

**Boston Borough Council  
Budget 2025-26  
Consultation Report  
Published**



### Introduction to this consultation

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

### Methodology

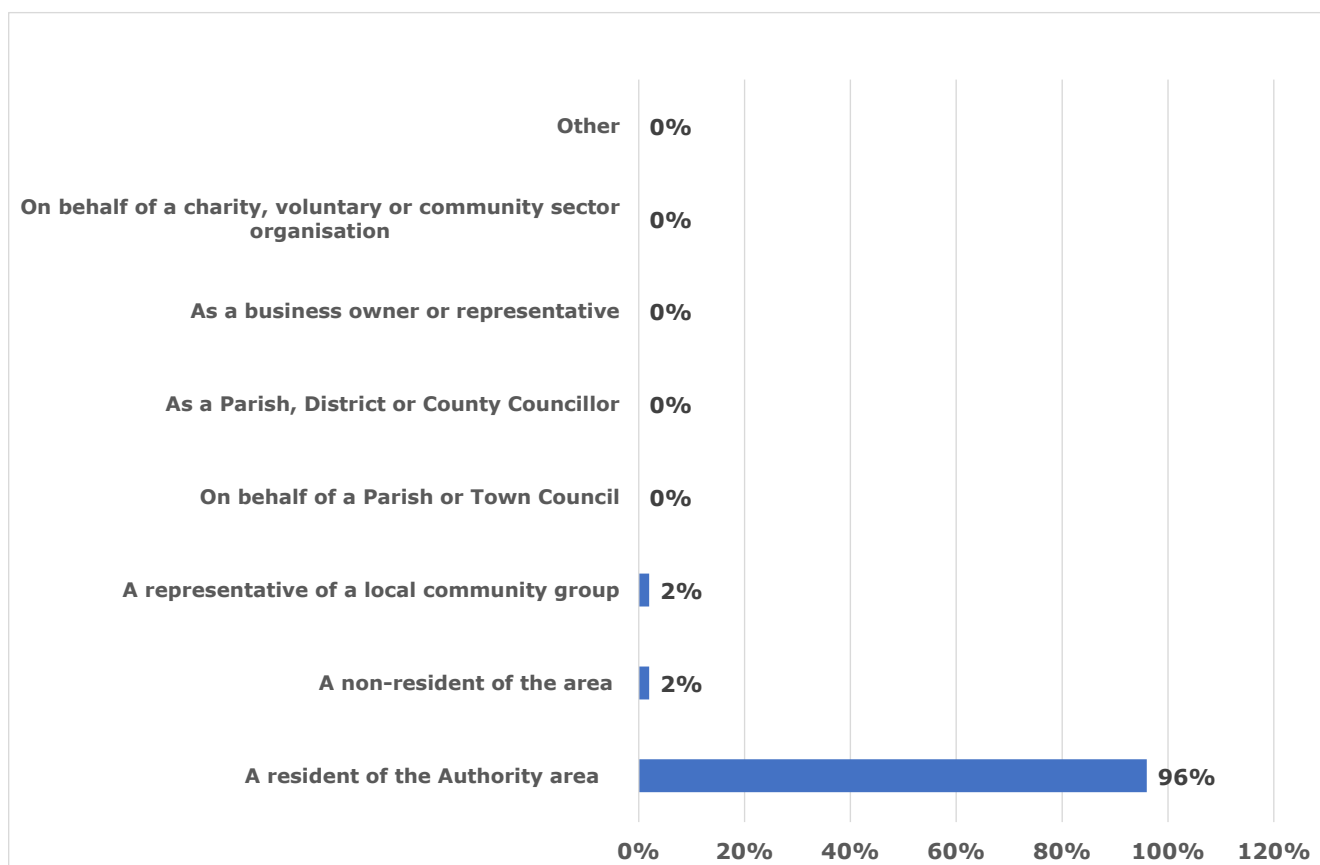
3. A media release was issued to local newspapers to promote the consultation and social media activity was ongoing throughout the consultation period.
4. A link to the electronic questionnaire was made available on the Council's website and in the Boston Bulletin. Paper copies of the questionnaire were available on request.
5. It should be noted that base data has been rounded to the nearest number (so may add up to between 99% and 101%).
6. No comparisons have been made to the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2023/24 as the questions in this survey are different.

### Response Rate

7. 50 electronic responses were received; an increase of 41 responses when compared with the previous consultation exercise undertaken in 2023/24.

## Results and Analysis

8. All respondents were asked in what capacity they had responded to the consultation. The chart below shows that the majority (96%) of all respondents responded as 'A resident of the Authority area'. It also shows that the remaining 4% of all respondents responded as either 'A representative of a local community group' (2%) or 'A non-resident of the area' (2%).



9. One respondent responded as 'A representative of a local community group' and were asked who they responded on behalf of. They stated that they responded on behalf of 'Boston Friends'
10. All respondents were advised that to deliver on the agreed priorities, both financial and non-financial; and to help direct and manage resources effectively and efficiently, the Council set an annual delivery plan (a link to the current version on the partnership's website). They were then advised that following a period of high inflation and financial pressures that both residents and businesses were experiencing, the Council was looking to find different and innovative ways of working.

All respondents were then given the opportunity to state what changes they thought the Council could implement in order to support this. Numerous suggestions were made such as decreasing the number of projects and focusing on the ones that have the largest impact on people and areas that require it the most, consulting with the businesses that have expressed interest in trading in the town

and being flexible with them about rates, signage and fascia. One respondent suggested promoting the town centre and another thought it would be a good idea to have a Police presence in the town. A further respondent thought the Council should enforce byelaws on anti-social behaviour. One respondent suggested the Council should take on communal spaces associated with new builds so that those residents didn't have to pay a service charge as well as Council Tax. A full list of suggestions are detailed below.

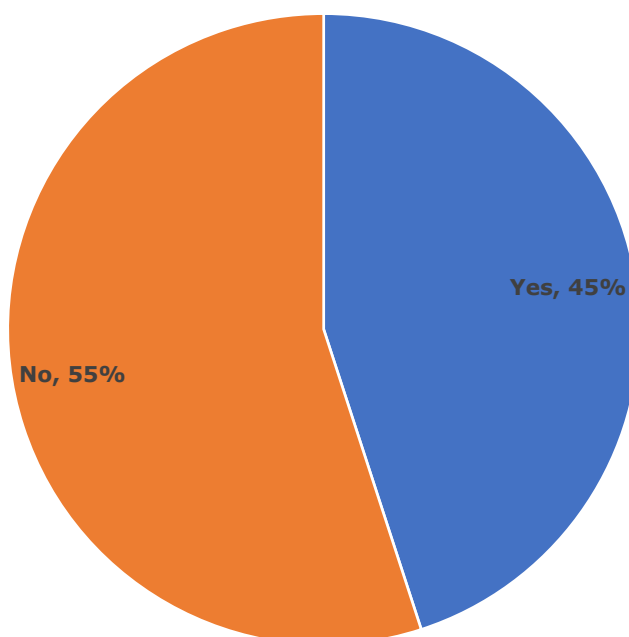
- How about everyone just gets paid minimum wage that would save millions
- Take charge of own administration and maintenance works.
- Decrease the amount of projects and focus on the ones that have the largest impact on the people and areas that require it most. A lot of project sound good and make good headlines, but the projects that really matter and have true impact are the ones that are less glamorous.
- I believe that LCC is spending too much on IDB's. I think IDB should be nationalised and/or be funded by farmers who's land benefits. I think a lot of the initiatives are a waste of time and money and will lead to increased council tax. I feel that CT should be reformed so it is no longer a regressive tax. I think LCC is wasting money, but is probably under financial pressure, due to their Statutory duties.
- Reduce the number of councillors and abolish the mayor
- Reinstate council taking on communal spaces on new builds so residents are not expected to pay both council tax and service charge increases or subsidise council tax for residents on new builds as other residents on older estates are also getting grounds maintenance for their paid council tax where as new build owners are receiving less service for the same money.
- Stop giving benefits and discounts to people already on benefits
- I did look at the plan. A massive amount of information , much of it delivered in technical and "corporate speak". I just want the authority to which I pay my council tax to maximise the amount which it receives from the tax and spend it in the most effective and financially viable way, as decided by the elected members.
- Stop highway maintenance travelling for two paid hours a day to come to Boston to work employ local people for local jobs
- The town is desperate for a visible police presence, on foot. The current situation is unacceptable. More needs to go towards that. Why is so much going to the drainage board??? We have a flood defence now.
- Consult with the hundreds of companies that have expressed interest in trading in the town and be very flexible this time. I have spoken to dozens of national firms and small businesses who were very keen to trade here but hit a brick wall when consulting with the council. Most were shocked by business rates here and spoke of rigid rules regarding signage and fascia's. Boston has lost millions of pounds in revenue due to these failures to negotiate and the word has spread throughout the sector
- Forget about the arts and culture until things recover financially
- Take control of more of the services and collect the income
- Council members to pay for their own meals, hotels, travel expenses etc.
- Promote town centre premises occupation to raise business rates.
- a moratorium on councillors expenses and remunerations.

- Enforce all bylaws on antisocial behaviour and generate income by punitive action.
- The amount you spend on work. From little jobs to major i.e. Geoff Moulder, you and council get screwed. But do it because it's not your money, so don't care.
- Trim down expenses claims

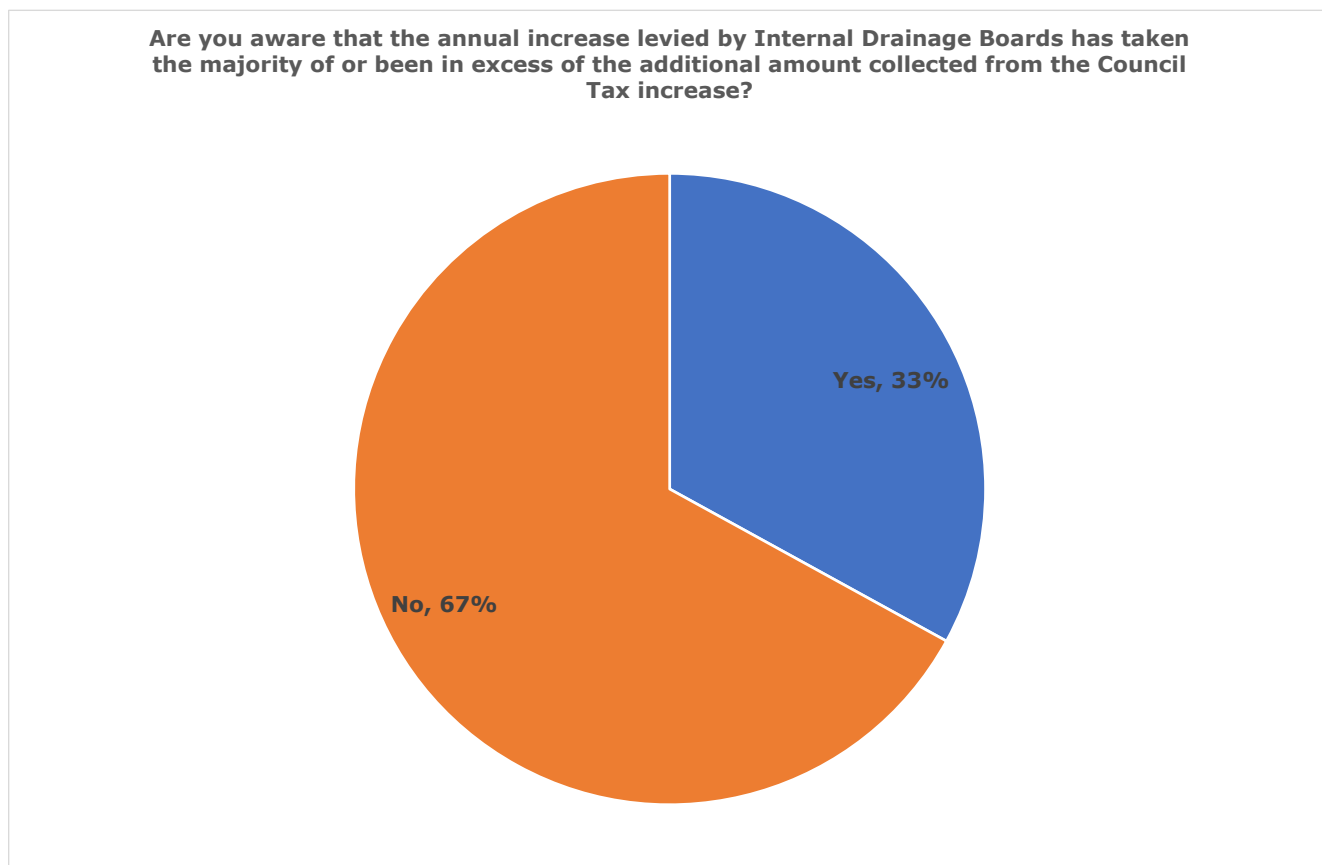
11. All respondents were informed that at times of high river and canal levels, pumping stations played a vital role in reducing the impact of flooding to homes, businesses, and farmland. Furthermore, these stations and some waterways were managed by public bodies called Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs).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

All respondents were asked if they were aware that for the equivalent of every £10 of the Council Tax charged to properties, Boston Borough Council only received £0.99p, and of that, the equivalent of £0.64p was passed on to the Internal Drainage Boards? The pie chart below shows that 45% of all respondents were aware that for the equivalent of every £10 of the Council Tax charged to properties, Boston Borough Council only received £0.99p, and of that, the equivalent of £0.64p was passed on to the Internal Drainage Boards, with the remaining 55% stating that they were not aware.

**Are you aware that for the equivalent of every £10 of the Council Tax charged to properties, Boston Borough Council only receives £0.99p and of that the equivalent of £0.64p is passed on to the Internal Drainage Boards?**

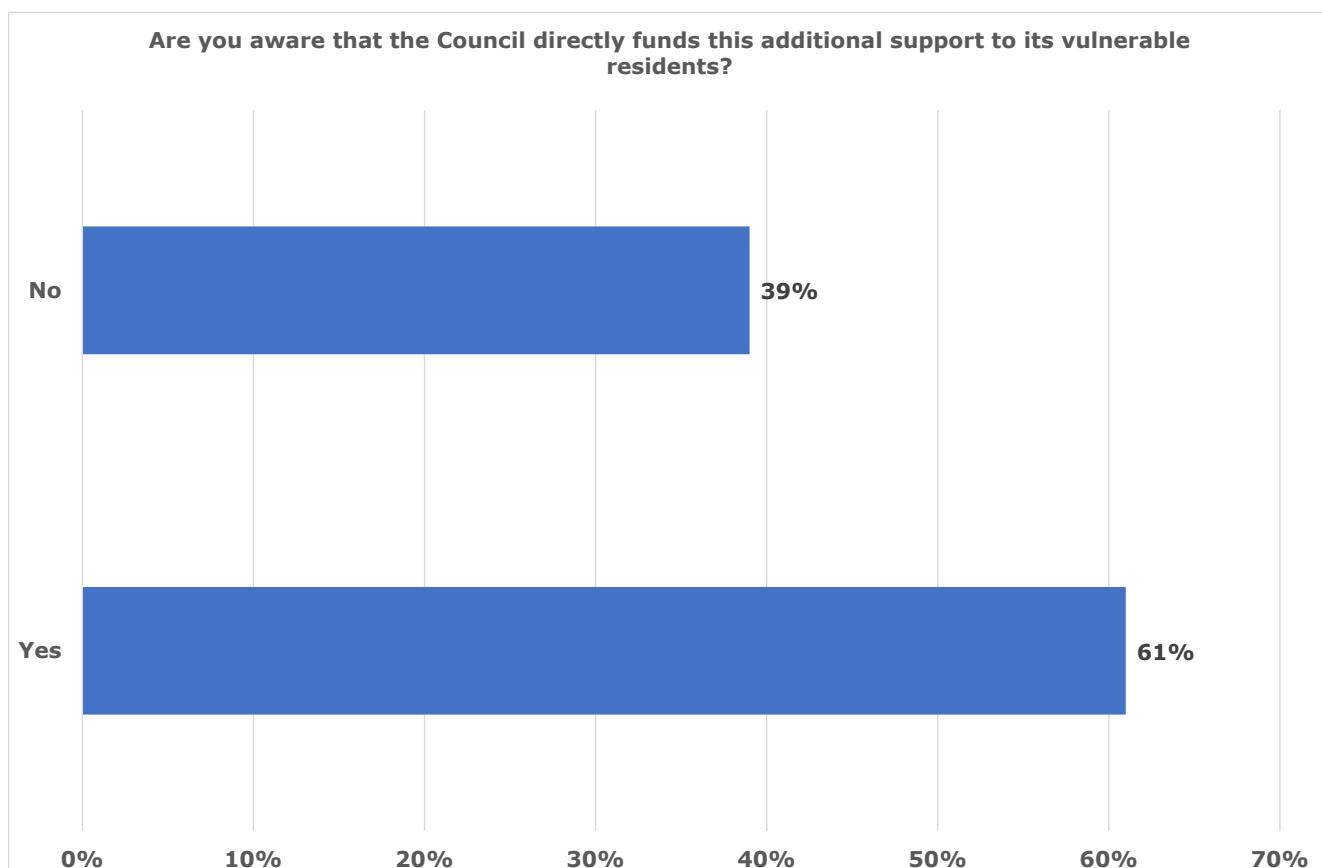


12. The pie chart below shows that 33% of all respondents were aware that the annual increase levied by Internal Drainage Boards had taken the majority of or been in excess of the additional amount collected from the Council Tax increase, with the remaining 67% stating that they were not aware.



13. All respondents were advised that the Council Tax Support Scheme provided financial assistance through a reduction in Council Tax bills for households on a low income or receiving certain benefits. Boston Borough's scheme for working-age applicants was means-tested, with special consideration for vulnerable groups, including families with children, individuals with disabilities, and those with caring responsibilities. Additionally, the scheme protected War Disablement Pensioners, War Widows, War Widowers and Care Leavers. They were also advised that since 2013, the Council had offered a support scheme that covered up to 75% of Council Tax for working-age households on low incomes. Currently, the scheme supported around 4,700 households at a cost of approximately £4.38 million annually. A link to the Council Tax Support Scheme was provided, should respondents need more information.

All respondents were then asked if they were aware that the Council directly funded the additional support to its vulnerable residents? The chart below shows that 61% of all respondents stated they were aware that the Council directly funded the additional support to its vulnerable residents; with the remaining 39% stating they were not aware.



14. All respondents were given the opportunity to make any comments. Some respondents commented that the whole system needed an overhaul especially Internal Drainage Boards. Others thought that more money was needed from Lincolnshire County Council or the Government. One respondent queried whether landowners contributed towards the Internal Drainage Boards. A couple of respondents felt that there was little help available to those on low incomes and not on benefits but those on benefits tended to receive help. A further respondent commented that pressure should be put on employers to pay a decent wage so that residents did not rely on the Council for certain benefits. A full list of comments are listed below.

- The percentage must be reduced to 50% support. We are all paying this and clearly it is no longer affordable until a long-term IDB funding solution is found.
- Support the vulnerable as it's greatly appreciated
- With the number of 'vulnerable residents' taking so much of the money paid by Boston residents who probably don't have much income themselves it is obvious that more money needs to come from either Lincolnshire CC or from central Government.
- Do land owners pay towards the drainage board costs as they are the people who need the drainage most.

- To save money how about all the hierarchy in Boston get paid the minimum wage like all normal staff that would save millions and all elected members in the Council is councillors do it for free. A
- According to Google, my Council Tax is higher than a similar property in Kensington, yet the facilities are much less, and 'we' are expected to have the likes of pylons and wind generators, without thought to maintain their standards.
- I feel that closer inspection of those in receipt of the support needs to be taken as many use the system to their advantage when it is needed, which is costly and takes away from those in genuine need.
- Very little support for low incomes, earlier in the year I was a Universal Credit recipient. No support with CT was given. Whole system requires reform in my opinion. Especially IDB's. They should be paid for by farmers and/or the nation.
- Non-working households that are not unemployed due to retirement or illness should have measures to encourage them into work rather than living off of benefits as though they were an income.
- As the vulnerable receive benefits according to their situation the support should be reduced from 75% to not more than 50%.
- People not on benefits struggle more than those on benefits yet get no help because they bother to work. Stop giving more discounts to those already on benefits! I'm on low income but can't get help because I work, yet people on benefits earn more than I do yet qualify because they are on benefits! How is this fair?
- I do not want to contribute to other people's council tax. I already contribute to other people's electricity, gas, water, and broadband bills.
- I would just want to be reassured that the Council Tax is collected from every individual who has a liability to pay the tax.
- Please keep up support for this
- Woefully under resourced Council Tax fraud prevention. It needs to go to those who need it. I've seen with my own eyes it wrongly applied (worked on council tax)
- The system needs an overhaul
- The population of Boston is enormous now. And the services are at the worst level in living memory I feel that we need an independent audit to see why the maths do not add up and to find the missing millions.
- I think support for working aged people, who can but don't work, should be removed. The working people of this country pay enough already.
- This should come directly from the government not from Boston council tax!
- The Council should satisfy themselves and rate payers that they get good value for money and not just hand over the money using the providers financial statements. Any provider can spend money just to make sure they exceed budget so as to ensure the following years allowance.
- For single persons council tax should be halved unless they have more than two bedrooms
- There should be pressure on employers to pay a decent wage so that the reliance on handouts by local Councils is removed.



- Enforce the law, issues fines, reactivate the speed cameras. Reap the benefits and do your job in an effective, positive, and non-wasteful manner.
- Public toilets
- Look at all staff and check if actually needed, other front-line organisations have done this