

Lincoln Citizens' Panel 'You Said We Did' Updates from November 2023 Survey

Within this section includes an overview of some of the activity, which has / is taking place following receiving feedback from panel members to the previous Lincoln Citizens' Panel survey. Unfortunately, the council is not able to action all feedback received due to costs and staff resources, however, we aim to act upon as much feedback as possible to improve service delivery.

Cost of Living Support

Within the feedback from the November 2023 survey, the majority of respondents informed us they were not aware of the cost of living support available in the city and where this was publicised. Since this survey, the team has been working hard to address some of these issues and this includes:

- City of Lincoln Council has appointed a dedicated Cost of Living Co-ordinator to ensure the cost of living pages on the council's website are regularly updated and continue to provide key information on the cost of living support provided by the council and the support provided nationally.
- Regular cost of living leaflets have been produced and distributed to ensure that residents are aware of the cost of living support that is available to them.
- The Communications Team working with the Cost of Living Co-ordinator have provided cost of living information and details of the support available through regular posts on the council's social media channels.
- The council has recently delivered Household Support Fund 4 for the period 1st Apr 2023 to 31st Mar 2024 providing key financial support to those most in need in the city. This has included open application scheme's on the council's website and working with different organisations and charities within the city to ensure that the most vulnerable and in need are supported. The support provided has included Post Office payout awards, supermarket vouchers, energy vouchers and direct cash payments by BACS.

Revenues and Benefits Service

The feedback received from residents on the Revenues and Benefits questions within the previous Citizens' Panel survey focused on probate information, issues with demand letters and difficulty being able to speak to a member of the team. The team have provided some clarification on this below.

Response received from panel member – 'Trying to get information on an inherited, empty property and what to do about it particularly because probate took so long'.

Response received from Revenues and Benefits Team – ‘Council Tax probate is explained on our website on the following link <https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/council-tax/apply-council-tax-discount>. If you are unable to access the website or need more information, please call 01522 881188.

Response received from panel member – ‘Still sending out demand letters when I have paid in full’.

Response received from Revenues and Benefits Team – ‘Correspondence from the team may at times cross with a payment in the post or the banking system. Any payment received from the customer should appear on the customer’s Council Tax account at the end of the day that it is received’. The team doesn’t send demand letters where customers have paid in full.

Response received from panel member – ‘When I emailed the support team nobody replied at all - I had to call them on several occasions’.

Response received from Revenues and Benefits Team - The team receive approximately 500-800 emails a week depending on the time of the year. In addition to this the team also receive 1,000-1,500 forms online each week and make every effort to try and answer these as soon as possible. Sometimes responses to e-mails may take longer due to staff sickness, resource pressures and training new staff. To help ensure responses are sent as quickly as possible, customers are asked to provide all the relevant information regarding their enquiry, including contact details.

Waste Management

Feedback received from residents on the Waste Management questions focused on sack collections and residents not being happy with the where their bin had been left after collection. The team has provided some clarification on this below.

Analysis from the survey - 50% of respondents using sacks for their waste collection felt they got too many sacks where 7.1% of respondents felt they did not receive enough sacks for their waste collection.

50% of respondents felt they could manage with bag deliveries monthly, and 35.7% felt they could cope with bulk sack deliveries every 3 months.

Response received from Waste Management Team - Currently residents with sack collections for their waste get 2 sacks each week - this mirrors the capacity of the wheeled bins. The council is considering changing to an on-demand service, with rolls of sacks delivered, but with a tag reminding people to reorder when down to the last half dozen. Such a change may not be possible before the end of the council’s existing waste contract, which expires in September 2026. This is because the council’s contractor has pre-ordered and already taken delivery of the sacks to get bulk buy cost benefits. The council will continue to negotiate rolling out the sacks with the reminder tags under the existing contract, however, at very least will look to have made a clear decision on this under the new contract.

Analysis from the survey - The single biggest complaint regarding the waste collection service from respondents was that their bins were not put back where they were collected from.

Response received from Waste Management Team - The council has raised this with the contractor, and they have reminded all staff to replace bins with care, and not to block drives/paths.