Carer u17		Carer o18		Sexual Orientation		District								IMD Quintile					R/U Classification	
Response	Avg %	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Other	Female	Male	I use another term	Under 35	35 - 44	45 - 54	55+	Yes	No	White	BME	No religion	Christian religion	Non-Christian religion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Straight/Heterosexual	LGB+	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Non-Leicestershire Authority	1 - Most deprived	2	3	4	5 - Least deprived	Urban	Rural
Above 5%	16	19	11	0	16	18	0	6	12	24	18	12	17	17	3	18	17	0	13	18	14	17	16	13	16	22	15	15	10	23	10	17	25	16	17	16	19	16	20
5%	14	12	16	17	15	14	0	15	10	15	18	13	15	16	3	13	17	10	11	17	11	15	14	17	18	11	30	15	20	13	10	11	0	23	12	13	19	16	15
Above 4%	3	3	3	0	3	4	0	3	4	4	3	1	4	4	0	3	3	7	3	4	4	3	4	3	6	4	3	3	0	0	0	11	0	3	2	3	4	2	6
4%	14	16	13	0	19	7	0	15	14	13	17	15	15	15	13	16	13	13	18	13	16	14	16	3	21	9	6	25	0	13	20	11	0	13	17	19	12	16	11
Above 3%	2	1	3	0	1	4	0	0	3	4	0	4	1	2	0	2	2	0	2	1	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	3
3%	11	12	9	33	11	11	14	21	12	6	12	8	12	13	3	12	13	3	11	11	7	12	11	17	13	9	12	8	10	13	0	11	0	10	8	15	8	8	15
Above 2%	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2
2%	15	16	13	17	15	12	29	12	17	13	13	12	15	14	20	12	15	23	13	14	30	10	14	10	12	19	15	10	20	19	10	6	25	3	19	16	14	14	14
1%	6	6	7	0	6	5	14	9	4	9	6	7	6	6	13	7	4	10	5	7	6	6	6	10	1	11	6	3	10	6	20	11	0	3	10	8	6	8	3
None	10	6	14	33	6	13	43	9	10	7	6	17	6	7	20	7	8	17	11	7	4	9	7	17	4	4	9	8	20	9	20	22	25	16	10	4	9	9	7
Council Tax should be reduced	9	8	10	0	9	10	0	9	15	6	6	11	9	7	23	8	7	17	11	8	6	10	8	10	6	9	3	8	10	2	10	0	25	13	0	4	7	7	3

Significance
- Very significantly higher
- Significantly higher
- Significantly lower
- Very significantly lower
- Similar
- Suppressed

Matrix 4

Question 6: "What impact, if any, would an overall 5% increase in Council Tax (the proposed total of core Council Tax and precept) have on your household finances?"

		Role (combined response)			Gender			Age				Disability		Ethnic group		Religion			Parent/ Carer u17		Carer o18		Sexual Orientation	
Response	Avg %	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Other	Female	Male	I use another term	Under 35	35 - 44	45 - 54	55+	Yes	No	White	BME	No religion	Christian religion	Non-Christian religion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Straight/Heterosexual	LGB+
Significant impact	27	20	35	33	26	27	50	22	27	20	27	42	21	23	57	20	29	41	24	27	22	27	25	39
Moderate impact	30	30	30	33	30	27	50	25	37	24	29	28	30	30	27	30	28	41	39	24	45	26	30	24
Slight impact	29	31	27	17	30	31	0	39	22	38	31	23	32	33	3	32	30	13	24	34	26	31	30	24
No impact	15	19	9	17	15	15	0	14	14	18	13	6	16	15	13	18	13	6	14	14	7	16	15	12

	District								IMD Quintile					R/U Classification	
Response	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Non-Leicestershire Authority	1 - Most deprived	2	3	4	5 - Least deprived	Urban	Rural
Significant impact	13	32	26	19	50	21	38	11	25	28	17	26	23	24	21
Moderate impact	30	28	41	42	8	23	33	22	25	31	33	26	34	31	29
Slight impact	39	30	21	26	42	35	24	39	25	31	27	36	31	33	29
No impact	18	11	12	14	0	21	5	28	25	9	23	13	12	12	20

Significance
- Very significantly higher
- Significantly higher
- Significantly lower
- Very significantly lower
- Similar
- Suppressed

Matrix 5

Question 7: "Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with how the growth and savings have been allocated across our services?"

		Role (combined response)			Gender			Age				Disability		Ethnic group		Religion		
Response	Avg %	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Other	Female	Male	I use another term	Under 35	35 - 44	45 - 54	55+	Yes	No	White	BME	No religion	Christian religion	Non-Christian religion
Agree	46	53	38	20	52	40	0	39	47	51	51	41	50	50	29	52	48	28
Neither agree nor disagree	35	32	38	60	30	42	75	31	25	40	35	42	32	35	32	27	40	41
Disagree	19	15	24	20	18	19	25	31	28	9	14	17	18	15	39	21	11	31

		Parent/ Carer u17		Carer o18		Sexual Orientation		District								IMD Quintile					R/U Classification	
Response	Avg %	Yes	No	Yes	No	Straight/Heterosexual	LGB+	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Non-Leicestershire Authority	1 - Most deprived	2	3	4	5 - Least deprived	Urban	Rural
Agree	46	50	46	46	48	48	47	60	38	48	45	36	52	42	61	0	53	48	47	50	53	42
Neither agree nor disagree	35	31	36	35	34	34	31	24	43	33	40	55	35	37	11	50	33	34	34	35	31	41
Disagree	19	19	17	19	18	17	22	16	19	18	15	9	13	21	28	50	13	18	19	15	17	18

Significance
Very significantly higher
Significantly higher
Significantly lower
Very significantly lower
Similar
Suppressed

Matrix 6

Question 11: "To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should continue lobbying Government to review the way funding is distributed between councils?"

		Role (combined response)			Gender			Age				Disability		Ethnic group		Religion			Parent/ Carer u17		Carer o18		Sexual Orientation	
Response	Avg %	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Other	Female	Male	I use another term	Under 35	35 - 44	45 - 54	55+	Yes	No	White	BME	No religion	Christian religion	Non-Christian religion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Straight/Heterosexual	LGB+
Agree	94	94	93	83	95	92	88	97	87	96	95	95	94	94	87	93	94	90	94	94	99	92	94	91
Neither agree nor disagree	4	4	4	17	3	7	0	3	6	4	2	4	3	3	13	3	4	10	6	3	0	5	4	6
Disagree	2	2	3	0	3	1	13	0	6	0	2	1	3	3	0	4	1	0	1	3	1	3	2	3

	District								IMD Quintile					R/U Classification	
Response	Blaby	Charnwood	Harborough	Hinckley & Bosworth	Melton	North West Leicestershire	Oadby & Wigston	Non-Leicestershire Authority	1 - Most deprived	2	3	4	5 - Least deprived	Urban	Rural
Agree	94	89	100	93	83	96	95	95	75	100	87	95	94	93	96
Neither agree nor disagree	3	5	0	7	17	2	0	5	25	0	8	4	3	5	2
Disagree	3	5	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	6	1	3	3	2

Significance
Very significantly higher
Significantly higher
Significantly lower
Very significantly lower
Similar
Suppressed

Leicestershire County Council

If you require information contained in this leaflet in another version e.g. large print, Braille, tape or alternative language please telephone: 0116 305 6803, Fax: 0116 305 7271 or Minicom: 0116 305 6160.

જો આપ આ માહિતી આપની ભાષામાં સમજવામાં થોડી મદદ ઈચ્છતાં હો તો 0116 305 6803 નંબર પર ફોન કરશો અને અમે આપને મદદ કરવા વ્યવસ્થા કરીશું.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0116 305 6803 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਦਵਾਂਗੇ।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে 0116 305 6803 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر کال کریں 0116 305 6803 اور ہم آپ کی مدد کے لئے کسی کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，請致電 0116 305 6803，我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku, zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 6803, a my Ci dopomożemy.

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