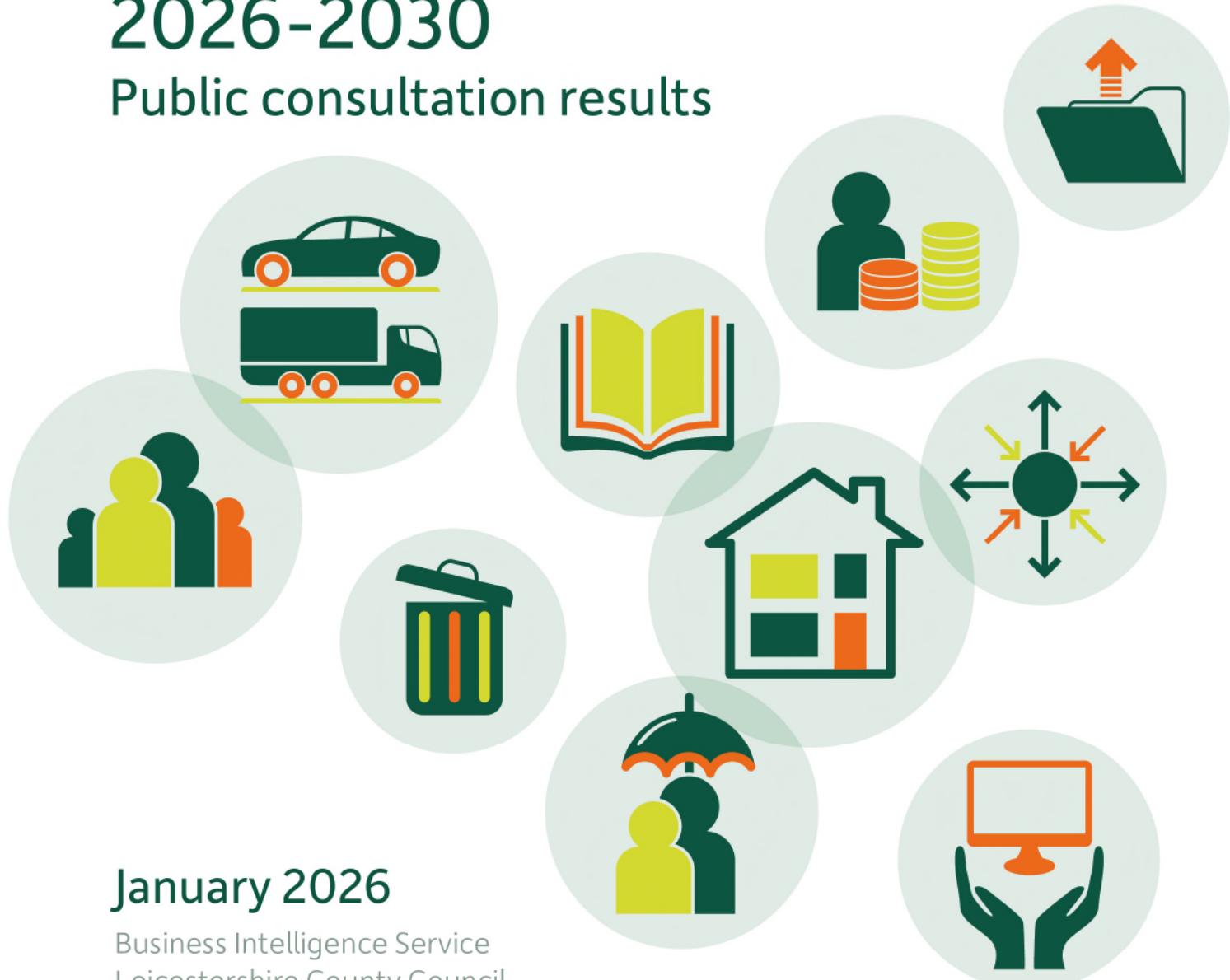




Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy

2026-2030

Public consultation results



January 2026

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Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this report, Leicestershire County Council cannot be held responsible for any errors or omission relating to the data contained within the report.

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Key findings

In total, 346 responses were received to the consultation survey, of which 77% were residents of Leicestershire and 47% were employees of Leicestershire County Council (LCC) (multiple-choice question).

Growth and Savings

When respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with how the growth and savings had been allocated across services, 45% agreed and 28% disagreed (28% neither agreed nor disagreed).

Respondents were asked whether there were any savings they disagreed with. Some respondents simply said they disagreed with most or all of them, whilst others mentioned specific services including Children's and Adult's services and services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Other savings areas that respondents disagreed with included public transport, libraries and Beaumanor Hall and Park.

Many respondents disagreed with the council proposing further rises in Council Tax, with some expressing concern about increases at a time when residents are already stretched. Several respondents felt that residents are paying more tax to receive less services, and a few expressed frustration at proposed rises to Council Tax when the new council leadership had stated that they would not increase Council Tax in their manifesto. Although responses referencing Council Tax were largely negative, a few respondents acknowledged that a rise is necessary or expected to fund crucial council services.

Several respondents mentioned the council's need for improving efficiencies and systems in order to make savings, including less layers of management and duplication of work tasks. A notable proportion of respondents felt that insufficient information or data was provided around proposed savings to allow them to give a meaningful response, whilst others criticised the council for paying external consultants to carry out the council's efficiency review.

Savings Opportunities

Respondents were asked to what extent they thought the areas identified by the council should contribute to savings. Overall, the response was largely positive, with over 70% of respondents considering the areas identified should contribute to savings either 'A great deal' or 'To some extent'. 'Procurement of external spend' was the area which respondents felt should most contribute to savings. The area that respondents were least supportive of was 'Use of technology/ artificial intelligence to improve efficiency'.

Respondents were asked whether they thought the areas identified were the right areas to focus on, and whether there were any other areas where they thought the council could make further savings. Common suggestions included reducing the use of external consultants and reviewing staff structures. Several respondents highlighted risks or concerns with the proposals, specifically in relation to vulnerable groups and pressure on staff.

Overpaying for procurement, improving council efficiencies, current use of council buildings, concentrating on economic growth and reviewing staff expenditure were also mentioned by respondents. Others suggested ideas around road repairs and maintenance, better use of voluntary and community services and making better use of research.

Council Tax

Just under a third of respondents (32%) said that they would be prepared to pay a 5% increase or above in Council Tax (including the adult social care precept), and over a third (36%) said they would be prepared to pay a 3% increase. Just over a fifth (21%) said they would not be prepared to pay any increase in any Council Tax and just over a tenth (11%) said they thought Council Tax should be reduced.

Ideas for growth and capital investment

When asked to comment on the areas identified for growth or capital investment, several comments highlighted areas that they felt should be prioritised, with specific references to children's and adult's services. Some of those who mentioned these services highlighted a need to focus on preventative services. Environment and transport was another common theme, with several respondents highlighting a need to focus on improvements to the road infrastructure and flood prevention. Other specific areas of focus included free access to waste and recycling centres, improving communication between local authorities and investment in Beaumanor Hall and Park.

A number of comments suggested other sources of income or funding, particularly using developer contributions to support new housing infrastructure (e.g. schools and roads) and requesting government grants for specific services. Suggestions around future savings and efficiencies was another key theme noted among comments, including references to shared IT resources, back office costs and staffing structures. Several areas of concern were raised within the comments, particularly around government funding and the impact of austerity, increasing demand for social care and increased Council Tax. A number of respondents felt they did not have enough detail to respond to the question, whilst others indicated general agreement with the ideas for growth or capital investment.

Other comments around the council's budget proposals

Respondents were asked to provide any further comments or suggestions about the council's budget proposals. The most common theme concerned perceived inefficiency of the council, with suggestions for improving efficiency and productivity and for the council to 'live within its means'. The financial impact of proposed Council Tax rises was a concern for several respondents, whilst others felt that increasing Council Tax was necessary and preferable to reducing services. Other respondents mentioned the need for fairer funding from Central Government, reducing spending on external consultants, improving road repairs and increasing spending on schools. Several respondents criticised the consultation, stating the information on proposals was too vague, insufficient and unclear.

Background

Uncertainty around Government funding and relentless growth in demand for services is dominating the council's budget proposals for 2026-30. The council's yearly core budget is £660m - or £1.3billion including all grants and income that relate to specific services. The county council is one of the biggest organisations in Leicestershire, spending more than £20million every week on crucial services for its residents.

The council's biggest funding source is Council Tax, followed by Government grants - some of which can only be spent on specific projects. Around three-quarters of the budget is spent on social care and supporting vulnerable people.

The four-year proposals earmark £131million extra for social care, which is 20% more than previous forecasts, to manage the rising demand for support for vulnerable people. Over the last 12 months, demand for children needing costly residential provision has increased by 28%. The council knows that action is needed to bridge a budget gap, forecast to exceed £100m by 2030. It is carrying out an efficiency review to help identify opportunities to close the gap and these proposals include some early ideas to reduce costs.

Proposals included:

- £131million more to support vulnerable people
- £63million to cover National Living Wage and inflation increases
- £45million of savings—plus early opportunities identified in the council's efficiency review
- A £456million four-year capital pot—to pay for improving roads, providing social care accommodation and new school places to support new housing

District councils, police, fire and parish and town councils all make up portions of residents' total Council Tax bills. Next year's proposals show the extra income that would be raised by a 2.99% increase in Council Tax, however, the final level will not be agreed until February when the level of Government funding will be known. A rise of this percentage would mean bills would increase by 97p a week, however, the council would still need to find £106million of savings by 2030.

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 17th December 2025 to 18th January 2026.

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 comprehensive range of communications activity promoted the budget consultation and encouraged people to have their say.

This included a Chief Executive's briefing for staff, a social media campaign (across X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Next Door), a bespoke budget webpage, intranet content, newsletters, Leicestershire Matters, media releases and direct emails to 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 346 responses.

Questions

The survey asked respondents about Council Tax levels and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with how the budget had been allocated across services. It also asked respondents the extent to which certain areas should contribute to savings, with an open-ended question to ask respondents whether these areas were the right ones to focus on and whether there any areas where they thought the council could make further savings?

Additionally the survey asked a number of other open-ended questions about the budget and the way the council works. These are listed below:

- Are there any savings you disagree with?
- 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 Service, 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.

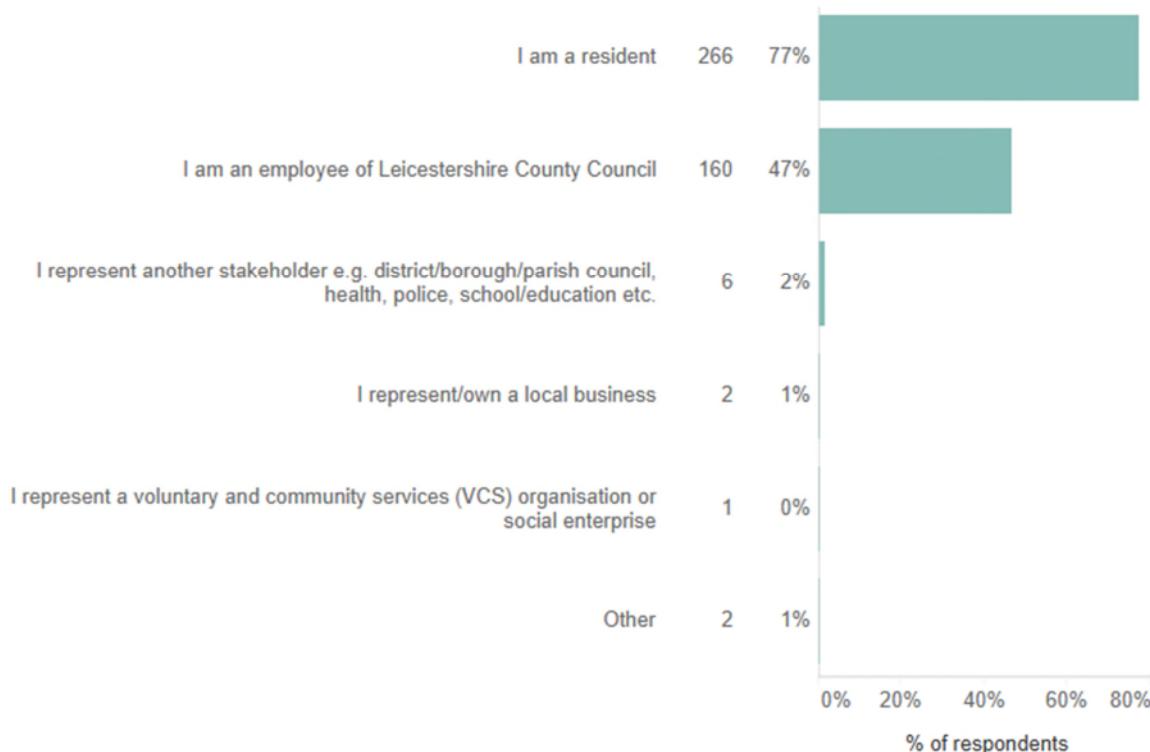
Results

In total, 346 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 77% of people who completed the survey were responding as residents and 47% were employees of Leicestershire County Council (LCC). Fewer responses were from representatives of organisations. This question was multiple choice.

Chart 1 - Role of Respondent (multiple response)

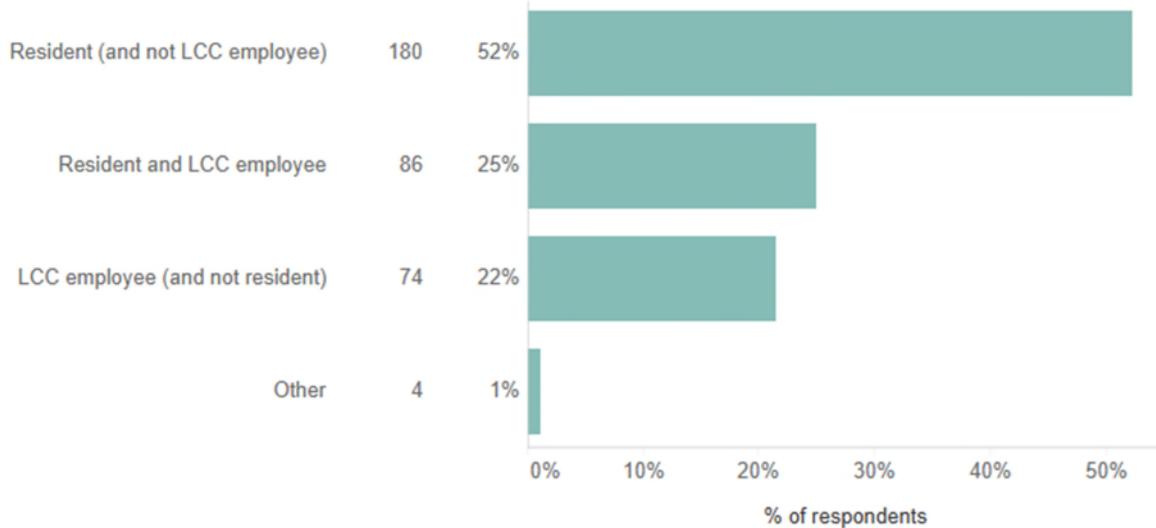


Base = 344

Chart 2 shows 52% were residents and not employees of LCC, 22% were LCC employees and not residents, and 25% were both.

Throughout the analysis that follows, a comparison has been made between the views of residents who are not LCC employees (180 respondents) and the views from LCC employees (160 respondents).

Chart 2 - Role of Respondent (single response)



Base = 344

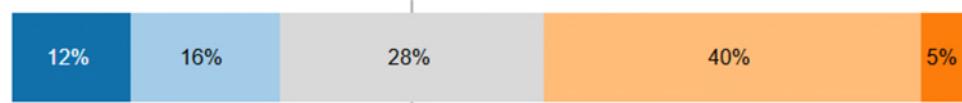
Question 4 - Growth and savings allocation

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 3, 45% agreed, 28% disagreed and 28% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 4 shows 32% of residents agreed with how growth and savings had been allocated across services, 39% disagreed and 29% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Over half of LCC employees (59%) agreed with how growth and savings had been allocated across services, 16% disagreed and 26% neither agreed nor disagreed (see Chart 5).

Chart 3 - Growth and savings allocation - All Respondents



Base = 329

Chart 4 - Growth and savings allocation - Residents only



Base = 173

Chart 5 - Growth and savings allocation - LCC employees



Base = 152

Response
█ Strongly disagree █ Tend to disagree █ Neither agree nor disagree █ Tend to agree █ Strongly agree

Statistical analysis shows that LCC employees (59%) and those living in Hinckley and Bosworth (63%) were significantly more likely to agree with how growth and savings had been allocated across council services, compared to the average (44%). Looking at the response from residents only (32%) were significantly less likely to agree than the average (44%).

A significantly higher proportion of those aged over 55 (33%) and those with a long-term illness or disability (30%) neither agreed nor disagreed with how growth and savings had been allocated compared with the average (28%). Respondents with a long-term illness or disability (16%) were significantly less likely to respond 'neither agree nor disagree' compared to the average (28%).

Residents (39%) and respondents aged 35-44 (41%) were significantly more likely to disagree with how growth and savings had been allocated when compared with the average (28%).

Question 5 - Disagreement with specific savings

Respondents were asked whether there were any savings they disagreed with. In total, 110 respondents provided a response to this question (40%).

Although several respondents answered “No” or “N/A”, there were many who expressed concerns or disagreed with specific savings. Some simply said they disagreed with ‘most’ or ‘all of them’. SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) services, children’s and adult’s services were mentioned by several respondents, with particular concerns around cuts to special needs nurseries, Post-16 SEN transport, early years care and adult’s services accessed by elderly residents. A few of these respondents said they disagreed with cuts to vital services for vulnerable children and adults. Other savings areas that respondents disagreed with included public transport, libraries, Beaumanor Hall and Park, education and community centres. Some respondents urged the council to increase investment in highways, safe cycling routes and adult and community learning.

Many respondents disagreed with the council proposing further rises in Council Tax. Several respondents expressed concern about increases in Council Tax at a time when cost of living (such as bills and food) is also increasing. Respondents suggested that residents were already feeling stretched and costs were already too high. Some respondents felt that a high proportion of residents do not access adult or children’s social care, so therefore their Council Tax should not be increased to cover these council services, whilst others disagreed with increases in Council Tax when there are further proposed cuts to services. A few respondents expressed frustration with the new council leadership, which stated in their manifesto that Council Tax would not be increased. Whilst the comments referencing Council Tax were largely negative, there were a few respondents who acknowledged that a rise in Council Tax was necessary or expected to fund council services.

Another strong theme for criticism was the perceived inefficiency of the council. Some respondents felt that the proposed savings indicate that the council is working inefficiently, and instead of further cuts to vital services, the council should focus on improving systems and inefficiencies – which respondents believed as a result, would create savings and prevent cuts to services. There was also a view that the council had been making savings for over ten years, and there is not much more to be cut. A few respondents mentioned staffing inefficiencies, suggestions included ‘less layers of management’, ‘less duplication of work tasks’, ‘more in-house training’ and ‘a full review of roles and responsibilities’. Employing less consultants was also mentioned as a way to make savings.

A notable proportion of respondents felt more information was needed on the council’s savings for them to provide a meaningful response. Some respondents expressed frustration at the lack of sufficient detail around the proposals, whilst others said the data needed to be explained in order to understand the savings being proposed. A few respondents criticised the council for paying external consultants to carry out the efficiency review.

Other comments included references to Local Government Reorganisation, combining authorities, not saving enough on specific services and climate change.

Sample comments (for Q5)

““All of them”

“Should not cut costs for vulnerable children and adults including care”

“SEN support is vital. Mainstream schools need support to ensure children with SEN can make the required progress”

“Highways and education need maximum investment”

“The council needs to find savings, not impose further taxation on already-stretched residents, who pay their taxes”

“People are really feeling the pinch with the cost of living with all bills, food and general life. Most people cannot do things that they used to do as the essential household bills are too much already. Increasing council tax which is already over £210 a month in my household which only gets us fortnightly bin pick ups and no garden waste subscription included is just getting ridiculous. I appreciate that the services are important but there needs to be other avenues looked at rather than the working class constantly struggling, especially for services that they do not use.”

“I don’t agree with rises whilst we are not receiving a rise in services”

“REFORM UK categorically stated in their manifesto, Council Tax would not be increased if they successfully lead the council.”

“The overwhelming majority of expense is surrounding social care, but a huge proportion of residents do not need to access this in any capacity. Increased payments to these areas for something that people don’t use could be considered unfair when the services they do use are getting comparatively very little.”

“It is a false economy to cut any services which support early years care, social provisions such as libraries and community centres. These should be excluded from any cuts in spending although there may be ways to make services more efficient”

“A lot of savings could be made by less duplication of work tasks and less layers of management. Training, by allowing more in-house or smaller training companies to become involved.”

“You have provided zero data. How can we possibly provide meaningful comment?”

“Unless I have missed something there is no in depth analysis of where the savings are coming from and which departments and how that will affect the services that we provide to the citizens of Leicestershire.”

“Disagree with bringing in consultants to review the Council spend.”

“Combining authorities”

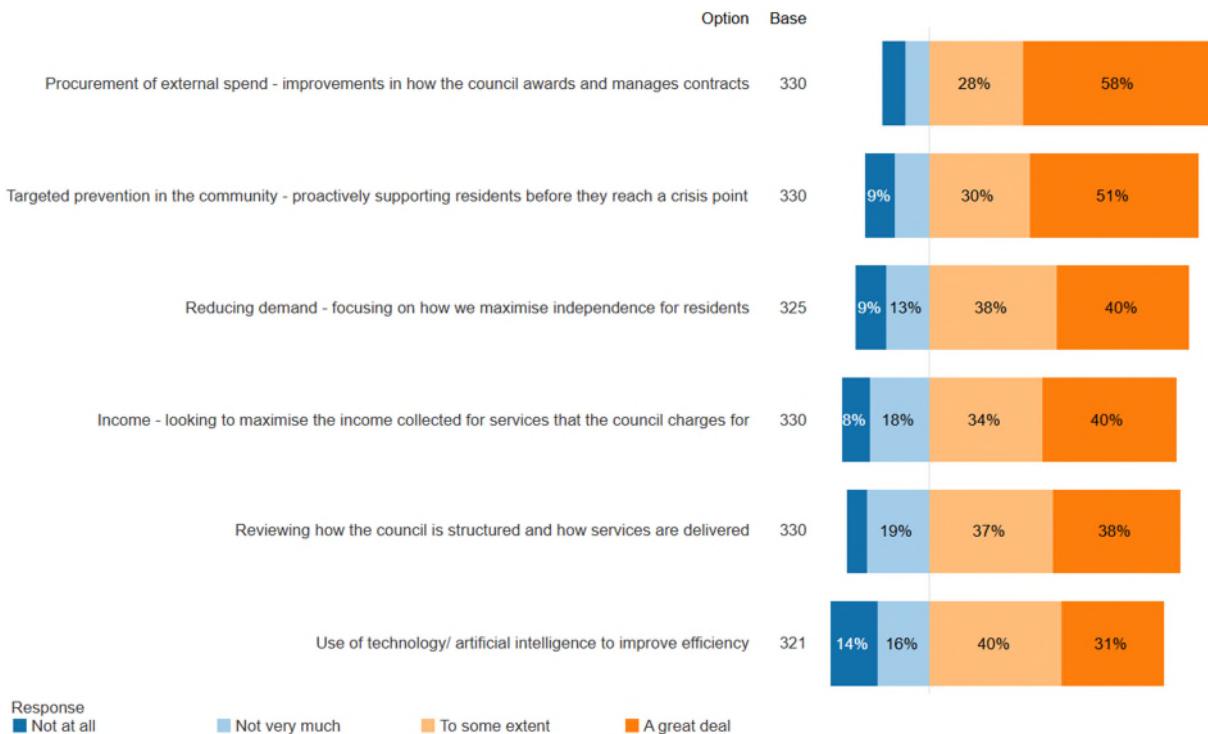
“Not saving enough on Public Health. It should not be part of local government.”

Question 6 - Focus for savings opportunities

The survey highlighted that the council is carrying out an in-depth review of all of its spending, and listed areas for savings opportunities. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they thought these areas should contribute to the council's savings.

Overall, the response was largely positive, with over 70% of respondents considering the areas identified should contribute to savings either 'A great deal' or 'To some extent'. 'Procurement of external spend' was the area which respondents felt should most contribute to savings, with 86% of respondents saying 'A great deal' or 'To some extent'. Under three quarters (71%) felt 'Use of technology/ artificial intelligence to improve efficiency' should contribute to savings 'A great deal' or 'To some extent', which was the least supported out of the six areas (see Chart 6).

Chart 6 - Areas for saving opportunities - All respondents



Statistical analysis shows that female respondents (85%) and respondents living in Blaby (93%) were significantly more likely to say that 'Targeted Prevention' should contribute to savings 'A great deal' or 'To some extent', when compared to the average (81%). Male respondents (75%) were significantly more likely to say that 'Targeted prevention in the community' should contribute to savings 'Not very much' or 'Not at all', compared to the average (19%).

Compared to the average (74%), LCC employees (79%) and respondents aged over 55 (85%) were significantly more likely to say that 'Looking to maximise the income collected for services the council charges for' should contribute to savings 'A great deal' or 'To some extent'.

Statistical analysis shows that those living in rural areas of the county (86%) were significantly more likely to say that 'Reviewing how the council is structured and how services are delivered' should be an area that contributes to savings 'A great deal' or 'To some extent' when compared to the average (75%). Those living in urban areas (73%) were significantly less likely to say this.

Respondents aged over 55 (79%) and those living in the least deprived areas (85%) were significantly more likely to say that 'Use of technology / artificial intelligence to improve efficiency' should be an area considered for savings either 'A great deal' or 'To some extent' compared to the average (70%). Those aged 35-44 (60%) and those living in the third most deprived quintile (where 1 = most deprived and 5 = least deprived) (60%) were significantly less likely to say this, when compared to the average (70%). Respondents aged 35-44 (40%) and those living in the third IMD quintile areas in Leicestershire were significantly more likely to say that 'Use of technology / artificial intelligence to improve efficiency' should contribute to savings 'Not very much' or 'Not at all', when compared to the average (30%). Those aged over 55 (21%) and those living in the least deprived areas of the county (15%) were significantly less likely to say this, than the average (30%).

Question 6a - Comments and Suggestions on areas for further savings

Respondents were asked whether they thought the savings opportunities within Question 6 were the right ones to focus on, and whether they thought there were other areas in which to make further savings. In total, 146 respondents provided a response to this question (42%).

The most common suggestion was to stop or reduce the use of external consultants. Another common suggestion related to the council staff and structure, for example, reducing the number of managers to increase front line workers or other reviews of current practice, with some suggesting a reduction in overall numbers. A similar number of respondents highlighted risks or concerns with the proposals, with concern for vulnerable groups and pressure on staff.

Procurement, with a perception of overpaying, was highlighted by several respondents, with a similar amount of people suggesting the council could be run more efficiently, with excessive bureaucracy and procedures mentioned. Spending on SEND services and other independent care providers was highlighted by some with independent care, SEND transport and SEND in general mentioned. Adult Social Care was also mentioned, but by fewer respondents.

The idea of using AI to generate savings was questioned by several respondents who were sceptical of the idea, whilst a smaller number felt that better use of AI and technology was a good idea.

It was questioned by some respondents why a spending review was taking place with the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation. Others suggested looking at the current use of council buildings (including references to heating and lighting but also selling or leasing underused facilities), whilst the reducing the number of councillors and associated costs (e.g. expenses and support) was suggested by others.

Some respondents felt that expenditure on staff pensions could be an area for savings, whilst a similar number felt more flexible working (including contracted hours) and working from home could generate savings.

There were some ideas that were less common but were mentioned more than once. These included better road repairs and maintenance (to save future and recurring costs), receiving more income from large developers, better use of voluntary and community services, reducing expense claims and reducing or stopping the amount the council spent on benefits and childcare. A couple of comments related to research, examples included making better use of research and bringing in more research funding.

Other ideas suggested by respondents included raising Council Tax for multi-occupancy homes; stop spending on Net Zero, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and translation services; more money for youth clubs and young people; concentrate on economic growth; more shared services with other local authorities, reduce fraud; ask staff for ideas; increased Central Government funding; more joined up work between departments; and reduce agency spending.

Sample comments (for Q6a)

"The above areas are the right areas to look for efficiencies. The restructuring of the council/adult social care services has been attempted every couple of years. A large amount of money is spent on outside consultancy agencies to achieve the same outcomes - renaming the teams/disbanding them, without addressing deeper systemic issues. This can lead to frustration, wasted resources, and little improvement in service delivery"

"The use of artificial intelligence in my opinion has challenges and frustrations. Technology is fine if people can use it but AI is very unpopular due to its failings. Older people and vulnerable people would not be able to access the services they desperately need"

"In terms of reviewing how the council is structured, and how services are delivered, with local government just around the corner, it feels like doing the same job twice."

"Staffing structures ,better quality of road repairs"

"A total rethink and re-evaluation in services provided, and the associated costs. Public sector pay should not rise in the way it has, given private sector pay stagnation, and the pension plans for public sector workers are out of line with the rest of the working population."

"Look at footfall and focus on areas that residents can travel easily to rather than keeping little used buildings open just because they fall in poorer areas."

"Has the impact of savings made through LGR been factored in and the changes in management structure, buildings and greater strength in bargaining of contracts?"

"Ensuring people have access to the right support before reaching crisis is very sensible for all. It's impossible to comment on the others without more context"

"Investment in mainstream SEN and pull expenditure from independent non maintained provision."

Question 7 - 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, 86 respondents provided a response to this question (25%).

Apart from those who answered 'No,' 'None' or 'n/a,' many respondents highlighted areas that they felt should be prioritised, with a number mentioning children's and adult's services including education, social care, early help and SEND. Some who mentioned children's and/or adult's services also highlighted a need to focus on preventative services, along with the view that the council should invest in mental health earlier.

Environment and transport was another theme noted amongst the comments, with several highlighting a need to focus on improvements to the road infrastructure (particularly potholes) and/or flood prevention. There was also support from some respondents for more focus on sustainable transport solutions, with specific references to cycling infrastructure and public transport.

Several comments suggested a need to focus on other specific areas. These included support for the voluntary and community sector (VCS), local businesses, working parents, and for a rise in the living wage. Other comments referenced a need for further analysis and thinking outside the box along with the need for consistent funding as opposed to short term grants.

Other specific areas of focus suggested include free access to waste and recycling centres to prevent fly tipping, improvements in planning and planning reform, along with improving communication between local authorities. Investment in Beaumanor Hall and Park was mentioned as an opportunity to support wider council services, particularly young people, whilst there was also the view that Beaumanor Hall could generate income as a hotel.

A number of comments did suggest other sources of income or funding, particularly using developer contributions to support new housing infrastructure such as schools and roads. Requesting government grants for specific services was mentioned whilst others suggested generating income, for example through investment in rental property and renewable energy, or by charging for services, including learning and development, trade waste, museums and legal services.

Suggestions around further savings and efficiencies was another key theme noted amongst the comments. These included references to shared IT resources, back office costs, management, staffing and structures. Opportunities to leverage the local labour market and reduce commissioning costs by moving away from managing demand to shaping supply was also highlighted. Other more general comments suggested focusing on the basics, potential future exploration of AI, and the view that no growth is needed.

Several areas of concern were raised within the comments. These included general concerns around government funding and the impact of austerity, whilst others mentioned specific service areas such as increasing demand in social care and privatisation, SEND costs,

transport costs, funding of school places, farms sales and staffing concerns. Concern about increased Council Tax or rates and concern around the implications of local government reorganisation was also noted.

A number of respondents felt that they did not have enough detail to respond to the question, whilst a few reflected a general disagreement or negative view of the proposals. Others did not make a specific comment in response to this question but referred to their previous answers.

Several comments indicated general agreement with the ideas for growth or capital development and/or reflected a positive viewpoint, including the view that the council had been run efficiently despite underfunding. Others suggested agreement with the ideas but with a cautionary message, such as the need for wise investment and for it to be ethical, future-proofed, evidence-led, disciplined and aligned with protecting services and

Sample comments (for Q7)

"Children's services are [in] great need and they will eventually move into the adult social care arena - as SEN covers up to 25, they will instantly become part of the [Adult] SC budget when they age out. - focus on this holistically to ensure support is in place earlier and maximise independence would be beneficial and reduce the strain on adult services."

"Potholes need sorting more roads need gritting in bad weather"

"I generally agree but would say that the majority of the cost for new school places should be met by the developers of the new housing."

"Some chargeable services for those that can afford it e.g. learning & development modules for businesses"

"Greater use of shared IT resources. Inc Children's adults and external. Spending on flood prevention/infrastructure. So much time and money is lost to the Department/government in time wasted."

"You haven't really provided any detail. Presume investment for new school places should be funded through developer contributions, or does the Council have to top this up - if so by how much. What are the proposals for social care accommodation - where will it be. Is this the right time given pending LGR and potential boundary changes with the City? Where is the investment in roads going - Melton [distributor] - but what else? Are there plans to break the endless cycle of filling potholes, rather than improving roads."

"Why had it taken so long to identify such simple areas of savings"

"Investment and growth should be relative to need and not to the disadvantage of service delivery"

"Ensure that any investment is ethically done and reflects the council core values. Future proof any new buildings/upgrades to be fit for purpose and future proofed to be separated/co-shared if service change or demand reduces."

"The ideas for capital investment appear sound and based on need/demand."

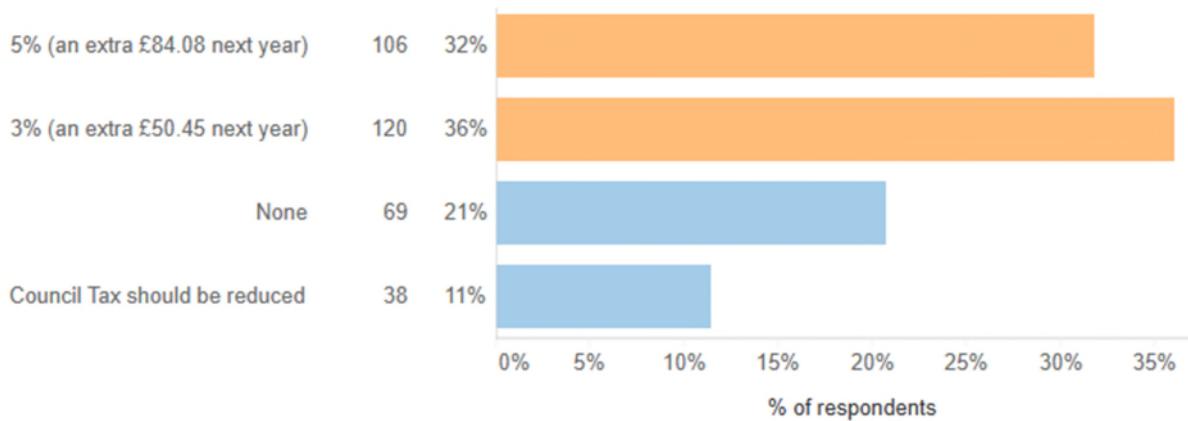
Council Tax increase

Respondents were asked what Council Tax increase they would be prepared to pay next year, to fund county council services (including both the core and adult social care precepts). Chart 7 shows that 68% were prepared to pay an increase in Council Tax.

Just under third of respondents (32%) were prepared to pay an increase of 5% and over a third (36%) were prepared to pay an increase of 3%

Just over a fifth (21%) said they did not want any increase in Council Tax and just over a tenth (11%) said they thought Council Tax should be reduced.

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



Base = 333

Statistical analysis showed that LCC employees (39%) and those aged 45-54 (42%) were significantly more likely to agree with a total Council Tax increase of 5%, when compared to the average (32%). Residents (25%) were significantly less likely to agree to an increase of 5% than the average.

When compared to the average (36%), respondents who were aged over 55 (46%) and those living in Blaby (53%) were significantly more likely to agree to a Council Tax increase of 3%, whereas respondents aged 35-44 were significantly less likely to agree (25%).

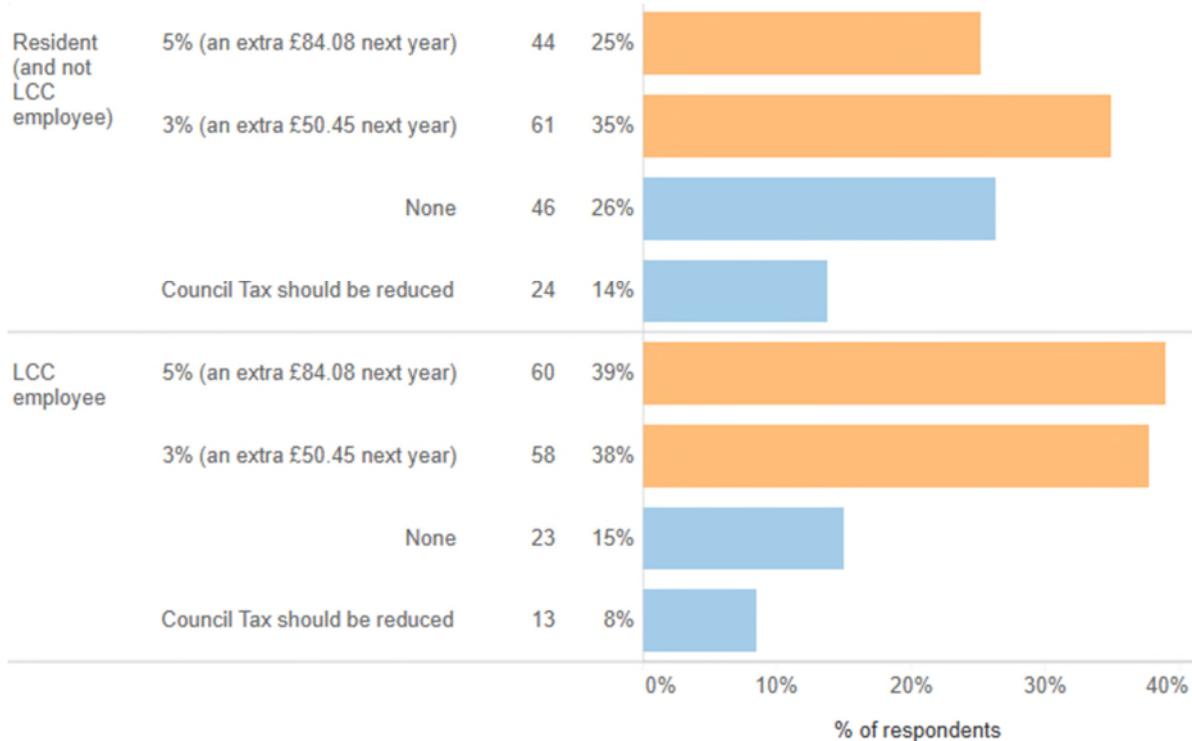
Of those who indicated a preference for no increase in Council Tax, residents (26%) were significantly more likely to agree when compared to the average (21%). LCC employees (15%) were significantly less likely to agree with no increase in Council Tax compared to the average (21%).

Respondents aged 35-44 (22%) or those who said they were a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under (19%) were significantly more likely to be in favour of reducing Council Tax than the average (11%). Those aged over 55 (6%), those who were not a parent or carer of a young person (6%) and those living in Blaby (2%) were significantly less likely to be in favour of reducing Council Tax than the average (11%).

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 (39%) were prepared to pay a Council Tax increase of 5% compared to residents (25%). A slightly higher proportion of LCC employees (38%) were prepared to pay an increase of 3% when compared to residents (35%).

A larger proportion of residents were not prepared to pay any increase in Council Tax (26%) or thought Council Tax should be reduced (14%) compared to LCC employees (15% and 8%, respectively).

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



Resident base: 175

LCC employee base: 154

Question 9 - 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, 136 respondents provided a response to this question (39%). Apart from those who responded "No" or "None", the response to this question was mixed.

Comments could be broadly grouped by theme. The most common theme concerned the efficiency of the council, which contained general comments about improving efficiency and productivity, but also more specific comments referencing children's services expenditure being out of control, that large salaries should be reduced and the council needing to live within its means.

Another common theme was criticism of the information provided for the consultation, with some respondents stating that the information was not sufficient, not clear, lacked detail and that the proposals were too vague.

The financial impact of a Council Tax rise was mentioned by several respondents, often relating to the cost of living. Some felt that any rise should not exceed inflation or other rises in income, whilst others said it was unaffordable and would cause hardship. A similar number of comments suggested that the council had 'promised' to either freeze or reduce Council Tax and some felt that this promise had been broken.

There was some support for raising Council Tax, with a few respondents who felt it was necessary and would be preferable to reducing services. Several respondents felt the county should receive more from Central Government, indicating concern that Leicestershire was not receiving 'fair' funding.

The theme of consultants was again mentioned with concerns about reduced consultant spending being mentioned by some respondents. Others mentioned specific topics including reducing spending on flags, improving youth facilities, increasing spending on schools, improving road repairs and reducing Adult Social Care. The view that there should be no change to working patterns and that redundancies should be avoided was also noted.

Sample comments (for Q9)

"It looks like there needs to be a reduction in the amount spent on adult social services"

"I disagree with your approach. You should be raising Council Tax instead of relying on savings- let's face it, 'savings' is just a euphemism for cuts."

"We simply can't afford to pick up more and more in taxation - residents are stretched, we can't afford our own bills. We're at our wits' end, and the thought of putting up council tax further is such a blow. Please don't punish us further, we just can't manage to pay more."

"Should be focused on wasteful expenditure, overstaffing and lack of productivity"

"You continue to increase council tax... but the services do not justify the increase."

"You said they'd be no increase to council tax. Yet here we are!"

"Do not employ external consultants and reinvest that money in something more practical."

"Not much detail yet... interested to see how this vague plan will work."

"Changes are needed in the council's structure to enable targeted prevention, and more help for people who need it"

"Council Tax increases appear to be your only answer but are NOT affordable for many residents who struggle to meet day to day living costs. I work for LCC and my annual salary is not in line with inflation or increases with the proposed council tax increase. I do not agree with this"

"I don't agree with the council tax increase but cannot see another way of boosting our income - However fair funding from central government should be a must - Leicestershire is one of the lowest funded councils and has been for years to bring us in line with other comparable authorities may fill some of the gaps we have"

"School and nursery funding is essential"

Communications

Question 10 - How the respondents found out about the consultation

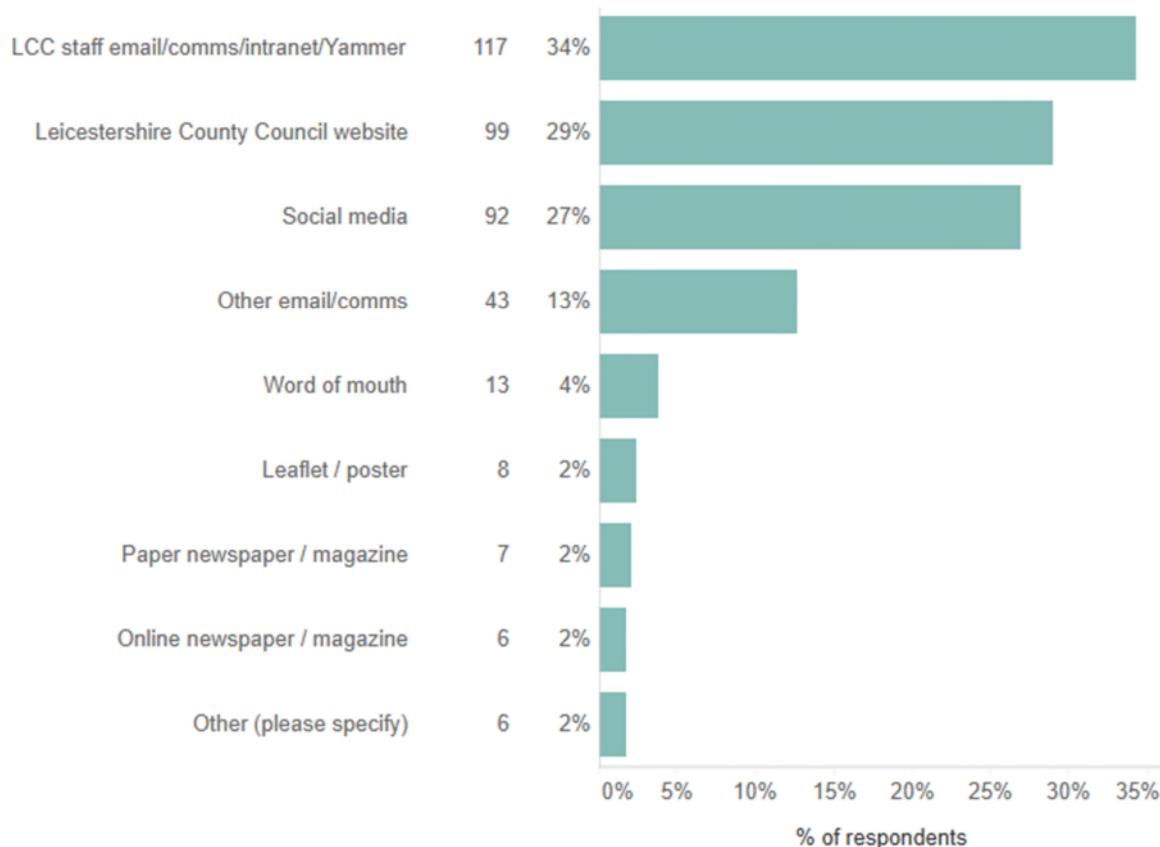
The questionnaire asked respondents how they found out about this consultation.

Chart 9 shows that over a third (34%) of respondents said they found out about the consultation through LCC staff email/comms/intranet/Yammer and a similar proportion found out through the Leicestershire County Council website (29%) or social media (27%).

Over a tenth of respondents said they found out from other emails or communications (13%). 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 message from a Parish Council, a Cabinet report and LinkedIn or other social media.

Chart 9 - How respondents found out about the consultation (multiple response)



Base = 341

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire



Have your say on our draft budget plans 2026 - 2030

Background

We've published our four-year draft budget proposals for 2026-30.

Uncertainty around Government funding and relentless growth in demand for services is dominating - 20% more compared to the previous budget.

We know that action is needed to bridge a budget gap, forecast to exceed £100m by 2030. We're carrying out an efficiency review to help identify opportunities to close the gap and these proposals include some early ideas to reduce costs.

Over the next few months, the review expects to identify more options to unlock savings, allowing us to develop a comprehensive efficiency plan.

Our yearly net budget totals £660m. The county council is one of the biggest organisations in Leicestershire, spending more than £20m 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.

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, or the supporting information enclosed before completing the survey: <http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/budget>

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

The closing date for this consultation is midnight **18 January 2026**.

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

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 2026-2030 spending plans for consultation.

The proposals at a glance:

- A budget gap of over £100m by 2029/30
- Around £131m more to support vulnerable people – in response to huge increase in demand
- Next year's proposals show the extra income that would be raised by a 2.99% Council Tax rise - but the final level won't be agreed until February, when there should be clarity on Government funding
- £63m to cover National Living Wage and inflation increases
- £45m of savings – plus early opportunities identified in our efficiency review
- A £456m four-year capital pot – to pay for improving roads, providing social care accommodation and new school places needed to support new housing

The Council Tax bill for county council services in 2025/26 is currently £1,681.50 per year for a band D property. Every 1% increase in Council Tax generates £4.2m of extra income each year to help close the budget gap and reduce the need to make savings.

Council Tax is one of the most important considerations when preparing the council's budget. It is an important source of income and an increase in Council Tax can help protect vital services by closing the budget gap. We are also aware of the need to balance any increase in Council Tax with the impact it has on our residents.

The 2.99% increase currently included in the draft budget proposals will raise income of £12.9m - to help close the budget gap and reduce the need to make savings - and increase bills by 97p per week. If the council decides to go for the maximum increase (4.99%), bills would increase by a further 65p and raise a further £8.6m to fund existing services (£21.5m in total).

Q4 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
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 Are there any savings you disagree with?

The council is carrying out an in-depth review of all of its spending. Savings opportunities are likely to be focused on the following areas:

- Targeted prevention in the community - proactively supporting residents before they reach a crisis point and need formal support from the council
- Reducing demand - focusing on how we maximise independence for residents and improve outcomes independence
- Procurement of external spend - improvements in how the council awards and manages contracts to ensure we are procuring the highest quality services, at the best value
- Reviewing how the council is set up and structured and how services are delivered
- Income - looking to maximise the income collected for services that the council charges for
- Use of technology/ artificial intelligence to improve efficiency

Q6 To what extent, if at all, do you think the following areas should contribute to savings?

	A great deal	To some extent	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know
Targeted prevention in the community -proactively supporting residents before they reach a crisis point	<input type="radio"/>				
Reducing demand - focusing on how we maximise independence for residents	<input type="radio"/>				
Procurement of external spend - improvements in how the council awards and manages contracts	<input type="radio"/>				
Reviewing how the council is structured and how services are delivered	<input type="radio"/>				
Income - looking to maximise the income collected for services that the council charges for	<input type="radio"/>				
Use of technology/ artificial intelligence to improve efficiency	<input type="radio"/>				

Do you think the areas above are the right areas to focus on? Are there any areas where you think we could make further savings?

Q7 Do you have any comments about the areas identified for growth or capital investment?

The table below gives an example of the financial impact of different Council Tax increases, both for the Council's budget but also for the amount a household has to pay:

Q8 Bearing in mind the Council Tax information above, what Council Tax increase would you be prepared to pay next year to fund county council services (including both the core and adult social care precepts).

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

- 5% (an extra £84.08 next year)
- 3% (an extra £50.45 next year)
- None
- Council Tax should be reduced
- Don't know

Any other comments

Q9 Do you have any other comments about our draft budget proposals?

Q10 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.

Q11 What is your gender? Please select one option only.

- Male
- Female
- I use another term

Q12 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please enter your age in numbers not words)

Q13 What is your postcode? This will help us understand views in different areas.

Q14 Are you a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under? Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No

Q15 Are you a carer of a person aged 18 or over? Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No

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

Q16 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? Please select one option only.

- Yes
- No

Q17 What is your ethnic group? Please select one option only.

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

Q18 What is your religion or belief? Please select one option only.

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

Q19 What is your sexual orientation? Please select one option only.

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

Thank you for your time. Your views will be considered before the budget is finalised in February 2026.

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

Age	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census (15+) %
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	
Under 15	0	0.0	0.0	16.4
15-24	2	0.7	0.6	11.7
25-34	26	8.7	7.5	12.0
35-44	57	19.0	16.5	12.1
45-54	86	28.7	24.9	13.7
55-64	97	32.3	28.0	13.3
65-74	23	7.7	6.6	11.2
75-84	9	3.0	2.6	7.0
85 or above	0	0.0	0.0	2.6
No reply	46		13.3	

Gender	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census %
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	
Male	125	38.6	36.1	49.4
Female	194	59.9	56.1	50.6
I use another term	5	1.5	1.4	
No reply	22		6.4	

Do you have a long-standing illness or disability?*	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census %
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	
Yes	84	26.7	24.3	16.2
No	231	73.3	66.8	83.8
No reply	31		9.0	

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

Ethnicity	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census %
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	
White	279	91.8	80.6	87.5
Mixed	2	0.7	0.6	2.2
Asian or Asian British	13	4.3	3.8	8.2
Black or Black British	2	0.7	0.6	1.1
Other ethnic group	8	2.6	2.3	1.0
No reply	42		12.1	

Sexual orientation	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census %
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	
Bi	2	0.7	0.7	1.0
Gay or Lesbian	13	4.5	3.8	1.2
Straight/Heterosexual	262	91.6	75.7	91.1
I use another term	9	3.1	2.6	0.2
No reply	60		17.3	6.5

What is your religion?	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
No religion	149	49.2	43.1	40.3
Christian (All denominations)	132	43.6	38.2	45.8
Buddhist	3	1.0	0.9	0.3
Hindu	5	1.7	1.4	3.7
Jewish	1	0.3	0.3	0.1
Muslim	3	1.0	0.9	2.3
Sikh	1	0.3	0.3	1.7
Any other religion or belief	9	3.0	2.6	0.5
No reply	43		12.4	5.5

Are you a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under?	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
Yes	108	34.2	31.2	(Census data includes
No	208	65.8	60.1	all people cared for
No reply	30		8.7	regardless of age)

Are you a carer of a person aged 18 or over?	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
Yes	74	23.6	21.4	(Census data includes
No	240	76.4	69.4	all people cared for
No reply	32		9.2	regardless of age)

District	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census
		% Ex M/O [#]	% Inc M/O [#]	%
Blaby	47	18.3	13.6	14.5
Charnwood	55	21.4	15.9	25.8
Harborough	25	9.7	7.2	13.7
Hinckley & Bosworth	43	16.7	12.4	16.0
Melton	15	5.8	4.3	7.3
North West Leicestershire	42	16.3	12.1	14.7
Oadby & Wigston	7	2.7	2.0	8.1
Missing/ Invalid/ Non-Leics Postcode	23	8.9	6.6	
	89		25.7	

National IMD quintile 2019	346	Survey Responses		2021 Census
		% Ex NR*	% Inc NR*	%
1 (most deprived)	6	2.3	1.7	1.6
2	26	10.1	7.5	10.7
3	44	17.1	12.7	16.6
4	94	36.6	27.2	33.5
5 (least deprived)	87	33.9	25.1	37.6
Null / No reply	89		25.7	

*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: "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		Parent/Carer u17		Carer o18		Sexual Orientation		District		IMD Quintile		RfU Classification			
Agree	44	52	41	20	39	45	68	46	55	43	47	33	46	50	21	42	48	38	41	38	20	48	30	40	48
Neither agree nor disagree	28	26	29	29	40	20	23	11	33	16	30	27	19	22	30	32	25	28	24	21	28	13	23	50	0
Disagree	28	15	30	30	40	41	33	21	21	29	26	43	32	20	47	33	25	28	28	26	25	35	17	14	33
Significance		Very significantly higher		Significantly higher		Similar		Very significantly lower		Significantly lower		Suppressed													

Matrix 2**Question 6: "To what extent, if at all, do you think the following areas should contribute to savings?"**

a) Targeted prevention in the community - proactively supporting residents before they reach a crisis point
 b) Reducing demand - focusing on how we maximise independence for residents

Number	Response	Avg %	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Male	Female	LCC another term	Use another term	35-44	45-54	Under 35	White	Non-white	No religion	Christian (all denominations)	Non-Christian	Straight/Heterosexual	LGBT+	Baby	Charwood	Melton	North West Leicestershire Authority	Non-Leicestershire Authority	Hinckley and Bosworth	Oadby and Wigston	1 - most deprived	5 - least deprived	Urban	Rural	IMD Quintile	IMD Classification								
37	A great deal / to some extent	81	79	85	75	60	70	83	89	83	84	80	82	72	81	82	77	83	80	85	80	74	81	93	83	65	64	90	87	76	71	100	85	74	80	87	81	84	
	Not very much / not at all	19	17	21	15	25	40	30	17	11	17	16	20	18	28	19	18	23	17	20	15	20	26	19	7	17	35	36	10	13	24	29	0	15	26	20	13	19	16
	A great deal / to some extent	78	80	76	80	77	60	75	87	74	77	77	80	76	78	83	77	84	76	74	80	64	80	93	78	74	79	82	83	71	71	83	73	71	81	85	81	78	
	Not very much / not at all	22	20	24	20	23	40	25	13	26	23	20	20	24	22	17	23	16	24	26	20	36	20	7	22	26	21	18	17	29	29	17	27	19	15	19	22		
	Reducing demand (Q6b)																																						
	Significance																																						
	Very significantly higher																																						
	Significantly higher																																						
	Significantly lower																																						
	Very significantly lower																																						
	Similar																																						
	Suppressed																																						

Matrix 3

Question 6: "To what extent, if at all, do you think the following areas should contribute to savings?"

c) Procurement of external spend - improvements in how the council awards and manages contracts

d) Reviewing how the council is structured and how services are delivered

January 2026

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Matrix 4

Question 6: "To what extent, if at all, do you think the following areas should contribute to savings?"

income - looking to maximise the income collected for services that the council charges for

f) Use of technology/ artificial intelligence to improve efficiency

Matrix 5
Question 8: "Bearing in mind the Council Tax information above, what Council Tax increase would you be prepared to pay next year to fund county council services (including both the core and adult social care precepts)?"

Role (combined response)	LCC Employee	Resident (and not LCC employee)	Female	Male	I use another term	35-44	45-54	55+	White	Non-white	No religion	Christian (all denominations)	Non-Christian	Lesbian	Gay	Lesbian/Heterosexual	Bi/aby	Chamwood	Harrowough	Merton	North West Leicestershire	Non-Lacestershire authority	Hinkley and Bosworth	Dadby and Wigston	Leicester	1 - most deprived	2 - least deprived	3 - least deprived	4 - least deprived	5 - least deprived	Rural	Urban	IMD Quintile	RU Classification				
5% (an extra £34.08 next year)	32	39	25	29	37	40	25	42	15	34	32	33	34	21	35	30	32	28	35	35	32	34	30	25	38	33	29	37	30	33	30	40						
3% (an extra £50.45 next year)	38	33	41	29	20	25	32	37	40	44	34	38	25	34	44	27	33	38	35	37	32	38	53	40	38	13	34	30	37	29	17	32	38	47	41	31		
None	21	15	28	22	17	20	27	19	28	14	15	22	19	21	17	18	20	22	19	23	18	15	27	13	27	4	12	0	17	20	21	13	17	19				
Council Tax should be reduced	11	8	14	7	16	20	22	7	22	6	10	11	9	33	10	10	23	10	6	8	13	12	14	11	2	8	13	27	10	9	15	43	0	10	11	7	11	10

Significance
■ Very significantly higher ■ Significantly higher ■ Significantly lower ■ Very significantly lower ■ Suppressed



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.

ਜੇ ਆਪ ਆ ਮਾਹਿਤੀ ਆਪਨੀ ਭਾਖਾਮਾਂ ਸਮਝਵਾਮਾਂ ਓਤੀ ਮਦਦ ਠਚਨਾਂ ਹੋ ਤੋ 0116 305 6803 ਨੰਬਰ ਪਰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਨੇ ਅਮੇ ਆਪਨੇ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਵਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਕਰੀਂਗੇ।

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

ਏਹੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਿਜੇਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵ ਬੁਝਾਰ ਜਨ੍ਯ ਆਪਨਾਰ ਯਦਿ ਕੋਨ ਸਾਹਾਇਤੇਰ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਹੋ, ਤਥੇ 0116 305 6803 ਏਹੀ ਨੰਬਰੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰਲੇ ਆਮਰਾ ਉਪਯੂਕਤ ਬਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਬਾਬੁਲ ਕਰਵੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد کا رہے تو راہ 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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