

Guildhall Gainsborough
Lincolnshire DN21 2NA
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AGENDA

This meeting will be recorded and the video archive published on our website

Governance and Audit Committee
Tuesday, 21st April, 2026 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - The Guildhall

Members:

- Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
- Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor John Barrett
- Councillor Eve Bennett
- Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
- Councillor Christopher Darcel
- Councillor David Dobbie
- Councillor Paul Swift
- Alison Adams
- Alexio Chandiwana
- Andrew Morriss

1. **Minutes of Previous Meetings** (PAGES 3 - 6)
To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meetings of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 10 and 24 March 2026 (to follow)
2. **Annual Review of the Constitution** (PAGES 7 - 15)

Paul Burkinshaw
Head of Paid Service
The Guildhall
Gainsborough

Friday 17 April 2026

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 10 March 2026 commencing at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Alison Adams
Alexio Chandiwana
Andrew Morriss

In Attendance:
Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Aaron Macdonald Client Manager RSM
Katy Allen Corporate Governance Officer
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Paul Swift

At the commencement of the meeting at 2.00pm the committee was not quorate. The meeting was adjourned at 2.02pm and resumed at 2.17pm when the quorum was achieved.

55 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

56 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2026 were approved as a correct record.

57 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

58 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The committee received a report outlining the Matters Arising identified at previous meetings.

With no further comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions was **NOTED**.

The committee, at the request of the Chairman, agreed to take Agenda Item No. 6 c) – Partnership Report before Agenda Item No. 6 a).

59 PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Governance Officer providing the Committee with updated details of the key strategic partnerships that the Council are involved in and associated costs.

A councillor referred to the Central Lincs Local Plan and asked whether those costs could be reduced. It was advised that there was a lead officer for each partnership and a response would be provided directly.

A member asked how value for money was assessed, whether an audit process was in place and how this could be reported. In response it was confirmed that more information would be gathered from April onwards to assess value for money. Details of individual partnership audits was included in the report but was also an issue for members to discuss in more detail.

The Chairman asked if there were any partnerships that needed to be added to the audit process. Members agreed further information was needed regarding the Central Lincs Local Plan and that the lead officer be invited to give more detail to the committee.

The committee highlighted that the amount of officer time spent on partnership working should be part of any audit process.

RESOLVED:

That the details provided of the key partnerships be noted and the Council approach to partnership working be noted.

60 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2026

A report was considered presenting the committee with the Internal Audit progress report for March 2026.

It was noted that all audits were on track to be completed on time in accordance with the timetable. Members welcomed the progress that had been made.

RESOLVED:

That the progress to date be noted and the content of the report be agreed.

61 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2026/27

The committee considered a report outlining the Internal Audit Plan for 2026-27 and seeking approval of the plan.

A councillor asked if there was any concern about complacency, whether it was considered to have become overly systemised and whether there was anything that wasn't on the plan that should be. In response it was confirmed that all opinions were considered carefully and if it was felt there were any gaps then these would be raised with members.

A member made reference to the partnership report considered earlier in the meeting and asked if it was possible to link the audit process to partnerships so there was a thread connecting them. In response it was agreed this could be done and this would be reported through the executive summaries for each audit.

A councillor noted there was no mention of Local Government Reorganisation in the risks and whether this needed to be included. It was clarified that the audits dealt with the current position and priorities so any changes would need to be considered as and when they happened and the plan changed as required.

It was highlighted by a councillor that it was important that when using consultants it was important that value for money was achieved and that the workload across departments needed to be monitored to ensure best use of workforce resources.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Plan for 2026-27 be approved

62 REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING ACTIVITY 2024-25

Consideration was given to a report providing the committee with an update of Whistleblowing incidents received in the Financial Year ended 31 March 2025.

Members noted there had been no incidents reported for the period.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be noted and the committee should continue to receive annual updates in relation to any incidents.

63 REVISED MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL

The committee received a report seeking consideration of the revised Member and Officer Protocol and seeking its recommendation for approval at the full Council meeting.

Members welcomed the document and requested that it was widely shared with members and officers so that it was fully understood by all. In response it was confirmed that political awareness training would be provided and once it was approved it would be widely promoted.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Member and Officer Protocol be **RECOMMENDED** to full Council for approval.

64 WORKPLAN

With no comments or further questions from members, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 3.32 pm.

Chairman



**Governance and Audit
Committee**

21 April 2026

Subject: Annual Review of the Constitution – Position Update and Ongoing Work

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Lisa Langdon
Lisa.Langdon@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides the Governance and Audit Committee opportunity to consider and note the contents of the Annual Review of the Constitution – Position Update and Ongoing Work report (attached at Appendix A) prior to its submission to Annual Council.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members consider and note the Annual Review of the Constitution – Position Update and Ongoing Work Report (attached at Appendix A) prior to its submission to Annual Council.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Council is required by law to prepare, and keep up to date, the Constitution (Section 9P Local Government Act 2000 as amended).

West Lindsey's Constitution commits to a review being done at least annually

Financial :

There are no financial implications associated with this report

Staffing :

There are no staffing implications associated with this report

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

N/A

Data Protection Implications :

N/A

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

N/A

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

N/A

Health Implications:

N/A

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

Risk Assessment :

Good governance and up to date practices and procedures for decision making ensure the organisation is legally compliant, whilst protecting against ultra vires

decisions. Further, good governance is essential for ensuring value for money and protecting against reputational damage, and financial loss. Ensuring good governance at all levels protects the organisation from external claims and challenges. “Failure to comply with legislation” and “inability for the Council’s governance to support quality decision making” are strategic risks for the organisation and these risks are considered regularly by the Management Team prior to consideration at the Governance and Audit committee. The Constitution is Council’s key document for governance and powers, and compliance with the Constitution is essential to keep the organisation safe and legally compliant.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, Councils are legally required to prepare, adopt, and keep up to date a Constitution, which acts as the Council's rulebook and ensures the organisation operates transparently, efficiently, and lawfully.
- 1.2 West Lindsey's Constitution commits to a review being done at least annually, and the outcome being reported to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Council following consideration by the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 1.3 Attached at Appendix A is the draft report to be submitted to Full Council at its AGM.
- 1.4 The Financial Procedure Rules and the Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules referred to in the appended report, are matters for consideration by the Committee at its meeting on 21 April, and as such are not currently appended.
- 1.5 As agreed at the Full Council meeting on 13 April, the organisation will now move to a 3 Policy Committee model and draft terms of reference were produced. Further consideration will be given to these terms of reference and engagement through a member briefing prior to these being presented to Full Council for final adoption at the Annual General Meeting.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members consider and note the Annual Review of the Constitution – Position Update and Planned Work Report (attached at Appendix A) prior to its submission to Annual Council.



**APPENDIX A
Annual Council Report**

11 May 2026

Subject: Annual Review of the Constitution – Position Update and Ongoing Work

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Lisa Langdon
Lisa.Langdon@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

This report sets out a position statement in respect of the work undertaken on the Constitution during 2025/26 and also details further ongoing work required to the Constitution in coming months.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

FOR FULL COUNCIL

- 1) That Members note the work and updates which have been made to the Constitution throughout 2025/2026, including the Revised Financial Procedure Rules and Revised Contract and Procurement Rules, as set out Appendix 1 and 2 of this report**
- 2) That Members note the further revisions required to the Constitution in forthcoming months (as set out in section 3 of this report) and which will be the subject of further reports**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Council is required by law to prepare, and keep up to date, the Constitution (Section 9P Local Government Act 2000 as amended).

West Lindsey's Constitution commits to a review being done at least annually,

Financial :

There are no financial implications associated with this report

Staffing :

There are no staffing implications arising from this report. The work is primarily conducted by the Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer with the senior officers on the Management team being regularly updated.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

It is imperative that when dealing with all governance issues, people are treated equally and fairly. The Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer and wider team are aware of Equality legislation and ensure that equality and diversity is considered and applied as appropriate at all times.

Data Protection Implications :

There are no direct data protection implications associated with this report. Good governance should ensure that the GDPR 2016 and associated regulations and guidance are complied with,

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

n/a

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

n/a

Health Implications:

n/a

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

Risk Assessment :

Good governance and up to date practices and procedures for decision making ensure the organisation is legally compliant, whilst protecting against ultra vires decisions. Further, good governance is essential for ensuring value for money and protecting against reputational damage, and financial loss. Ensuring good governance at all levels protects the organisation from external claims and challenges. "Failure to comply with legislation" and "inability for the Council's governance to support quality decision making" are strategic risks for the organisation and these risks are considered regularly by the Management Team prior to consideration at the Governance and Audit committee. The Constitution is Council's key document for governance and powers, and compliance with the Constitution is essential to keep the organisation safe and legally compliant.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Under Section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000, Councils are legally required to prepare, adopt, and keep up to date a Constitution, which acts as the Council's rulebook and ensures it operates transparently, efficiently, and lawfully.
- 1.2 West Lindsey's Constitution commits to a review being done at least annually, and the outcome being reported to the Annual Meeting of Council.
- 1.3 West Lindsey District Council during 2025/2026 has seen significant changes to both its Senior Leadership Team and its Political Administration. As a result, many areas of the Constitution have already been updated and revised within the year.
- 1.4 Notification has been received from Government regarding planned statutory changes to Planning Committee delegations, which will require further changes to the Constitution, the Planning Committee Terms of Reference, and officer delegations. This further work will be carried out once the legislative framework is clear and reports brought before Members for consideration.
- 1.5 Following approval to move to a three Policy Model, terms of reference for the three new policy Committees have been produced and those terms of reference are presented again to Full Council for consideration in a separate report. It is further anticipated that a mid-year review of these terms of reference is conducted.
- 1.6 Work is also nearing completion regarding the wider management team structure which will require changes to the officer delegations, such changes will be presented to Members in the usual way for consideration.

2 Work Undertaken with 2025/26

- 2.1 During 2025/2026 many areas of the Constitution have been updated and revised within the year, reflecting changes within the management of the organisation, the political leadership and to strengthen governance and member/officer relations.
- 2.2 The areas reviewed and approved in-year are : -
 - Introduction of new and improved Local Code of Corporate Governance approved on 25 November 2025 and now displayed on the Council's website [view here](#) and linked to the Council's Constitution.
 - An updated Member Officer Protocol following updated guidance from the Local Government Association approved on 13 April [view here](#)

- Revisions to Standing Orders as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee - [Link to report](#)
 - the decision to move to three policy Committees, aligned to the Corporate Plan themes. [Link to report](#)
- 2.3 The Governance and Audit Committee also received and approved both updated Financial Procedure Rules and Procurement and Contract Procedures at their meeting on 21 April 2026. The updated Rules are presented here at Appendix 1 and 2 for completeness.
- 2.4 Members are asked to note the work undertaken over the previous year in respect of the Constitution to date.

3 Pending Work

- 3.1 Revisions will be required to be made to the Officer Scheme of Delegation (contained in Section IV of the Constitution). These changes will be presented following completion of the wider management structure review.
- 3.2 Notification has also recently been received that the Government plans to make statutory changes to the delegations for Planning Committees, which will need detailed consideration, and it is expected these will require implementation before 30 September 2026

4. Recommendations

- 1) That Members note the work and updates which have been made to the Constitution throughout 2025/2026, including the Revised Financial Procedure Rules and Revised Contract and Procurement Rules, as set out Appendix 1 and 2 of this report**
- 2) That Members note the further revisions required to the Constitution in forthcoming months (as set out in section 3 of this report) and which will be the subject of further reports**