

West Lindsey District Council State of the District 2023



Introduction

Welcome to the Council's annual State of the District Report for 2023. In alignment with the Council's Corporate Plan, the report focuses on two of its main priority areas: 'People' and 'Place'. The State of the District Report is designed to support and inform the Council's decision-making; providing the evidence base to monitor progress against the objectives the Council has set itself in the Corporate Plan and to identify emerging issues and opportunities across the district. Additionally, the report provides useful information to parish councils, residents, businesses and other key stakeholders in the district.

The report provides important information relating to the district of West Lindsey, such as the economy, health and wellbeing, employment, education, housing and public safety. It also provides up to date facts and figures about the demography of the district, compiled from the most recent Census in 2021. The impact of wider issues, such as the pandemic and the rising cost of living are also reflected in the report.

West Lindsey is one of the largest districts in England and one of the most rural in the county of Lincolnshire. One of seven district areas in the county, West Lindsey covers 1,156km² (447 square miles), with the administrative centre in Gainsborough on the River Trent to the west, and the smaller market towns of Market Rasen and Caistor to the east.

Statistics used in this report are the most up to date available, including data from the most recent Census in 2021. If you would like to know more about any of the information contained in this report, please contact Customer Services on 01427 676676 or email corporate.plan@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Overview

The state of the district in 2023 is mixed

Overall, the state of the district remains mixed. There are great differences in the characteristics and levels of need across the district. Some neighbourhoods experience among the highest levels of deprivation in the country, while others are among the most affluent. This range of characteristics, such as wealth, accessibility, infrastructure and deprivation have a varied effect on the needs and aspirations of local people and the delivery of services in the district. Health outcomes are good overall, but below the national average in areas of high deprivation. Adult obesity has worsened significantly, with West Lindsey having the second highest adult obesity rate in England. Conversely, childhood obesity rates have improved, with rates falling below the national average for the first time. Educational attainment is improving, but still remains below the national average at all levels of attainment. Employment levels are rising and unemployment has fallen dramatically following the economy's recovery from the pandemic, however, wages remain below the national average, with the gap widening further for women in work.

Housing has become less affordable although not as much as in the rest of England where the gap in affordability is much higher.

Business confidence is low, which mirrors the national picture due to high inflation, high costs and an uncertain economic outlook.

Levels of crime are relatively low and the visitor economy continues to improve.

Against a backdrop of the rising cost of living and global instability, a mixed outlook is to be expected. The main challenges for West Lindsey now and in the future stem from health inequality, low wages, an uncertain economic outlook, adequate housing supply and tackling climate change. However, the Council remains in a strong position as a systems leader to tackle these issues through its new Corporate Plan and through partnership working and programmes such as Levelling-Up and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

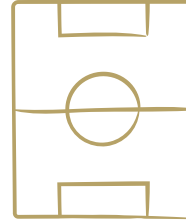
Our People



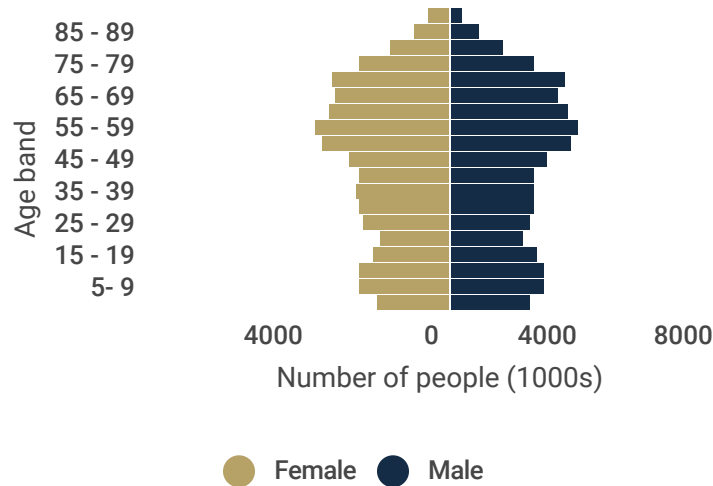
Population Overview

95,570

The population estimate for West Lindsey in 2023. This is a 0.4% increase (370 people) on the previous year. The district's population has risen by 6.7% over the past decade, on a par with the national average. It should be noted that, outside Census years, population size is estimated and may have a margin of error of around 1%.



West Lindsey is the second least densely populated local authority area in the East Midlands with just 82 people per sq km. This is equivalent to two football pitches per resident compared to the most densely populated local authority area (Tower Hamlets), which has the equivalent of 112 people per football pitch.



The population pyramid opposite shows the number of people in West Lindsey on Census Day in 2021, broken down by age-band and sex. In total, there are currently 43,500 women and 46,600 men living in the district. Over the past 10 years, there has been an increase of 28.3% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 0.1% in people aged 15-64 years and an increase of 5% in children aged under 15 years. In 2021, West Lindsey ranked 255th for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, a rise of 3 places since the 2011 Census.

Population Change



The population is growing

The population will grow to 105,700 by 2041, up 10% from today's figure.

The birth rate continues to decline, with 765 live births in 2022, a decrease of 3.4% on the previous year. The number of deaths rose in 2022 to 1,199, up 7.5% on the previous year. This mirrors the national trend of higher than average excess deaths although the reasons for the increase are not clear.

The growth in population can be explained by rising life expectancy and migration.



The population is ageing

The number of children and young people aged 0-19 will remain relatively stable up to 2041. This age group currently makes up 20% of the district's population.

There are currently 56,700 people of working age in the district and this number is not projected to alter significantly over the next 20 years.

The number of people of state pension age and above will rise every year, up from 21,325 in 2020 to 27,179 in 2041, an increase of 27.4%.



Diversity is increasing

As of Census Day 2021, 5.4% of the district's population describe themselves as non-white British, up from 3.6% at the last Census in 2011.

For the first time, the Census collected data relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. For West Lindsey, this showed that 94.9% (75,073 people) of the adult population has a gender identity the same as their sex registered at birth, 0.2% of people define as trans, 0.03% define themselves as non-binary and 0.02% define as another gender identity. 4% (3,817) of people chose not to answer.

Our People: Health Profile



Life expectancy remains varied

A girl born in West Lindsey today can expect to live an average of 83.8 years. This has remained stable and is on a par with the national average (83.4). By contrast, a boy born today can expect to live an average of 78.8 years. This is a slight decline from the previous year (79.5) and is below the national average (79.8).

There are sharp contrasts depending where in the district you live. Life expectancy is 8.9 years lower for women living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, placing the district in the bottom quartile. For men, the figure is 8 years lower.



Adult obesity has worsened significantly

For the first time, childhood obesity has fallen below the national average and West Lindsey has improved from bottom quartile to 2nd quartile for this metric. 20.7% (200) of children in school year 6 are classed as obese which is an increase on the previous year (18.8%) but below the national average (23.4%). This suggests that childhood obesity is showing early signs of stabilising.

By contrast, adult obesity has worsened significantly to 77.3%, up 17% on the previous year and representing the second highest adult obesity rate in England. The national average is 63.8%.



Mortality rates are good

Residents can expect good outcomes for mortality overall, with the district performing in the 2nd quartile for all causes of mortality.

Overall, the under 75 mortality rate is 329.0 (per 100,000). This is better than the national average of 363.4. Likewise, the under 75 mortality rates for cancer (111.1) and cardiovascular disease (67.4) are better than average, although cardiovascular mortality has risen over the past 12 months, in line with the national trend. The reasons for this are currently being explored.

Our People: Physical Activity



Physical activity levels remain stable

Levels of physical activity in adults remains stable. 60.4% of adults participate in at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week. This is the second highest in Lincolnshire (where the county average is 56.4%) and on a par with the national average. 27.7% of adults report being physically inactive.

The picture worsens for children. 47.9% of children aged 16 and under participate in at least 150 minutes of physical activity which is the third lowest in Lincolnshire, but better than the national average. 31.8% of children are physically inactive.

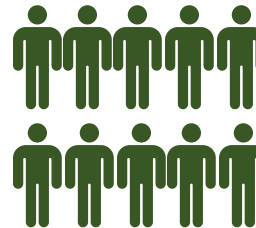
The health costs of physical inactivity to West Lindsey are significant...



1 YEAR
£1,973,266



5 YEARS
£9,866,331



**COST PER 100,000
POPULATION**
£2,126,752

Our People: Poverty and Deprivation

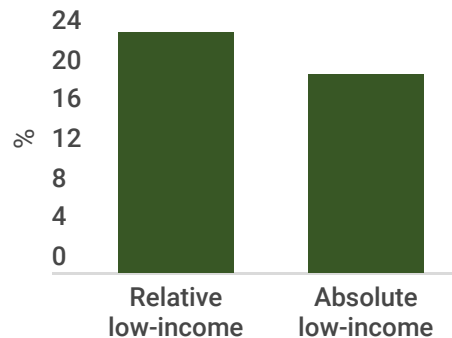


Child Poverty is worsening due to the rising cost of living

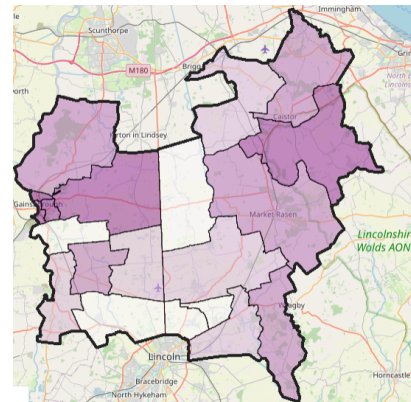
A total of 3,216 children aged 0-15 (20.1%) are living in absolute low income households in West Lindsey, defined as below 60% of the median income. This figure has almost doubled compared to the previous year (10.9%), which can largely be attributed to the rising costs of living in that time. The Gainsborough East ward has the highest rates of child poverty in the district at 34.7% (664 children) while Nettleham has the lowest rates at 7.8% (49 children).

The Gainsborough South-West ward contains neighbourhoods defined as within the 0.1% most deprived in England. Conversely, other areas such as Nettleham are amongst the least deprived.

Deprivation has an impact on health, life expectancy, skills and employment opportunities, with metrics in these areas underperforming for the most deprived neighbourhoods.



20.1% of children in West Lindsey are living in absolute low-income households, almost double the number of the previous year. This is higher than the national average of 15%.



The shaded map shows levels of deprivation in each ward. The darker the colour, the higher the level of income deprivation
(Source: LG Inform Plus)

Our Place



Our Place: Employment and Skills



Unemployment is low

Employment is currently at 84.7%, an increase of 11.1% on the previous year and significantly higher than the national average (75.6%). This equates to 48,600 people in employment across the district.

Economic inactivity has almost halved over the past 12 months, down to 14.2% (7,700 people). This is better than the national average of 21.5%.

Unemployment has fallen by 44% in the 12 months to December 2022 with 1,000 people currently unemployed (2.1%). This is lower than the national average of 3.6%



Wages remain lower than average

At £621 per week, the gross weekly wage remains lower than the national average

The birth rate continues to decline, with 765 live births in 2022, a decrease of 3.4% on the previous year. The number of deaths rose in 2022 to 1,199, up 7.5% on the previous year. This mirrors the national trend of higher than average excess deaths although the reasons for the increase are not clear.

The growth in population can be explained by rising life expectancy and migration.



Educational attainment is mixed

In 2021, the number of people holding at least a level 2 qualification (equivalent to 5 GCSEs) has fallen to 64.5% (35,900 people), down from 76.2% the previous year. Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to A Level) have also fallen, down from 53.4% in 2020 to 51.2% (28,500 people) in 2021.

By contrast, level 4 qualifications (equivalent to degree or HND level) have risen, up from 30.3% in 2020 to 33.6% in 2021 (18,700 people). At all levels, West Lindsey fell below the national average in 2021, the latest year for which data are available.

Our Place: Housing Profile



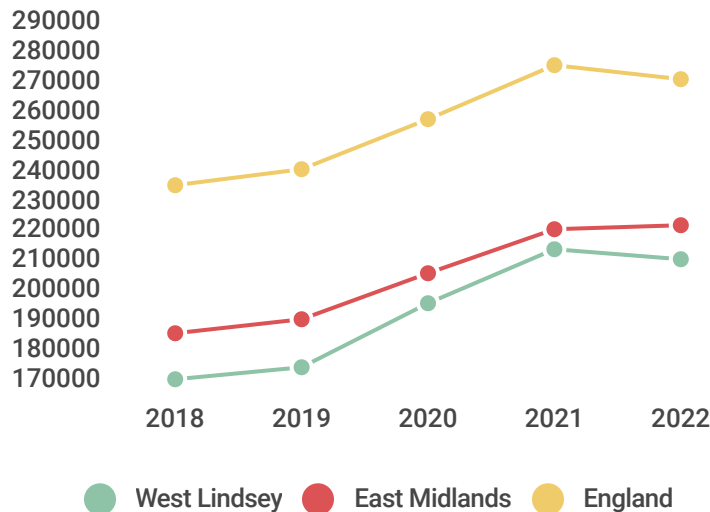
There are 44,737 dwellings in the district, an increase of 1,005 on the previous year. Of these, 41.5% are owned outright compared to 32.5% nationally; while 29.7% are owned with a mortgage compared to 29.8% nationally. 10.9% are socially rented, which is lower than the national average of 17.1% while 17.9% of properties are private rented compared to 20.6% nationally.



As of March 2022, West Lindsey has a deliverable housing supply of 4,018 dwellings, which is the number of homes expected to be delivered in West Lindsey up to March 2027.



As of March 2022, 589 net additional dwellings were completed against the Local Plan target of 1,540 dwellings per year. Of those completed, 72 were affordable dwellings.



As of December 2022, the average house price was £214,995 which is a 1% decrease on the previous year. The fall is in line with the national trend and can be explained by the rise in inflation and interest rates which has impacted the housing market.

Our Place: Housing Condition & Affordability



Housing Affordability has declined

Housing affordability is calculated by dividing house prices for existing dwellings, by gross annual residence based earnings. For West Lindsey, the affordability ratio has worsened to 6.17, compared to 5.94 the previous year. This is in line with the national trend linked to rising inflation, high interest rates and below inflation pay increases in many employment sectors.

In the private rented sector, the median monthly rent of £550 is 37.3% below the national average.



Hazards are an issue in the private rented sector

There are 2,413 private rental properties in West Lindsey that have a serious home hazard, which represents 26.2% of private rental housing stock. This is significantly higher than the national average of 12%.

Hazards in the private rented sector are disproportionately concentrated within the wards of Gainsborough South-West (792 properties), Gainsborough North (310), Market Rasen (198), Hemswell (127) and Wold View (124).



The number of off-grid homes is high

9,941 homes, or 23% of all homes in the district, are not in receipt of mains gas. This is mostly concentrated in a band running from the Thonock Park and Blyton areas and down to Welton, taking in Waddingham and Hemswell.

Being off grid increases the risk of fuel poverty. Heating oil, for example, is not subject to the same price cap as gas and electricity, with off-grid energy prices rising disproportionately higher than mains energy prices over the past 12 months.

Our Place: The Local Economy



The economic outlook is mixed

Gross Value Added (GVA is used to measure the output of the local economy. In 2021, West Lindsey's GVA was just over £1.6 billion, up from £1.4 billion the previous year. Just over £1bn of this was generated by the services sector.

In 2021, the amount of employment floor space in the district increased by 56% to 9,572 square metres. The majority of this was for office and light industrial use, namely three large developments in the district.

Business confidence in Lincolnshire is low, with concerns from businesses focused on declining profitability and rising interest rates. High inflation remains the single biggest point of concern.



Domestic sales did increase during 2022 following the pandemic, but they have stabilised at low levels.



Profitability, cash flow and business investment all fell during 2022 and are not expected to recover during 2023.

Our Place: Access to Broadband

85%

The government's minimum target for UK households with access to gigabit broadband by 2025.

43%

The percentage of households in West Lindsey with access to gigabit broadband, up from 38% the previous year.

76%

The percentage of homes in England that currently have access to gigabit broadband.

90%

The percentage of households in West Lindsey with access to superfast broadband, up 1% on the previous year.

Our Place: Crime



Levels of crime are low and stable

There were a total of 5,456 recorded crimes in West Lindsey during 2021. This was an increase of 1% on the previous year and represents a crime rate of 57 per 1,000 which is unchanged from the previous year and lower than the national average (79 per 1,000).

Violence against the person is down 3% from 2020, while violence without injury is down 7%. Burglary has also fallen, down 15% on 2020 levels, whilst residential burglary fell by 25%.

Shoplifting rose by 44%, which can be explained by the lifting of pandemic restrictions on non-essential retail. Sexual offences have risen by 7% and drug offences rose by 18%.



Incidences of shoplifting, drug offences, sexual offences, stalking and harassment, non-residential burglary and criminal damage all rose during 2021.



Incidences of burglary, violence against the person, violence with and without injury, theft, burglary, residential burglary and vehicle offences all fell during 2021

Our Place: Visitor Economy



The visitor economy is recovering

Spend on the visitor economy in West Lindsey rose by 50% to £111.88m in 2021, although this rise is atypical given the long periods of pandemic restrictions in place during much of 2020. Spend remains below pre-pandemic levels.

A total of 1.6 million tourist day visits were made to the district, which generated £68m for the local economy.

181,000 visits made up 716,700 nights in local accommodation, generating a spend of £5m on local accommodation and £43.6m for the local economy.

3.9

The average number of tourist nights spent in West Lindsey.

90%

Of all tourist visits to West Lindsey are day visits, most of whom visit the district between May and October.

£59.50

The average visitor spend, with 41% of all tourist expenditure being spent on retail, food and drink.

Our Place: Conservation



West Lindsey is a place of natural beauty

Natural nature reserves are designated by Natural England as key places for wildlife and natural features. The district has one such reserve, Bardney Limewoods, which covers 330 hectares of West Lindsey.

The district is also home to two local nature reserves. Owlet, in Blyton and Theaker Avenue in Gainsborough.

It is recommended that there is one local nature reserve for every 1,000 people. West Lindsey is just over half that target, with 0.55 nature reserves per 1,000 people.



Our Sites of Special Scientific Interest are in good condition

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. West Lindsey is home to 15 such sites. 83.6% of the district's SSSIs are in a favourable, or unfavourable but recovering position, equivalent to 7771.16 hectares of land.

The remaining 16.4% are in an unfavourable condition, covering 126.34 hectares of land. These sites are located in Laughton Common, Cliff House, Scotton and Laughton and Laughton Forest Ponds, Lea Marsh and Swallow Wolds.

Our Place: Sustainability and the Environment



Our carbon footprint is set to rise

West Lindsey's carbon emissions have been falling since 2012, although they are likely to rise in the coming year as a result of the new leisure centre in Market Rasen and the new crematorium at Lea Fields.

As of 2019, local CO₂ emissions stood at 6.4 tonnes per person, per year. This is down from 8.1 tonnes in 2012 and represents the second highest emissions in Lincolnshire.

Transport accounts for the highest emissions, at 214.9 kilo tonnes of CO₂, the majority of which is emitted by road transport.

2019 Carbon emissions within the scope of influence of Local Authorities (kilo tonnes CO₂).

