

AGENDA

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

**Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Tuesday, 19th December, 2023 at 6.30 pm
Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA**

Members:

- Councillor Trevor Young (Chairman)
- Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Owen Bierley
- Councillor Matthew Boles
- Councillor Frazer Brown
- Councillor Stephen Bunney
- Councillor Ian Fleetwood
- Councillor Roger Patterson
- Councillor Tom Smith
- Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
- Councillor Paul Swift

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Public Participation Period

Up to 15 minutes are allowed for public participation.
Participants are restricted to 3 minutes each.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting.

i) For Approval

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting 9 (TO FOLLOW)
November 2023

ii) For Noting

Joint Staff Consultative Committee meeting on 23 November (PAGES 3 - 7)
2023

4. **Declarations of Interest**
Members may make declarations of Interest at this point or may make them at any point in the meeting.
5. **Matters Arising Schedule** (PAGES 8 - 9)
Setting out current position of previously agreed actions as at 11 December 2023
6. **Public Reports for Approval:**
- i) Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25 (PAGES 10 - 23)
 - ii) Council Tax Empty Homes Premiums 2024/25 (PAGES 24 - 40)
 - iii) Street naming and Numbering Policy (PAGES 41 - 74)
 - iv) Committee Work Plan (PAGES 75 - 77)
7. **Exclusion of Public and Press**
- To resolve that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.
8. **Exempt Report(s)**
- i) Council Debt Write Offs 2023/24 (PAGES 78 - 97)
 - ii) Contact Centre Technology (PAGES 98 - 115)
 - iii) Scampton: Legal Position Update (TO FOLLOW)

Ian Knowles
Head of Paid Service
The Guildhall
Gainsborough

Monday, 11 December 2023

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the MS Teams on Thursday, 23 November 2023 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Members: Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway (Chairman)
Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Matthew Boles

Representatives of Union members: James Deacon (Vice-Chairman)

Representatives of Non-union staff: Brad Bishell

In attendance: Lisa Langdon , Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services, and Monitoring Officer
Lyn Marlow, Customer Strategy and Services Manager
Andrew Warnes, Democratic and Civic Officer

28 MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 5 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

30 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Chairman invited comments from Members regarding the Matters Arising Schedule, detailing the actions agreed at previous meetings.

Members questioned the high percentage of staff absences due to back pain and whether it was just a small number of people or a recurring issue.

The Democratic and Civic Officer agreed to liaise with the Human Resources Manager to distribute the figures. Members also requested regular updates on detailed figures for sickness absences.

With no further comment, the Matters Arising schedule was **NOTED**.

31 **REFRESH OF THE CURRENT COMPLEX, DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS CUSTOMER PROCEDURE**

The Chairman invited the Customer Services and Strategy Lead to present the report, which was a refresh of the current Complex, Difficult and Dangerous Customer Procedure. The aim of the report was to commence the consultation process, and to seek the views of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC), before proceeding to wider staff consultation, before final adoption at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee. It was explained that Members would have further consideration of the final documentation at a future meeting, before recommending it for full adoption.

In her presentation, the Officer provided some background on the current procedure. She explained that the initial policy came into effect in 2007, with subsequent updates. The present review process had begun in 2019, however, the impact of COVID-19 and other issues had caused significant delays. An urgent review of the current procedure had therefore commenced and required consultation. The Officer clarified that though the procedure was in place, it needed improvement and greater clarity on the policy usage. The current procedure was over 30 pages, with the draft version of the report around 13 pages.

The Officer provided context to the situation for front line staff in the public service sector. Members heard that the Institute for Customer Service (ICS) had reported in 2022 that:

- 60% of staff reported abuse, but 52% of those felt it would not make any difference;
- 33% don't report because it happened too often;
- 47% reported that they felt unsafe at work; and
- 31% were considering leaving service sector roles

The Officer also presented updated statistics from July 2023, which reported sick leave had increased by 20% in the customer service sector. Members learned that attacking a service sector person was now an aggravated offence. The Police did not categorise reports of abuse from the public service sector. The Officer explained that she had corresponded with West Lindsey District Council's Management Team to apply pressure on separate crime statistics for abuse of staff. She attributed the issues to two main factors. The first was the economic situation, with genuine public concerns and queries. The second was the "Age of Anger", which had arisen from the effects of the pandemic and on social isolation more generally, causing some behavioural issues.

The Officer detailed the planned course of action to include:

- a new name for the policy, and amending the language used to be softer;
- less spotlighted focus on certain groups;

- a policy to support staff with internal procedure;
- a separate policy to support Councillors;
- a rebranded and relaunch of the new staff policy/procedure;
- regularly scheduled and relevant training, coaching and support for those working with customers regularly;
- created flow charts to understand the internal procedure;
- a new leaflet and dedicated website page for customers explaining the policy;
- the involvement of the JSCC in the creation of the staff policy/procedure;
- designed oversight from the Quality Management Board; and
- the establishment of Terms of Reference for the determination team.

The Officer continued her presentation to highlight the current situation following the initial stages of the review. Body cameras in the reception area had been implemented. Members learned that once the recording formally started, the camera took a snapshot of the previous 30 seconds of footage. There had been a recent revision of customer behaviour notices in the public spaces of the Guildhall to enhance clarity and effectiveness. A new pilot programme within Customer Services of a low-level incident reporting system had started, with 52 reports logged from May 2023 to October 2023.

Members were then provided with an overview of Health & Safety reports, which totalled 22 incidents since May 2022:

- May 2022/April 2023: ten incidents
- May 2023: one incident
- August 2023: one incident
- September 2023: two incidents
- October 2023: six incidents

Members heard there were regular engagement events with the Police. These interactions followed up on 'not responded' incidents at West Lindsey District Council's facilities. This was further assisted by equipping the Customer Service Team with SIA licence qualifications. These officers were trained to deal with challenging customers and Members learned that the staff could not physically handle the customer. There was a requirement of Police intervention, and an invitation to leave being presented in front of a Police Officer, along with multiple attempts for an individual to be asked to leave the premises.

The Committee learned more collaborative engagement with the Jobcentre Plus had been launched, as the Authority handled the registration and welcomed the public. This action tied with additional coordination with the Communications team to create a consultation plan. Finally, there was to be a two-day training event for frontline staff, which emphasised resilience, with sessions to decompress and talk about their experiences.

In concluding her presentation, the Customer Services and Strategy Lead

explained an agreed upon multi-services approach in principle. A meeting was scheduled to discuss joined-up approaches, especially with shared customers. These included daily multiple approaches or extended hours dealing with the same customer. The Officer informed the Committee there was further planned consultation with the relevant teams and team managers.

Discussion ensued, and Members drew on multiple points from the report and presentation. In response to a set of queries about the Police response, the Officer explained that the Police would likely be dealing with another matter and expected the Authority to be able to manage the issue internally. There was a push for a meeting with the local Police to begin a dialogue and find a way to improve the situation.

Members heard that the current situation included two-hour waits for a Police response and a lack of Police attendance at an incident at the Trinity Arts Centre. The Officer emphasised that she was pressing for Police action and wanted to assure staff of the Authority's support.

In response to a series of questions about staff training in managing customers and their behaviour, it was explained that all new staff went through a training process, starting with listening to calls, and were supported by senior officers throughout their development. The Customer Services and Strategy Lead assured the Committee that staff training included resilience and that the last refresh included training on difficult customers.

In reply to a query about SIA training, Members learned that the six-day course covered various topics, including first aid and conflict management. This training supplemented regular anti-terrorism training and body language interpretation sessions. The customer services team regularly reviewed these topics. Members also heard that the team would restart internal training using scenario experiences of possible situations in early 2024.

Moving on to the legality and usage of body cameras for reception staff and whether signage was sufficient, Members discussed the viability of the cameras being on all the time and the legal necessity of directly informing people that the camera was always recording. The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services explained that provisions to amend the signage were possible.

Members also learned about the procedure for those escorted out of the building. In the post-action follow-up, it was up to the Determination Team to review the circumstances and apply the most appropriate avenue for future contact to be made by the customer, such as by email, telephone, or pre-arranged appointment. Bans on contact had also been used. In response to a question about why the Authority could not throw out individuals causing disruption, Members learned that it would open the Authority to possible charges of assault. The Customer Services and Strategy Lead explained that training was scheduled to manage drug and substance abuse users

who access the services in the Guildhall. Members also gave their own experiences and knowledge of related incidents.

Members commented on Officer and Member relationships, with some giving their own experiences as Elected Members and the issues surrounding Members' behaviour in the past and in hypothetical situations. In response to a query about how staff might deal with undisciplined Councillors, the Committee heard the Member-Officer Protocol, which laid out the standards of behaviour expected between Members and Officers. The Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services explained further review of the possible imbalance between Officers and Members could be considered. A training session on this topic for Elected Members was scheduled soon. She also explained that using corporate induction sessions for new staff to explain the different situations could help improve Officer-Member relationships.

With no requirement for a vote, the report was **NOTED**, and confirmed that the Committee had provided comments.

32 **WORK PLAN**

The Customer Services and Strategy Lead informed the Committee that her report would return to the Joint Staff Consultative Committee in due course.

A Member of the Committee requested a report on apprenticeship levies. Members heard that the Democratic and Civic Officer would liaise with the Assistant Director of People and Democratic Services to determine the timescale and delivery of the report.

With no further comments from Members of the Committee, the Work Plan was **NOTED**.

33 **TO NOTE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date and time of the next meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee to be held at 4pm on Thursday, 19 January 2024, was **NOTED**.

The meeting closed at 4.58 pm.

Chairman

Corporate Policy & Resources Committee Matters Arising Schedule

Purpose: To consider progress on the matters arising from previous Corporate Policy & Resources Committee meetings.

Recommendation: That Members note progress on the matters arising and request corrective action if necessary.

Status	Title	Action Required	Comments	Due Date	Allocated To
Black	Scope of Leisure Contract – Workshop for Members	<p>Extract from CPR 20/7 - Members again requested a workshop in order that they may understand which elements of the current service they may affect under the current contract and which matters would fall outside of scope.</p> <p>Officers undertook to arrange such a workshop in due course, noting the pressures and Members diaries at present.</p>	<p>Please arrange appropriate workshop in consultation with Lead Members/ Officers Democratic Services</p> <p>Date and format to be agreed with Members as part of training programme. - Draft report due to G and A in September .</p> <p>Date of 23 November now agreed- all members invited</p>	30/09/23	Emma Foy
Black	Leisure contract - reasons for ceased activities	<p>extract from mins of mtg 20/7/23</p> <p>Members also requested that Officers liaise with the providers regarding roller discos, and the indoor cricket referred to seeking to understand why the activities had ceased.</p>	<p>Please liaise with the providers as requested and feedback information obtained through this matters arising please</p>	21/09/23	Emma Foy
Black	Free Parking for Christmas Events 2023	<p>Inform members of Delegated Decision in respect of free parking days for Christmas Events 20234</p>	<p>At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 10 November 2022 a report was presented and agreed (Minute 43) on Fees and Charges. This report accepted the recommendation by Prosperous Committee and gave delegated authority to the Chief Executive to determine and vary the date on which free parking is held each year up until 2025, in consultation with Event Organisers and the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p>The Event Organisers, which for Market Rasen is the Town Council and for Gainsborough is the Town Council and West Lindsey District Council, have confirmed that the dates for the Christmas events for 2023 are as follows: -</p> <p>Gainsborough – Saturday 18 November 2023</p> <p>Market Rasen – Saturday 9 December 2023</p>	18/10/23	Simon Wright
Green	UKSPF Reporting to Members	<p>CP&R 9 Feb '23: resolved that approval be given to quarterly and annual reporting arrangements as identified in the report, these being quarterly updates on expenditure and an annual report on progress of the programme being given to the</p>	<p>Logged here to ensure future items are included in the work plan, responsible Officer may need updating depending on workstream. financial info reported to CPR July 23</p> <p>Officers are in the process of arranging a Member Workshop, reporting schedules to be confirmed.</p>	30/11/23	Sally Grindrod-Smith

		Prosperous Communities Committee: to be programmed into forward plan				
			<p>Workshop booked 25 October. Quarterly reporting underway via finance reports to CP&R. Annual report to PC Cttee to be scheduled (suggest March / April 2024).</p> <p>Workshop / Information session to be rescheduled.</p>			
Green	Exit Poll of TAC Users	CP&R 07.06.23: Members enquired whether users of the Trinity Arts Centre could be surveyed as to their other interactions in Gainsborough whilst visiting the TAC. Suggested a form of 'exit poll'.	<p>Staff at Trinity Arts Centre have devised an exit poll to roll out as part of the Autumn/ Winter programme and are finalising distribution arrangements.</p>	29/12/23	Craig Sanders	

Agenda Item 6a



**Corporate Policy and
Resources**

Tuesday 19 December 2023

Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

Report by:	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Contact Officer:	Alison McCulloch Revenues Manager alison.mcculloch@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To adopt a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That;

It is agreed to recommend to Full Council the adoption of Option 1 of the report for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey District Council for 2024/25.

That being, to make no changes to the current council tax support scheme apart from to apply any new legislative requirements and the uprating of the non-dependent charges, applicable amounts, and household allowances and deductions, used in the calculation of the reduction in accordance with the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) annual 'up-ratings'.

To also apply any additional changes to government welfare benefit regulations during the year which are intended to increase the income of benefit recipients to avoid unintended consequences to customers.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Council has to determine a local scheme for council tax reduction by 31 January 2024.

Financial: FIN Ref – FIN/96/24/MT/SSC

The cost of the Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) is shared between Lincolnshire County Council (75%), West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) (12.5%) and Lincolnshire Police (12.5%).

Year	Total	WLDC 12.5%	LCC 75%	PCC 12.5%
2023/24	£6,907,224	£863,403	£5,180,418	£863,403
2024/25 Option 1	£7,114,440	£889,305	£5,335,830	£889,305
2024/25 Option 2	£6,907,224	£863,403	£5,180,418	£863,403

Recommendation is **Option 1**, to apply uprating.

Consultation has taken place with both the Lincolnshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire and both have submitted responses agreeing to make no change to the scheme for 2024/25 but both would agree to increasing the uprating of all allowances and premiums in line with Department for Work and Pensions allowances (option 1 of this report).

Option 2, do not apply uprating.

If we do not apply the applicable amount up-ratings to working age claimants their Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) income will exceed their applicable amount and they will be entitled to less council tax support. This in turns means their council tax bills will increase which will require more council tax to be collected.

Staffing:

The changes are minimal and therefore should not impact on staff.

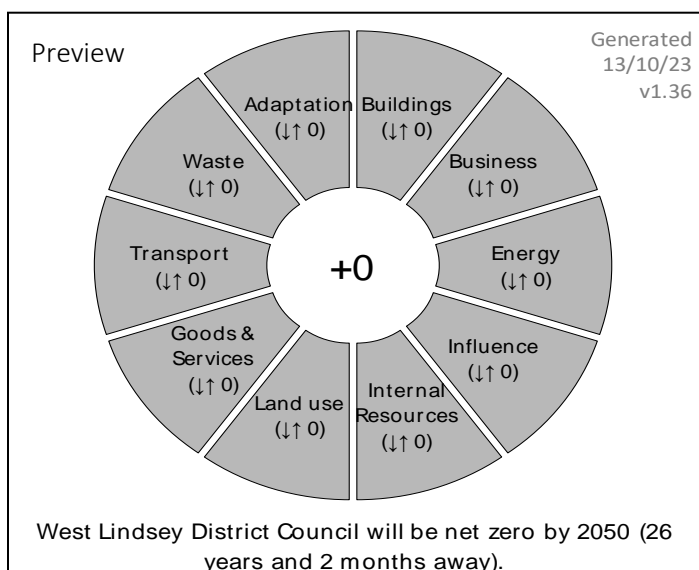
Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Please see appendix A – Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25 Equality Impact Assessment.

Data Protection Implications:

None arising from this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:



There will be no impact from this report in respect of environmental terms as this is a financial reduction in the council tax liability for those on low incomes.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None arising from this report.

Health Implications:

None arising from this report.

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

Local Government Finance Act 2012 -
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/17/contents/enacted>

- a. If Council Tax Support caseloads rise or fall, then WLDC and the other major precepting authorities will have to absorb those expenditure variations through the Collection Fund. It is therefore vital that the financial implications of the scheme decisions made are realistic in terms of bridging the funding gap.
- b. If there is a downturn in the local economy or where there have been major redundancies if a major company ceases trading, Council Tax Support caseloads could rise significantly.
- c. Each Council must approve their local Council Tax Support scheme by 31st January otherwise a default scheme, similar to the current Council Tax Support default scheme applied to customers of pension age, will have to be implemented. Applying a similar scheme to all working age customers would increase the annual expenditure on Council Tax Support.
- d. The amount of council tax support awarded last year was £6.6 million; however, this is estimated to increase slightly to £6.9 million by the end of the financial year.

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

X

Key Decision:

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

Yes

X

No

Executive Summary

Council Tax Benefit was a national scheme providing means-tested financial help for low-income households to pay their Council Tax liability. This was abolished on 31 March 2013 by the Local Government Finance Act 2012 which placed a legal requirement on every billing authority to adopt a Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme.

Since the inception of the LCTS scheme on 1st April 2013 relatively minor changes have been made which has enabled claimants to receive a similar level of support each year and enabled the council to maintain an annual council tax collection rate of around 98%.

In 2020, 2021 and 2022, following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government awarded a grant to all local authorities for a payment to be paid to all working aged council tax support claimants. This was paid directly to council tax accounts and it also permitted the use of any surplus to support economically vulnerable people and households.

Following the allocation of these awards, it was also possible to introduce discretionary hardship funds for all council taxpayers to apply for if they continued to experience financial difficulties caused by the pandemic. To date we have assisted 2,102 families, already in receipt of council tax support with an award of up to £50 off their council tax account. We have also been able to assist 74 council taxpayers by the award of a council tax discretionary hardship payment in respect of their 2023/24 council tax liability.

A significant change to the LCTS scheme for 2024/25 is likely to have a negative impact on the collection rate and reduce the yield over the year.

Full Council must approve and adopt the finalised LCTS scheme by 31st January 2024 at the latest.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 replaced Council Tax Benefit with a Council Tax support scheme. Unlike Council Tax Benefit (CTB) which is set by Central Government, the new Council Tax support scheme must be defined by individual Local Authorities (albeit with much central prescription).
- 1.2 Pensioners are protected by legislation which means 'local schemes must give the same pre-2013 level of assistance to pensioners'. West Lindsey District Council also made the decision in 2013/14 to protect those in receipt of a War Pension and those claimants receiving a Disability Benefit.

2 Current Situation

We currently have 6,043 council tax support claimants and of these 2,427 are pensioners and 3,616 are working age claimants. This equates to 60% of our total caseload who would be impacted by any changes to the scheme.

Our council tax collection rate for 2022/23 was 98.28% which was in the top quartile performance being 32nd position out of 181 local authority reported outturns. The national average was only 96% so this is considerably higher. Some of this success can be attributed to the Government's hardship award and to the council tax discretionary hardship relief scheme which has enabled our most financially vulnerable residents to receive some financial support from the Council.

The Council recognise that many of our residents are feeling the effects of the increased cost of energy, petrol, and food prices. We are working with our partners across the public and voluntary sectors to support our residents, and particularly those who are vulnerable and hardest hit by the cost-of-living crisis. The current West Lindsey scheme is one of the most generous in Lincolnshire and if we were to look at changing the scheme, we may be impacting on those most affected by the cost-of-living increases and adding to their financial burden.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Consultation was undertaken between 24th August and 6th October 2023. Invitations to the consultation were sent to the Citizen Panel members who received electronic surveys, a total of 972 members. This was also published on the West Lindsey District Council website and advertised through Social Media. In total, 212 responses were received.

3.2 The questions and responses asked are detailed below:

1. Do you agree that the only change that should be made to the scheme is the up rating of all allowances and premiums in line with the Department for Work and Pensions allowances?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	155	73%
Don't know	17	17%
No	10	10%

2. Are you currently in receipt of Council Tax Support?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	11	5%
Don't know	1	1%
No	200	94%

3.3 Comments from the consultation

- Provide the maximum support to those in need and adopt whatever necessary changes are required to achieve this without causing the council financial difficulties in the longer term that would have an adverse effect on those in most need of support
- I agree that council tax support for those that need it should be increased to reflect current inflationary trends
- The council should be aware of the effects of poverty on the population, especially children and young people
- The benefit scheme covers all the local government charges, and this is taken into account as my wife and I fall above help i.e. spare cash. So I believe that we have contributed enough money towards this whilst working
- I am on a low income & in receipt of tax credit & child tax credit. The child tax credit will cease shortly. The increase where I no longer receive 25% discount will be completely unaffordable. Causing serious distress & impacting on health
- Some pensioners who have not got a works pension or any other pension or income coming in, need more help than people who haven't paid anything into the system. Should be made to do some kind of work to get their money
- It is central government's role to help the poor not local council tax payers

3.4 The results

These results show that the majority of respondents were not in receipt of council tax support but would agree to increasing the uprating of all allowances and premiums in line with Department for Work and Pensions allowances.

4. Consultation with major preceptors

Before a Council can determine to revise or replace its LCTS scheme it must consult with any major precepting authority which have the powers to issue a precept to it.

Consultation has taken place with both the Lincolnshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire and both have submitted responses agreeing to make no change to the scheme for 2024/25 but both would agree to increasing the uprating of all allowances and premiums in line with Department for Work and Pensions allowances (option 1 of this report).

5. Costings

The current estimates for the 2023/24 scheme are £6,907,224 being split as below:

Total	LCC – 75%	PCC – 12.5%	WLDC – 12.5%
£6,907,224	£5,180,418	£863,403	£863,403

6. Options

Two options have been considered for the 2024/25 scheme being to maintain or slightly reduce the level of financial support as detailed below:

6.1 Option 1 (Preferred)

To make no changes to the current council tax support scheme apart from to apply any new legislative requirements and the uprating of the non-dependent charges, applicable amounts, and household allowances and deductions, used in the calculation of the reduction in accordance with the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) annual 'Up-ratings'.

To also apply any additional changes to government welfare benefit regulations during the year which are intended to increase the income of benefit recipients to avoid unintended consequences to customers.

Costs/Savings

Initial estimates for 2024/25 show that there would be no direct saving to the council under this option as it would just maintain the current scheme. Any reductions in the cost of the scheme would be due to a reduction in council tax support claimants.

Based on a 3% increase in council tax this equates to an approximate cost of:

Total	LCC – 75%	PCC – 12.5%	WLDC – 12.5%
£7,114,440	£5,335,830	£889,305	£889,305

Advantages	Disadvantages
The financial modelling shows that West Lindsey District Council can still bridge the funding by continuing with the current scheme for a further year.	
The existing scheme works well and offers a high level of support for low-income families who may otherwise find themselves in debt.	
There has been a slight decrease this year in the number of households claiming LCTS which suggests that the situation is improving gradually as more claimants return to work or are receiving private pensions that reduces their CTR entitlement.	
Collection rates are being maintained under the current scheme.	
This option ensures the LCTS rules stay consistent with the DWP rules which avoids confusion for claimants.	
Retaining existing policy principles of keeping LCTS in line with other key welfare benefits promotes equality.	

6.2 Option 2

To make no changes to the current scheme for 2024/25 ie: do not apply the up-rate household allowances and deductions.

Costs/Savings

Initial estimates for 2024/25 show that there would be a slight saving to the council under this option however, it would effectively create a reduction in income for those affected.

If we do not apply the applicable amount up-ratings to working age claimants their Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) income will exceed their applicable amount and they will be entitled to less council tax support. This in turns means their council tax bills will increase which will require more council tax to be collected.

Based on no increase in up-ratings this equates to an approximately cost of:

Total	LCC – 75%	PCC – 12.5%	WLDC – 12.5%
£6,907,224	£5,180,418	£863,403	£863,403

Advantages	Disadvantages
Slight reduction in costs to the council	The Council would have three sets of rules to apply for families applying for financial help. This will cause confusion for the claimants, will lead to increased modification to ICT, additional training for the Benefits Team and an additional set of regulations to be prepared and implemented.
	Loss of reputation to the council in that it would show a lack of support to those in most financial hardship during the cost-of-living crisis.

7. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26

It is recognised that whatever decision is reached this would only be a scheme for 2024/25. A review of the scheme is undertaken annually when more knowledge of the impact of that year's scheme and collection rates are available. Monitoring will also take place to analyse the impact and any unintended consequences it has had on council taxpayers and benefit recipients.

Appendix A – Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<p>Name, brief description and objectives of policy, procedure, function?</p>	<p>For Council to agree the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey DC for 2024/25.</p> <p>To ensure that all council tax payers are treated fairly under the local scheme.</p> <p>To ensure that council tax support is payable to the most vulnerable residents of the district.</p>
<p>Have you consulted on the policy, procedure, function and if so, what were the outcomes?</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place with Lincolnshire County Council and the Crime and Police Commissioner for Lincolnshire who have both agreed to the recommendation.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place digitally with the residents of West Lindsey and the majority of people who completed the consultation agreed with the process of applying the 2024-25 up-ratings of income and allowances.</p>
<p>What barriers may these individuals or groups face, and how can you promote equality (where possible)</p>	
<p>Gender</p>	<p>There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Working age claimants of Council Tax Support may receive a reduced level of assistance as compared with the former Council Tax Benefit Scheme. This scheme aims to redistribute support and be more generous to those applicants on the lowest incomes.</p> <p>The government has stated that council tax support for older people will not be reduced as a result of the introduction of the council tax reduction scheme reform. This is because the government wants to ensure that low-income pensioners, who would struggle to pay council tax without additional support, and whom the government does not expect to work to increase their income, will continue to receive support for their council tax.</p> <p>Pensioner protection will be achieved by keeping in place national rules which broadly replicate the former council tax benefit scheme.</p>

Disability	There is no evidence that this scheme would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic except in the case of War Pension and those claimants receiving a Disability Benefit who are protected by the Government.
Race	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Religion or Belief	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Gender Reassignment	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Pregnancy, maternity or paternity	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Rural Isolation	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Socio-economic factors	There is no evidence that this scheme would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic. However, any person unable to complete the application form will be offered assistance from the Benefits Teams in completing the application form and also be signposted to outside agencies such as Citizens Advice and Money Advice Service
Other (eg: those with dependants/caring responsibilities, asylum seeker and refugee communities, children in the care system etc)	There is no evidence that this scheme would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic. However, any person unable to complete the local council tax support application form will be offered assistance from the Benefits Team in completing the form and also be signposted to outside agencies such as Citizens Advice, Stepchange and Money Advice Service
Is there any evidence or research that demonstrates why some individuals or groups are, or are not, affected?	There is no evidence or research available. This policy is based on nationally applicable legislation and it covers all applicants who must all meet a set of standards and criteria intended to ensure that evidence of hardship justifies a reduction in council tax liability.

<p>If there is a potential adverse impact, please state why and whether this is justifiable.</p>	<p>There is no potential adverse impact from this policy.</p>
<p>Outcome of EIA</p>	<p> No major change needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adverse impact but continue <input type="checkbox"/> Adjust the policy /proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Stop and remove the policy/proposal <input type="checkbox"/> </p>
<p>How will you monitor your policy, procedure, function to ensure there is no adverse effect on the protected characteristics (eg: gender, age, etc) in the future?</p>	<p>Due to the nature of the reductions in the level of support, all working age claimants have the potential to have reductions in their support, however, they can be considered for further assistance under the exceptional hardship policy.</p>

Agenda Item 6b



**Corporate Policy and
Resources**

Tuesday 19 December 2023

Subject: Council Tax Empty Homes Premiums 2024/25

Report by:	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Contact Officer:	Alison McCulloch Revenues Manager alison.mcculloch@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To consider that the Council maximises the increased premiums payable for long term empty properties.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That;

It is agreed to recommend to Full Council the adoption of Option 1 of the report to increase both the second home charges from 90% to 100% and long term unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property charges from 100% premium for those empty between 5 and 10 years to 200% premium i.e. charge 300% council tax and for those empty over 10 years to 300% premium i.e. charge 400% council tax.

It is also agreed to recommend an additional local exception and discount for any new owners of properties subject to a council tax premium providing evidence is provided of a firm commitment to bring the properties back into use within 12 months. This reduction would mean they would not be liable to pay council tax on the empty property for a maximum period of 12 months but, should the property become occupied within 12 months the new resident would become liable in accordance with council tax legislation. In the event that it is not brought back into use within this time period the appropriate premium charge will be restored and become due and payable.

These changes to be effective from 1 April 2024.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The council must determine the council tax empty property premiums in accordance with The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018

Financial: FIN/REF/94/24/MT/SSC

The recommendation is the adoption of Option 1 of the report to increase the council tax premiums payable for long term empty properties as allowed by the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 with effect from 1 April 2024.

Based on a collection rate of 75% this change would generate an income of just over £54k to West Lindsey should both of these new charges be implemented.

£54k is the WLDC share of the income. This amendment would generate additional income for the MTFP from 2024/2025 onwards.

There may be an increase in New Homes Bonus if properties are brought back into use, however the future of the scheme is unknown as the Government have not announced any allocations beyond 2023/2024.

Staffing:

The changes are minimal and therefore should not impact on staff.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The Equality Act 2010, section 149, outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

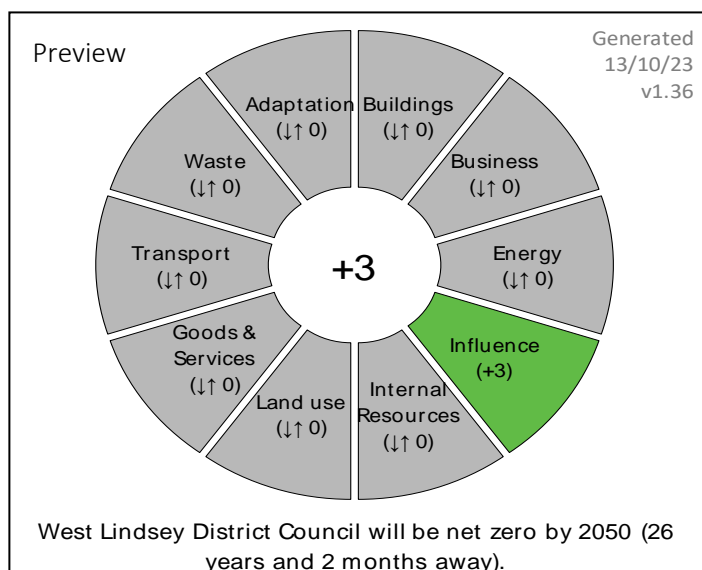
The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

It is considered unlikely that the council tax empty homes premiums referred to within this report will have an adverse impact on the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010.

Data Protection Implications:

None arising from this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:



Increasing the empty property premium will discourage owners from speculatively purchasing houses that they do not intend for immediate use. Bringing buildings back into use will reduce the need for housing demand elsewhere and reduces the need for carbon intensive construction. Mirroring the policies of the other Lincolnshire districts ensures a consistent message across Lincolnshire with regard to empty homes and shows the council's commitment to bringing them back into use.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None arising from this report.

Health Implications:

None arising from this report.

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

Local Government Finance Act 2012 -
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/17/contents/enacted>

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/25/contents/enacted>

Risk Assessment:

1. There is a risk that raising additional charges on empty properties could lead to an increase in council tax avoidance. This could include the creation of fictitious tenancies, increased claims for single person discount and claims for exceptions from the premium payments. This will be monitored by the Revenues team and mitigating steps will be taken to undertake property inspections where it is required to ascertain facts.
2. The number of complaints could increase which in turn increases the pressure on the Revenues resources. To mitigate this, we would deliver publicity in advance of the increased charges.
3. The premium could be seen to increase potential income; however, it could also increase the risk of non-collection. All recovery options would be used to collect any outstanding debts whilst providing assistance to any owner in genuine financial hardship. The potential non-collectible debit has been factored into the expected in year revenue.

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

X

Key Decision:

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

Yes

No

Executive Summary

This report outlines the current arrangements for the charging of Council Tax on unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property together with new powers to increase this charge under the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018.

It details the reasoning behind a possible change to the current charges and seeks approval to allow an increase to the premium charges of properties that have been empty for over 5 years.

This report also outlines the current arrangements for the charging of Council Tax on furnished second homes and seeks approval to allow for a reduction of the 10% discount ie a 90% council tax charge on furnished second homes to no discount being awarded ie a 100% charge.

1 Introduction

Billing authorities have a discretion over the levels of council tax due in respect of second homes, properties undergoing major repairs and properties that are 'unoccupied and substantially unfurnished'.

A billing authority may also set an 'Empty Homes Premium' for properties that have been 'unoccupied and substantially unfurnished' for a specific period. The premium applied depends on how long the property has been empty, irrespective of the owner.

The premium does not apply to any empty property qualifying for a Council Tax exemption for example whilst awaiting probate to be granted or where the owner is now in a permanent resident in a hospital or care home.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 amended legislation to enable a premium charge for homes that were unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over two years to be charged an additional 50% on the council tax due. This was approved and implemented by WLDC with effect from 1 April 2013 meaning that owners of empty properties were charged 150% annual council tax.

The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 amended legislation to enable the premium for homes that were unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over two years to be increased from 50% to 100% meaning that owners became liable for a 200% annual council tax charge. This was approved by the Council and implemented with effect from 1 April 2019. This act also enabled the premium to be increased from 1 April 2020 for properties empty over 5 years to 200% and from 1 April 2021 to increase the premium for dwellings empty over 10 years to 300%. West Lindsey has charged a 100% premium since 1 April 2019 for all properties empty and unfurnished over 2 years.

2 Corporate Plan Objectives and the Housing Strategy

The West Lindsey Corporate Plan 2023 and the West Lindsey Housing Strategy both detail the requirement to assist in meeting housing need and reduce the number of empty properties in the district as detailed below:

The West Lindsey Corporate Plan 2023

"Our Place" theme – Quality Housing: To facilitate quality, choice and diversity in the housing market, assist in meeting housing need and demand, and to deliver high quality housing related services that support growth.

West Lindsey Housing Strategy:

Priority theme "Improving Homes and Transforming Places".

Improving the existing housing stock and the resulting benefits to residents, and communities is a key priority for the council. Whilst we do not own or manage any housing stock we wish to work with others to achieve a number

of outcomes including raising housing standards, addressing energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. Reducing the number of empty homes in the district will also be addressed under this theme.

3 Current Situation

3.1 Empty properties

Currently the council awards a 100% discount i.e. no charge, in respect of properties that are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for up to 2 months. Following this discount period, a charge of 100% becomes due and a premium, for properties that remain unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for 2 years or more, then becomes due. The premium charged is 100% regardless of whether a property has been empty for 2 years or 10 years which makes for an annual charge of double the amount of the council tax.

Since 2020, local authorities have been able to increase this premium to 200% for properties empty for between 5 and 10 years (making a charge of 3 times the annual council tax) and, since 2021, 300% for those properties empty over 10 years (making a charge of 4 times the annual council tax).

3.2 Furnished Second Homes

Currently, in line with council tax legislation, a discount of 50% from the council tax is awarded when a property is left empty due to its owner being contractually bound to live in a particular property provided by an employer and where they are liable to pay the council tax as their sole or main residence.

Other properties that are furnished but unoccupied attract a discount of 10% from the council tax making them liable for a 90% council tax charge.

Since 2013 local authorities have been able to reduce the discount for furnished but unoccupied properties from 10% to zero thus enabling them to charge a 100% council tax for most furnished second homes.

4 Why consider a change to the Second Home Charge and Long-Term Empty Property Premium?

The intention behind this proposal is not to increase revenue through council tax but to assert some pressure on owners of empty properties to bring them back into use and thus to address the availability of homes within the district and provide homes for people who need them. Figures indicate that there are 203 properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for 2 years or more in the West Lindsey district that could be in use or brought back into use, but which are being left vacant.

Properties that remain empty for long periods of time often deteriorate and this could, in turn:

- encourage anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping, vandalism and arson increasing in a particular area
- reduce the value of the empty home and the neighbouring properties

- create additional renovation costs to the owner as the empty home deteriorates over time
- increase environmental health risks from vermin and waste plus create additional clearance costs to the owner
- increase the risk of squatters

Bringing long term empty properties back into use does result in the Council receiving a New Homes Bonus reward. The future of this scheme is not yet known however, if this continues to be awarded it could see the council receiving an additional sum for any long-term empty property being brought back into use.

5 Consultation

There is no requirement to consult on changes to the Empty Homes Premium or the Second Home discount however, as part of the council tax support consultation two questions were asked:

Do you agree that the furnished second home charge of 90% of the council tax should be increased to 100%?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	164	77%
No	35	17%
Don't know	13	6%

Do you own a furnished second home?

Answer	Number	%
Yes	5	2%
No	207	98%
Don't know	0	0

5.1 Comments from Responders

- I believe that increasing a second home charge to 100% would create more revenue for services offered across West Lindsey from customers who can afford it, as typically if the customer has a second home then i would suspect 99% of them are high income households
- Second homes should pay 45% more council tax also houses that stand empty for ten months a year should be compulsory purchased for the homeless
- Only disagree with full rate council tax on second homes furnished. Surely only 100% can be charged if occupied 100% of the time.
- It is most important that 2nd home owners pay the full rate of Council Tax

- I have previously owned a second home subject to council tax. This was not a holiday home but a rental property which became a financial burden between the departure of the tenant and its eventual sale. I am not opposed to the idea of levying tax on second properties provided that a distinction is made between inhabited or income-generating properties and empty properties that can hit the incomes of small-scale landlords
- Everything mentioned seem fair to me as a residence. If people have second homes in the area they need to pay fully for them
- I personally think second home should receive no reduction, if you can afford two homes you can afford two lots of council tax
- Second home owners bring a great deal of tourism to our area and should not be charged any more CT than any ordinary home owner. I would not want to see WLDC following some other councils that are charging double CT or more as this will spell 'death' to 2nd home owners and thereby adversely affect our much needed tourism
- Second homes should have a council tax of 5x normal council tax
- Some people are not wealthy but do have second homes. Perhaps the 100% charge should be for those that have an annual income of over £100k

5.2 Key Stakeholders

Colleagues in the Housing, Health and Wellbeing and Environmental Enforcement were also consulted for their opinions and feedback into these proposed changes. They were supportive to the measures being considered as positive in attempting to bring empty homes back into occupation as either rental or by being sold.

It was also commented that some second home owners were not proactive in maintaining the collection of their waste and in some cases it has resulted in residents having to make complaints to the empty homes officer to ensure the waste hazard was dealt with.

6. Other Lincolnshire District Charges

The table below details the current charges approved by the Lincolnshire district councils.

Local Authority	Current 2 nd home charge	Current Empty Property Charges		
		2-5 years	5-10 years	Over 10 years
Boston	100%	200%	300%	400%
City of Lincoln	100%	200%	300%	400%
East Lindsey	100%	200%	300%	400%
North Kesteven	90%	200%	300%	400%
South Holland	100%	200%	300%	400%
South Kesteven	90%	200%	300%	400%
West Lindsey	90%	200%	200%	200%

Whilst 3 out of 7 districts currently charge 90% for furnished second homes West Lindsey is the only district not to have increased the empty property charges.

7 Exceptions to the Empty Homes Premium

In accordance with council tax legislation the following exemptions from the premium will apply to properties that would normally be subject to the Empty Homes Premium:

- Homes that are empty due to the occupant living in armed forces accommodation for job-related purposes
- Annexes being used as part of a main property
- Homes that are a residential pitch occupied by a caravan or a mooring occupied by a boat will not be liable for the empty homes premium and will qualify for a 50% discount.

In certain circumstances long term empty properties liable for a 100% premium charge may be eligible for an exception to this premium, reducing the charge to 100% Council Tax. This is awarded for a maximum of 12 months, but certain criteria must be fulfilled:

- Owners who are genuinely attempting to sell or let their property which has been vacant for at least 2 years
- Owners who are experiencing particular legal or technical issues preventing the sale or let of the property
- Owners who are in negotiation with the Empty Property team

Additional Exception/Discount

In order to encourage the renovation and therefore enable long term empty properties to be brought back into use, it is recommended that a further exception and local discount be awarded provided the following criteria is met:

- The property must have changed hands, and the new owner must provide evidence of a firm commitment to bring the property back into use within 12 months.

In these circumstances an exception to the charge will be made alongside a local discount of 100% which will reduced the council tax charge to zero for a maximum period of 12 months. Should the property become occupied within 12 months the new resident would become liable in accordance with council tax legislation. In the event that it is not brought back into use within this time period the appropriate premium charge will become due and payable.

This exception and discount would be at the expense of West Lindsey District Council however, once the property was renovated and occupied a normal council tax charge would become due and payable and a long-term empty property would have been brought back into use thus fulfilling both the Corporate Plan Objectives and the Housing Strategy to assist in meeting housing need and demand, and to deliver high quality housing related services that support growth whilst at the same time reducing the number of empty homes in the district.

8 Costings


8.1 Furnished Second Home Calculations

The table below details the number of furnished second homes we currently have on our council tax database who are in receipt of a 10% discount.

It details the charge WLDC currently receives at 90% and the amount that would be returned if the charge was increased to 100%.

If 100% of the second home charges were collected WLDC would see an increase in Revenue of over £5k if a collection rate of 75% of the total sum charged was achieved.

Current Total Furnished Second Home Properties and charges for 2023/24

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Totals
 Total No of second home properties in each band charged at 90% ie 10% discount	100	49	53	24	8	8	5	1	248
Current Annual Council Tax per property at 90% ie 10% discount	£1,266.43	£1,477.49	£1,688.56	£1,899.64	£2,321.78	£2,743.92	£3,166.07	£3,799.28	£18,363.16
Total Charge at 90%	£126,642.60	£72,397.21	£89,493.79	£45,591.34	£18,574.20	£21,951.36	£15,830.33	£3,799.28	£394,280.09
100% council tax charge	£1,407.14	£1,641.66	£1,876.18	£2,110.71	£2,579.75	£3,048.80	£3,517.85	£4,221.42	£20,403.51
Potential income generation if charged at 100%	£140,714.00	£80,441.34	£99,437.54	£50,657.04	£20,638.00	£24,390.40	£17,589.25	£4,221.42	£438,088.99
Potential Increase IF all 100% charge is collected	£14,071.40	£8,044.13	£9,943.75	£5,065.70	£2,063.80	£2,439.04	£1,758.93	£422.14	£43,808.90
Split of Funding by authorities and value of potential increase IF all collected									
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Totals
Lines CC - 75%	£10,553.55	£6,033.10	£7,457.82	£3,799.28	£1,547.85	£1,829.28	£1,319.19	£316.61	£32,856.67
Lines PCC - 12.5%	£1,758.93	£1,005.52	£1,242.97	£633.21	£257.98	£304.88	£219.87	£52.77	£5,476.11
WLDC - 12.5%	£1,758.93	£1,005.52	£1,242.97	£633.21	£257.98	£304.88	£219.87	£52.77	£5,476.11

8.2 Long Term Empty Properties

The table below details the number of long-term empty homes we currently have on our council tax database who are in receipt of a 100% premium on the council tax charge.

It details the charge WLDC currently receives and what could be achieved if the premiums were increased to 300% for homes empty between 5 years and 10 years and 400% for homes empty over 10 years.

If these charges were implemented and collected in full WLDC would see an increase in Revenue of just over £65k.

It is unlikely the full liability would be collected and therefore it is estimated that a 75% collection rate would be achievable which would generate additional Revenue of just under £49k.

In contrast the Lincolnshire County Council would see an increase of £390k.

Current Total Long Term Empty Properties (empty for 2 years or more) and charges for 2023/24									
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Totals
Total No of empty properties in each band	127	27	22	14	3	1	4	5	203
Empty between 2 years and 5 years	68	16	14	10	1	1	2	3	115
Empty between 5 years and 10 years	25	3	3	2	1	0	1	1	36
Empty Over 10 years	34	8	5	2	1	0	1	1	52
Current Annual Council Tax per property at 100%	£1,407.14	£1,641.66	£1,876.18	£2,110.71	£2,579.75	£3,048.80	£3,517.85	£4,221.42	
Current Annual Charge per property at 200%	£2,814.28	£3,283.32	£3,752.36	£4,221.42	£5,159.50	£6,097.60	£7,035.70	£8,442.84	
Total income generation of long term empty properties at 200% charge	£191,371.04	£52,533.12	£52,533.04	£42,214.20	£5,159.50	£6,097.60	£14,071.40	£25,328.52	£389,308.42

Potential Charges for Total Long Term Empty Properties (empty for 5 years or more) based on charges for 2023/24									
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Totals
Total No of empty properties in each band	127	27	22	14	3	1	4	5	203
Empty Between 2 years and 5 years	68	16	14	10	1	1	2	3	115
Income generation at 200% charge	£191,371.04	£52,533.12	£52,533.04	£42,214.20	£5,159.50	£6,097.60	£14,071.40	£25,328.52	£389,308.42
Empty between 5 years and 10 years	25	3	3	2	1	0	1	1	36
Potential income generation at 300% charge	£105,535.50	£14,774.94	£16,885.62	£12,664.26	£7,739.25	£0.00	£10,553.55	£12,664.26	£180,817.38
Empty Over 10 years	34	8	5	2	1	0	1	1	52
Potential income generation at 400% charge	£191,371.04	£52,533.12	£37,523.60	£16,885.68	£10,319.00	£0.00	£14,071.40	£16,885.68	£339,589.52
Total Income Generation	£488,277.58	£119,841.18	£106,942.26	£71,764.14	£23,217.75	£6,097.60	£38,696.35	£54,878.46	£909,715.32

Potential Increase IF all collected	£296,906.54	£67,308.06	£54,409.22	£29,549.94	£18,058.25	£0.00	£24,624.95	£29,549.94	£520,406.90
Split of Funding by authorities and value of potential increase IF all collected									
Lincs CC - 75%	£222,679.91	£50,481.05	£40,806.92	£22,162.46	£13,543.69	£0.00	£18,468.71	£22,162.46	£390,305.18
Lincs PCC - 12.5%	£37,113.32	£8,413.51	£6,801.15	£3,693.74	£2,257.28	£0.00	£3,078.12	£3,693.74	£65,050.86
WLDC - 12.5%	£37,113.32	£8,413.51	£6,801.15	£3,693.74	£2,257.28	£0.00	£3,078.12	£3,693.74	£65,050.86
Estimated collection rate for long term empty properties = 75%									
WLDC	£27,834.99	£6,310.13	£5,100.86	£2,770.31	£1,692.96	£0.00	£2,308.59	£2,770.31	£48,788.15

9 New Legislation

New legislation is expected before the end of the financial year 23/24 which would enable local authorities to reduce the period classed as long-term empty from 2 years down to 1 year. This would enable a premium charge to be made once a property has been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for 1 year only.

It is also expected that there will be an opportunity to charge further premiums for furnished second homes.

It is not suggested, at this time, that this be considered as an option, but it may be possible to revisit this legislation once it is passed by Parliament.

10 Options

Option 1 (preferred option)

Agree to increase both second home charges from 90% to 100% and long term unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property charges from 100% premium for those empty between 5 and 10 years to 200% premium ie charge 300% council tax and for those empty over 10 years to 300% premium ie charge 400% council tax. These changes to be effective from 1 April 2024.

Agree to an additional local exception and discount for any new owners of properties subject to a council tax premium providing evidence is provided of a firm commitment to bring the properties back into use within 12 months. This reduction would mean they would not be liable to pay council tax on the empty property for a maximum period of 12 months but, should the property become occupied within 12 months the new resident would become liable in accordance with council tax legislation. In the event that it is not brought back into use within this time period the appropriate premium charge will be restored and become due and payable.

Option 2

Agree to increase second home charges from 90% to 100% with effect from 1 April 2024 but make no change to long term unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property charges.

Option 3

Agree to increase long term unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property charges from 100% premium for those empty between 5 and 10 years to 200% ie charge 300% council tax and for those empty over 10 years to 300% ie charge 400% council tax but to make no change to the second home charges. This change to be effective from 1 April 2024.

Option 4

Agree to make no change to either second home charges or long term unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property charges

Option 5

Agree to increase both second home charges from 90% to 100% and long term unoccupied and substantially unfurnished property charges from 100% premium for those empty between 5 and 10 years to 200% premium ie charge 300% council tax and for those empty over 10 years to 300% premium ie charge 400% council tax. These changes to be effective from 1 April 2024.

No additional exceptions or discounts to be awarded.

11 Conclusion

A collection rate of 75% would generate an income of just over £54k to West Lindsey should both of these new charges be implemented.

As of October 2023, the total liability for the 10% second home discount since 1 April 2004 is £4.8m and of that £193k remains outstanding making a total collection rate of 96.13%

The total liability relating to the empty homes premium raised since 1 April 2019 is £5.2m and of that £565k remains outstanding making a total collection rate of 89.15%.

Recovery action is being taken in respect of any accounts not being paid but of the 51 that have been empty for over 10 years only 3 accounts are presently in arrears.

Charging orders are the last resort for recovery of these debts which can result in an order for sale being awarded. This action usually results in payment in full either by the council taxpayer clearing their liability or by the sale of the property which clears the council's liability and enables the property to be brought back into use.

Communication

If the recommended changes are approved by full council a letter will be issued to all empty property owners to advise them of the new charges due to come into effect from 1 April 2024. This information will also be made available on our website and via social media. Time permitting we will also communicate this to landlords via their forum meetings.



**Corporate Policy &
Resources**

**Tuesday, 19 December
2023**

Subject: Street Naming and Numbering Procedure

Report by:	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Contact Officer:	Daniel Reason Corporate Systems Development Manager (Interim) daniel.reason@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	Note the changes to the Street Naming and Numbering Procedure and agree further Policy review

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Members are asked to:

- a) Note the changes to the procedure guide for Street Naming and Numbering
- b) Agree that a further update to the procedure guide will be undertaken in Quarter 4 2023/2024 as part of a Street Naming and Numbering Policy review to ensure that West Lindsey processes align to proposed changes in the Levelling up and Regeneration Act which when enacted will standardise the process for Street Naming and Numbering across England
- c) Agree that the review in Quarter 4 2023/2024 will be in consultation with relevant key stakeholders and will include a review of all the content, and improvements to accessibility of the information

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The legal framework within which the Council operates its Street Naming and Numbering is set out in the procedure. The following guidance and legislation applies:

- The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847
- Public Health Act 1907
- The Local Government Act 1985 and subsequent amendments.

It has been decided to update this procedure with a view to completing further updates in 2024 to align with any new legislation.

Legal advice has been sought to assist in the updates.

Financial : None

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Data Protection Implications : None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations : None

Health Implications:None

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

Street Naming and Numbering Procedure (2019)-

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Street%20Naming%20and%20Numbering%20Procedure.pdf>

Geoplace Guidance and Code of Practice -

<https://www.snn.geoplace.co.uk/tableofcontents>

Risk Assessment : None

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

x

Key Decision:

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

Yes

x

No

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Street Naming and Numbering procedure was reviewed in 2019 (Appendix 1). However, it doesn't appear that the procedure came to committee previously, and there are now some required updates to the procedure, including clarity on building names and numbering and also to renaming buildings and sites and as such, we have taken the opportunity to bring the updates to the procedure to the attention of members for noting.
- 1.2. As part of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act, there is an intention by the Government to update the national policy for street naming and numbering to ensure a standard approach across England. This law has not yet been enacted; however, it is thought this will happen sometime in 2024.
- 1.3. This report contains an updated version of the Council's Street Naming and Numbering Procedure (Appendix 2). This sets out the approach that is taken when dealing with applications of this type and also for the naming, numbering and renaming of buildings or sites.
- 1.4. The report also provides a summary of the main updates that have been made to the procedure along with any new additions (Appendix 3).
- 1.5. This update is being made in response to feedback from customers and from officers. It is expected that the new updated procedure now provides clarity in how we will deal with applications and decide on the final outcomes.
- 1.6. Applications are determined using this procedure and the GeoPlace Guidance and Code of Practice along with any relevant consultation exercises.
- 1.7. This procedure will form the basis of a new Street Naming and Numbering Policy that will be brought to Committee in 2024.

2. Street Naming and Numbering

- 2.1 All District Councils have a statutory responsibility for the naming of streets and postal addressing of properties within their authority boundaries. The legislation relating to street naming and numbering is contained within The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, Public Health Act 1907, The Local Government Act 1985 and subsequent amendments.
- 2.2 Address and street data held in a common standard can be used by government, local authorities, businesses and citizens to deliver better services. Good addressing of properties is important as it enables:
 - Emergency and health care services to find a property quickly
 - Mail and goods to be delivered efficiently

- Service connections by utilities companies
- Occupiers to apply for a credit card, benefits, pensions or obtaining goods by direct delivery
- Financial verification of addresses and fraud detection
- Visitors to find where they want to go
- Reliable delivery of services and products
- Service provider records to be maintained and kept in an efficient manner
- Digital processing of addresses without corrupting the data.

3 Proposed Procedure Amendments

3.1 The main changes that members should note are as follows:

Layout Change – The Procedure now groups related paragraphs together for better flow and to make it easier for applicants to find the information they need.

Property Numbering – This section has been amended to make it clear that in no circumstances will an official number be dropped from any address. This includes properties that historically didn't have a number but now do.

Street Naming – An application to name a street after a deceased individual who have prominent associations with the district or part of the district can be applied for after a period of **20 years** following the individual's death and with the agreement of the immediate family.

Naming/Re-Naming an Existing Building or Site – It has been made clearer that only the owner of a property can apply for a name change. It also sets out the process for dealing with applications relating to buildings or sites that are of public interest or historical significance.

Listed Buildings – This section has been added to address the process that will be followed in relation to listed buildings and includes the scenario whereby it may be necessary for the application to be determined by Planning Committee

3.2 The amendments to the procedure are aimed at ensuring that the Street Naming and Numbering officer has a more robust procedure to help deal with any complaints or queries raised by applicants. It will also remove some of the ambiguity for customers when making applications.

3.3 The street Naming and Numbering section on the West Lindsey District Council website will also be updated where necessary to reflect any changes.

4 Further Updates

4.1 A further review will take place in early 2024 as part of the implementation of a new Street Naming and Numbering policy

4.2 Any changes to the procedure, as part of the policy review will be made with the following considerations:

- Any changes to the street naming and numbering legislation introduced as part of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act.
- Digital web based version created to make it easier for applicants to access and navigate.
- GeoPlace guidance
- Alignment with Corporate layout and branding conventions
- Consultation with relevant key stakeholders

Members are asked to:

- a) Note the changes to the procedure guide for Street Naming and Numbering
- b) Agree that a further update to the procedure guide will be undertaken in Quarter 4 2023/2024 as part of a Street Naming and Numbering Policy review to ensure that West Lindsey processes align to proposed changes in the Levelling up and Regeneration Act which when enacted will standardise the process for Street Naming and Numbering across England
- c) Agree that the review in Quarter 4 2023/2024 will be in consultation with relevant key stakeholders and will include a review of all the content, and improvements to accessibility of the information

END

Street Naming and Numbering Procedure

1. Introduction	3
2. Types of Names	3
3. Naming Conventions	4
4. Application Procedure for Approval of Street Naming	5
5. Notification of Rejection	6
6. Notification of Approval	6
7. Erection of Street Name Plates	6
8. Street Numbering	7
9. Renaming and Renumbering	7
10. Property Name Changes	7
11. Implementation and Monitoring of the Procedure	8
Appendix C - Street Name Plate Specification	9

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All District Councils have a statutory responsibility for the naming and numbering of streets within their authority boundaries. The legislation relating to street naming and numbering is contained within The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, Public Health Act 1907, The Local Government Act 1985 and subsequent amendments.
- 1.2 “Street” includes any road, square, court, alley, passage or lane which has on one or both sides a more or less continuous and regular row of houses or other buildings.
- 1.3 The District Council holds property related information for the purpose of:
 - Delivery of post by Royal Mail
 - Responses to emergencies by ambulance, police and fire services
 - Timely provision of authority services
 - Record keeping e.g. legal transactions, taxation
- 1.4 The legislation requires names and numbers to be appropriate and to be prominently displayed.
- 1.5 This document provides useful information and guidance for both developers and residents on the naming and numbering of new streets. It covers new developments, residential and commercial and renaming and renumbering of existing streets, and numbering and naming of new property into existing named streets.

2. Types of Names

- 2.1 West Lindsey District Council will consider the following:-
 - an application for a street name should, first and foremost, shows some connection with the locality in which the street is located (e.g. the history, heritage or environment of the locality).
 - an application to name a street after a deceased individual who had prominent associations with the district or part of the district .
 - an application to name a street to mark some historic or political event.
 - an application to name a street after places or locations, whether within the district or nationally or internationally.
 - West Lindsey District Council will normally require the use of a suffix (e.g. “street”, “road”, “park”), an application for a single name will be considered.
 - any applications for names should be easy to say and spell, so as not to cause confusion, particularly in an emergency situation.
 - Any street name that has a royal family name or the word Royal can be applied for, but permission must be obtained from the Queen or the relevant royal family member via the Lord Chamberlain’s Office

2.2 The following suggested names will not be acceptable:-

- Inaccurate Use of Words will not be acceptable, for example, the use of the word “Mews” when a street is not Mews, for example, “The Beeches”, where the developer has felled every beech tree in sight.
- An application to name a street after any living individual.
- Aesthetically unsuitable name or names that is capable of deliberate misinterpretation.
- Street names should not duplicate or conflict with any identical streets in the area. A variation in the terminal word, e.g. Street, Road or Avenue should not be used but may be considered if they lead off each other.

2.3 Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, this guidance should be noted.

3.0 **Naming Conventions**

3.1 Guidance in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer outlines that certain types of “Streets” must have the correct suffix:-

- Street, Road, etc for thoroughfares;
- Lane, Drive, Way etc. for side streets; and,
- Close, End, etc. for cul-de-sacs.

Geographical or feature names might include:

- Hill, Rise, etc. for slopes; and,
- Circus, Square, Crescent, etc. for the appropriate road formats.

3.2 Although the District Council has no jurisdiction over the building names, in the case of new build, all new building names require to end with an appropriate suffix, for example:

- Lodge
- Apartments
- Mansions
- House
- Court

3.3 The legislation requires properties allocated with official street numbers are to always use the number. However, a house name may also be added, but the number must not be dropped in favour of the name.

3.4 For private houses it is sufficient that the name should not repeat or be similar to the name of the road or that of any other house or building in the locality. In order to name or rename a residential property the Street Naming and Numbering Officer requires a request in writing or using the “contact us” form on the website. The District Council’s records will be investigated to ensure there is no duplication and if appropriate the new name approved.

- 3.5 When infilling takes place within a street, if any unused numbers are available they should be used.
- 3.6 When unused numbers are not available, then the identification by suffix (a, b, c, etc.), would be acceptable.
- 3.7 Should the infilling create a large number of flats or similar units, the development may be named, (as described elsewhere), and clearly identified by private signage attached to the building erected and thereafter maintained by the developer, owner or occupier.
- 3.8 If new development takes place within a street, prior to the start of the numbering then the new properties/development should be named.
- 3.9 As with new developments, the District Council will supply the new name to Royal Mail and the statutory bodies.
- 3.10 Premises that are holiday properties will as a rule not be registered as delivery addresses if they are only for short-term occupation, or if there is some form of Site Management to deal with incoming mail etc. Individual premises will be considered on their merit, but if considered suitable as a delivery address, will be required to meet the criteria of having a secure delivery point and a properly displayed name and/or number.
- 3.11 New Dwellings in existing unnumbered roads will need to have their property names officially registered.

4.0 Application Procedure for Approval of Street Naming

- 4.1 All developers, their agents or other interested parties must have regard to this procedure before submitting an application for street naming.
- 4.2 Developers must make application for street naming of any new development at the earliest possible date and before a development is advertised, as an advertised name may well be rejected, causing difficulties for the developer and purchasers of property in the development.
- 4.3 Developers must contact the Parish or Town Council, (For the un-parished areas of the district, developers should contact the District Ward Member) at the earliest possible stage of development. Parish or Town Council are ideally placed to advise on matters of local significance and historical links. Their advice should be sought prior to submitting an application. Some Parish or Town Council and Ward members of un-parished areas may already have a list of names that are considered appropriate. All details of the Parish/Town councils and Ward Members are shown on the web-site – www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/parishcouncils.
- 4.4 Upon receipt of an application, the proposed name(s) will be checked with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and then with the Royal

Mail (and adjacent district Councils in boundary situations) for duplication or similar spelling or sounding names, prior to the application being approved or rejected.

- 4.5 When developments are nearing completion and ready for occupation the developer should contact WLDC who will in turn contact the Post Office to have the addresses "made live". Addresses are not "made live" at the initial stage to avoid unnecessary deliveries during the construction stage.

5. Notification of Rejection

- 5.1 If the Council rejects a proposed street name, the applicant will be notified and the reasons given for such rejection. The applicant will be invited to submit an alternative proposed name and an alternative may be suggested by the Council.

6. Notification of Approval

- 6.1 Once the Council approves a street name, details will be entered in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. Statutory Authorities will receive updates via the National Land and Property Gazetteer, other local authorities may be notified.
- 6.2 There are no statutory requirements for Creating Authorities to provide details of changes to existing property or new developments to any external organisations.

7. Erection of Street Name Plates

- 7.1 Upon approval of a street name, West Lindsey District Council will provide details of the specification document relating to the Highway Authority's requirements for street nameplate of an approved design and to agree the position for the erection of the street sign. See Appendix.
- 7.2 The District Council is responsible for the repair and maintenance of existing street name plates within the district when this becomes necessary either due to accidental damage, vandalism or normal wear and tear. Individual names for cul-de-sacs accessed via no-through roads could give rise to excessive use of "*leading to*" name plates at the entrance to estates and should be avoided by treating the estate as a single entity.
- 7.3 Developers are required to erect nameplates prior to occupation. Once roads are adopted the maintenance and replacement of Nameplates becomes the duty of the District Council. The specification document for Street Name Plates is available from the District Council upon request and also on the website.

8. Street Numbering

- 8.1 Roads, streets, drives or similar shall be numbered as follows:-
- Odd numbers on left hand side and
 - Even numbers on right hand side
 - Number 13 to be omitted
 - Cul-de-sacs may be numbered consecutively in a clockwise direction.
 - Building names or numbers shall be allocated to the road serving the principal entrance.
 - Only dwellings or business premises with a proper, secure delivery point should be numbered/named, ie-private garages, etc shall be ignored.
- 8.2 If a property is numbered in a numbered street then that number must be displayed and used.
- 8.3 The District Council is responsible for numbering the properties and will confirm the numbering at suitable stages during development.
- 8.4 If a developer returns to the council to re-number a newly numbered housing development, there will be a charge for this based upon the fee set for renaming and renumbering properties.

9. Renaming and Renumbering

- 9.1 Renaming /renumbering existing streets and buildings is normally only considered when changes occur which give rise (or are likely to give rise) to problems for the occupiers who are experiencing problems with their location from Royal Mail, the emergency services, utility companies and deliveries.
- 9.2 Under the legislation the District Council must consult with all those affected by the potential change. Only if a majority of two thirds of occupiers (Council Tax payers) are in favour of the proposed change is the next phase undertaken. This involves a legal notice displayed at the street giving aggrieved persons 21 days to make representation to the Magistrates Court.
- 9.3 Once this stage is completed the District Council make a new order officially changing the name of the road.

10. Property Name Changes

- 10.1 Should an occupier wish to use a name it must be used in conjunction with the number. WLDC can register this name with the Post Office as an alias.
- 10.2 If an owner wishes to change the name of a registered property, the request must be made to WLDC who will consult the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Post Office to check if your preferred name is acceptable.

- 10.3 Applicants are reminded that it can take up to one month for schemes to be approved or agreed by the Post Office.
- 10.4 WLDC will notify any necessary statutory consultees.
- 10.5 The Street Naming and Numbering Officer will check whether the name alteration is affecting a "Listed Building". If the Building is listed then the Conservation Officer is to be informed of the name change so that the relevant listing material may be updated.
- 10.6 There is no right of appeal against the renaming of a property for third parties. Therefore a neighbour cannot object to the naming of a neighbouring property.

11. Implementation & Monitoring Of The Procedure

- 11.1 The procedure will be continuously monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is effective in the management addresses within the District.

Appendix - Street Name Plate Specification.

Specification For Street Nameplates

NON REFLECTIVE STREET NAMEPLATE,
DIE PRESSED ALUMINIUM
11 GAUGE, 3½" KINDERSLEY ON 7" PLATE,
½" BORDER, BLACK ON WHITE,
RADIUSSED CORNERS, GREY BACK,
DRILLED FOR POST MOUNTING

MOUNTED ON 2 NO 80MM X 80MM UPRIGHTS,
BEVELLED TOPS, 30MM BACKING BOARD
ALL IN RECYCLED PLASTIC
BOLTED THROUGH, NAMEPLATE
FIXED WITH SECURITY SCREWS
FRAME TO INCLUDE BASE RODS

Street name plates – guidelines for positioning.

Where possible, name plates should be positioned at 45 degrees to the "main" road, so that it can be read by approaching traffic.

If the road has equal amounts of traffic from both directions, two signs are to be used. If traffic only comes from one direction, only one sign need be used.

If there is a wall immediately to the rear of the path, mount the name plate on a suitable backing board, and fix to the wall.

If the name plate is to be post mounted, position the posts in the back of the footpath, *not* behind it. The reason for this is that the footpath is "public", but the verge will probably be private and a new owner could ask us to move it in order to either plant a hedge or build a wall.

These are merely guidelines and not definitive. If your circumstances are different please contact Anna Grieve on 01427 676620 to discuss the matter.

STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING PROCEDURE

Street Naming and Numbering Procedure

1. Introduction	3
2. Types of Street Names	3
3. Street Naming Conventions	4
4. Application Procedure for Approval of Street Naming	4
5. Notification of Rejection	6
6. Notification of Approval	6
7. Erection of Street Name Plates	6
8. Street Numbering	6
9. Street Renaming and Renumbering	7
10. Property Naming	8
11. Naming/Re-Naming An Existing Property	8
12. Listed Buildings	10
13. Implementation and Monitoring of the Procedure	11
Appendix A - Street Name Plate Specification	12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 West Lindsey District Council has a statutory responsibility for the naming and numbering of streets and postal addressing of properties within their authority boundaries. The legislation relating to street naming and numbering is contained within The Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, Public Health Act 1907, The Local Government Act 1985 and subsequent amendments.
- 1.2 Address and street data held in a common standard can be used by government, local authorities, businesses and citizens to deliver better services. Good addressing of properties is very important as it enables:
- Emergency and health care services to find a property quickly
 - Mail and goods to be delivered efficiently
 - Service connections by utilities companies
 - Occupiers to apply for a credit card, benefits, pensions or obtaining goods by mail order
 - Financial verification of addresses and fraud detection
 - Visitors to find where they want to go
 - Reliable delivery of services and products
 - Service provider records to be maintained and kept in an efficient manner
 - Digital processing of addresses without corrupting the data.
- 1.3 "Street" includes any road, square, court, alley, passage or lane which has on one or both sides a more or less continuous and regular row of houses or other buildings.
- 1.4 The legislation requires names and numbers to be appropriate and to be prominently displayed.
- 1.5 This document provides useful information and guidance for both applicants and residents on the naming and numbering of streets. It covers new developments, re-naming of existing properties, naming and numbering of new properties into existing named streets and finally renaming and renumbering of existing streets.
- 1.6 All decisions on applications will be processed in accordance with this procedure, the Geoplace Guidance and Code of Practice and any relevant consultation exercises.

2. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING

Types of Street Names

- 2.1 West Lindsey District Council will consider the following:-

- an application for a street name should, first and foremost, show some connection with the locality in which the street is located (e.g. the history, heritage or environment of the locality).
- an application to name a street after a deceased individual who have prominent associations with the district or part of the district can be applied for after a period of 20 years following the individuals death and with the agreement of the immediate family.
- an application to name a street to mark some historic or political event.
- an application to name a street after places or locations, whether within the district or nationally or internationally.
- West Lindsey District Council will normally require the use of a suffix (e.g. “street”, “road”, “park”), although an application for a single name may be considered.
- any applications for names should be easy to say and spell, so as not to cause confusion, particularly in an emergency situation. It is important to note that in the majority of cases apostrophes or another punctuation will not be held in postal address databases. This is to assist emergency services etc. when trying to locate premises in a quick and efficient time frame.
- Any street name that has a royal family name or the word Royal can be applied for, but permission must be obtained from the HM King Charles III or the relevant royal family member via the Lord Chamberlain’s Office.

2.2 The following suggested names will not be acceptable:-

- Inaccurate Use of Words will not be acceptable, for example, the use of the word “Mews” when a street is not Mews, or, “The Beeches”, where the Applicant has felled all the beech trees in the area.
- Inappropriate or offensive names will not be accepted.
- An application to name a street after any living individual.
- Aesthetically unsuitable name or names that is capable of deliberate misinterpretation.
- Street names should not duplicate or conflict with any identical streets in the area. A variation in the terminal word, e.g. Street, Road or Avenue should not be used but may be considered if they lead off each other.

2.3 Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, this guidance should be noted.

3. **STREET NAMING CONVENTIONS**

- 3.1 Guidance in the GeoPlace Guidance and Code of Practice outlines that certain types of “Streets” must have the correct suffix:-

- Street, Road, etc for thoroughfares;
- Lane, Drive, Way etc. for side streets; and,
- Close, End, etc. for cul-de-sacs.

3.2 Geographical or feature names might include:

- Hill, Rise, etc. for slopes; and,
- Circus, Square, Crescent, etc. for the appropriate road formats.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF STREET NAMING

- 4.1 All applicants, their agents or other interested parties must have regard to this procedure before submitting an application for street naming.
- 4.2 Applicants must in the first instance have their proposed street name agreed with the Parish or Town Council at the earliest stage of development. Parish or Town Councils are ideally placed to advise on matters of local significance and historical links and may already have a list of names that are considered appropriate. All details of the Parish/Town councils and Ward Members are shown on the web-site www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/parishcouncils. For the unparished areas of the district, Applicants should contact the District Ward Member.
- 4.3 It is important to note that marketing names that applicants use to promote their properties may not be agreed as an official address and therefore it is important that any applications for new street names are applied for at the earliest possible date as this may cause difficulties for both the applicant and the purchaser.
- 4.4 Upon receipt of an application, the proposed name(s) will be checked with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer for duplication or similar spelling or sounding names prior to the application being approved or rejected. If necessary Royal Mail, and adjacent District Council in boundary situations, will also be consulted in this regard.
- 4.5 It is standard practice for all new addresses to be placed on Royal Mail's "not yet built" file in order to avoid unnecessary deliveries during the construction stage. When the properties are complete and accessible the applicant should contact WLDC who will then contact Royal Mail to make the addresses "live". Alternatively the applicant is able to activate newly built properties themselves by using this form - online contact form

5. NOTIFICATION OF REJECTION

- 5.1 If the Council rejects a proposed street name, the applicant will be notified and the reasons given for such rejection. The applicant will be invited to submit an alternative proposed name and an alternative may be suggested by the Council.

6. NOTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

- 6.1 Once the Council approves a street name, details will be entered in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. Statutory Authorities will receive updates via the National Land and Property Gazetteer, other local authorities may be notified.
- 6.2 There are no statutory requirements for West Lindsey District Council to provide details of changes to existing property or new developments to any external organisations.

7. ERECTION OF STREET NAME PLATES

- 7.1 Upon approval of a street name, West Lindsey District Council will provide details of the design specification and positioning for the street name plate in conjunction with the Highway Authority's requirements. This information is also on the website. See Appendix.
- 7.2 The District Council is responsible for the repair and maintenance of existing street name plates within the district when this becomes necessary either due to accidental damage, vandalism or normal wear and tear.
- 7.3 Individual names for cul-de-sacs accessed via no-through roads could give rise to excessive use of "*leading to*" name plates at the entrance to estates and should be avoided by treating the estate as a single entity.
- 7.4 Applicants are required to erect nameplates prior to occupation. Once roads are adopted the maintenance and replacement of nameplates becomes the duty of the District Council.

8. STREET NUMBERING

- 8.1 Roads, streets, drives or similar shall be numbered as follows:-
- Odd numbers on left hand side and
 - Even numbers on right hand side
 - Number 13 and all other such like numbers to be included unless requested otherwise by the applicant
 - Cul-de-sacs may be numbered consecutively in a clockwise direction up to and including a maximum of 12 properties
 - Building names or numbers shall be allocated to the road serving

the principal entrance.

- 8.2 Addresses can be issued to the majority of buildings. However, for properties to be deliverable and held on Royal Mail's database they do need to have a secure delivery point with a residential or commercial requirement.
- 8.3 If a property is numbered in a numbered street then that number must be displayed and used.
- 8.4 When infilling takes place within a street, if any unused numbers are available they should be used.
- 8.5 Should the infilling create a large number of flats or similar units, the development may be named, (as described elsewhere), and clearly identified by private signage attached to the building erected and thereafter maintained by the applicant, owner or occupier.
- 8.6 When unused numbers are not available, then the identification by suffix (a, b, c, etc.), would be acceptable.
- 8.7 The District Council is responsible for numbering the properties and will confirm the numbering when requested by the applicant. However, we would advise that numbers are allocated as and when properties are at foundation level or above to avoid the issue surrounding point 8.8 below.
- 8.8 If an applicant returns to the council to re-number a newly numbered housing development, there will be a charge for this based upon the fee set for renaming and renumbering properties.

9. STREET RENAMING & RENUMBERING

- 9.1 Renaming/renumbering existing streets and buildings is normally only considered when changes occur which give rise (or are likely to give rise) to problems for the occupiers who are experiencing problems with their location from Royal Mail, the emergency services, utility companies and deliveries.
- 9.2 Under the legislation the District Council must consult with all those affected by the potential change. Only if a majority of two thirds of occupiers (Council Tax payers) are in favour of the proposed change is the next phase undertaken. This involves a legal notice displayed at the street giving aggrieved persons 21 days to make representation to the Magistrates Court.
- 9.3 Once this stage is completed the District Council make a new order officially changing the name of the road.

10. NEW AND EXISTING BUILDING NUMBERS

- 10.1 The legislation requires properties allocated with official street numbers are to always use the number. However, a house name may also be added, but the number must not be dropped in favour of the name.
- 10.2 In no circumstance will a property with an existing number be removed at the request of the owner. This remains to be the case if historical records show that originally the property only had a house name and that the house number has been added in addition to or in replacement of the house name.
- 10.3 If new development takes place within a street, prior to the start of the numbering then the new properties/development should be named.
- 10.4 Premises that are holiday properties as a rule will not be registered as delivery addresses if they are only for short-term occupation, unless there is some form of Site Management to deal with incoming mail etc. Individual premises will be considered on their merit, but if considered suitable as a delivery address, will be required to meet the criteria of having a secure delivery point and a properly displayed name and/or number.
- 10.5 New Dwellings in existing unnumbered roads will need to have their property names officially registered.

11. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR NAMING BUILDINGS AND SITES

Naming a New Building

- 11.1 Although the District Council has no jurisdiction over the building names, in the case of new build, all new building names require to end with an appropriate suffix, for example:
 - Lodge
 - Apartments
 - Mansions
 - House
 - Court
- 11.2 For private houses it is sufficient that the name should not repeat or be similar to the name of the road or that of any other house or building in the locality.
- 11.3 As with new developments, the District Council will supply the new name to Royal Mail and the statutory bodies.

12. NAMING AND RENAMING OF EXISTING BUILDINGS & SITES

- 12.1 To make an application to add a house name to an existing property or to rename a property the applicant must be the owner of the property.
- 12.2 Renaming of an existing building or site can be applied for through the submission of a Street Naming and Numbering application. When making

a request to change the name of a building or site, the proposed name must follow the building naming requirements detailed in the 'Application Process for Naming Buildings and Sites' section of the procedure on page 8.

- 12.3 If an owner wishes to change the name of a registered building or site, the request must be made to WLDC using the online form [Street naming and numbering application form](#).
- 12.4 Should an owner wish to use a name it must be used in conjunction with the existing number. It is important to realise that house names do not replace numbers in any circumstances. WLDC can register this name with Royal Mail as an alias (this can take up to one month for their records to be updated). This means that Royal Mail will hold the address details for the property in two formats. Firstly, just making reference to the postal number and secondly with the house name and the postal number (alias address). Please note postal address data is purchasable and so not all companies will purchase the alias information for their records.
- 12.5 The Local Land and Property Gazetteer will be used to check for address duplications and to ensure that your preferred name is acceptable.
- 12.6 A public interest test will be applied to all naming and renaming of buildings and sites. Where no public interest is found in the renaming of a building or site, these will be considered and determined by the Director – Change management, ICT and Regulatory Services in line with the Council's scheme of delegation within the constitution.

13. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

- 13.1 In cases of applications for the renaming of a building or site which is considered of public interest due for example, it has historical/social importance or is considered a prominent or significant landmark in the area, the Council will reserve the right to follow the process detailed below.
- 13.2 Once a renaming application is submitted that the Council considers to be in public interest in line with paragraph 13.1 above, the Council will:
 - a. Display a notice of the proposal in a prominent and publicly accessible position at the building/site or part to which the change application relates; and
 - b. Consult relevant and appropriate stakeholders pertinent to the building/site in question.
- 13.3 The notice under paragraph 13.2(a) above shall state the new name proposed and that representations may be made in writing to the Council by the deadline specified in the notice, not earlier than 28 days after the posting of the notice.

- 13.4 The Council shall consider all representations made as provided in paragraph 13.2(b). A report will be created which will detail the number of representations submitted to the Council, provide a summary of the representations, including those raised by key stakeholders and detail the key issues to be considered.
- 13.5 This report will be presented to Planning Committee where members will consider the key issues raised. The Committee will give weight to the views of those considered key stakeholders relative to the reason the application was considered to be in the public interest initially. The Committee will make decision on the application, whether to support or refuse the name change. The Committee's decision will be final.
- 13.6 Where an application to rename a building or site is approved WLDC will notify any necessary statutory consultees of the update to the address details and place the information on the website.

14. LISTED BUILDINGS

- 14.1 If the building to be renamed is a listed building it may be necessary for consultation with relevant parties to be completed before a decision can be made. These will typically include West Lindsey District Council's conservation officer, Historic England and other heritage groups known to the Council at the time of the application, as well as the Ward Member for the area.
- 14.2 The Council shall consider the representations made by key stakeholders as provided in paragraph 14.1. A report will be created which will, provide a summary of the representations made, including the detail of the key issues to be considered.
- 14.3 In cases where there are objections to the proposed name change this report will be presented to Planning Committee where members will consider the key issues raised. The Committee will give weight to the views of key stakeholders and particularly the buildings prominence and linkages to the area's broader history and distinction. Not all applications to rename Listed Buildings will go to Committee, however where they do The Committee will make decision on the application, whether to support or refuse the name change. The Committee's decision will be final.
- 14.4 There is no right of appeal against the renaming of a property for third parties. Therefore, a neighbour cannot object to the naming of a neighbouring property.

15. IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING OF THE PROCEDURE

- 15.1 The procedure will be continuously monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is effective in the management addresses within the District.

Appendix A - Street Name Plate Specification

Specification For Street Nameplates

NON-REFLECTIVE STREET NAMEPLATE, DIE PRESSED ALUMINIUM

11 GAUGE, 3½" KINDERSLEY ON 7" PLATE,

½" BORDER, BLACK ON WHITE, RADIUSSED CORNERS, GREY BACK,
DRILLED FOR POST MOUNTING

MOUNTED ON 2 NO 80MM X 80MM UPRIGHTS, BEVELLED TOPS, 30MM
BACKING BOARD

ALL IN RECYCLED PLASTIC BOLTED THROUGH, NAMEPLATE FIXED WITH
SECURITY SCREWS FRAME TO INCLUDE BASE RODS

Street name plates – guidelines for positioning

Where possible, name plates should be positioned at 45 degrees to the "main" road, so that it can be read by approaching traffic.

If the road has equal amounts of traffic from both directions, two signs are to be used. If traffic only comes from one direction, only one sign need be used.

If there is a wall immediately to the rear of the path, mount the name plate on a suitable backing board, and fix to the wall.

If the name plate is to be post mounted, position the posts in the back of the footpath, *not* behind it. The reason for this is that the footpath is "public", but the verge will probably be private and a new owner could ask us to move it in order to either plant a hedge or build a wall.

These are merely guidelines and not definitive. If your circumstances are different please contact Anna Grieve on 01427 676620 to discuss the matter.

New Inserts

Paragraph	Wording
1.6	All decisions on applications will be processed in accordance with this procedure, the Geoplace Guidance and Code of Practice and any relevant consultation exercises.
2.1	An application to name a street after a deceased individual who have prominent associations with the district or part of the district an be applied for after a period of 20 years following the individuals death and with the agreement of the immediate family.
10.2	In no circumstance will a property with an existing number be removed at the request of the owner. This remains to be the case if historical records show that originally the property only had a house name and that the house number has been added in addition to or in replacement of the house name.
11.3	As with new developments, the District Council will supply the new name to Royal Mail and the statutory bodies.
12.1	To make an application to add a house name to an existing property or to rename a property the applicant must be the owner of the property.
12.5	The Local Land and Property Gazetteer will be used to check for address duplications and to ensure that your preferred name is acceptable.
12.6	A public interest test will be applied to all naming and renaming of buildings and sites. Where no public interest is found in the renaming of a building or site, these will be considered and determined by Director – Change management, ICT and Regulatory Services. in line with the Council’s scheme of delegation within the constitution.

13

13. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

- 13.1 In cases of applications for the renaming of a building or site which is considered of public interest due for example, it has historical/social importance or is considered a prominent or significant landmark in the area, the Council will reserve the right to follow the process detailed below.

- 13.2 Once a renaming application is submitted that the Council considers to be in public interest in line with paragraph 9.2 above, the Council will:
 - a. Display a notice of the proposal in a prominent and publicly accessible position at the building/site or part to which the change application relates; and
 - b. Consult relevant and appropriate stakeholders pertinent to the building/site in question.

- 13.3 The notice under paragraph 13.2(a) above shall state the new name proposed and that representations may be made in writing to the Council by the deadline specified in the notice, not earlier than 28 days after the posting of the notice.

- 13.4 The Council shall consider all representations made as provided in paragraph 13.2(b). A report will be created which will detail the number of representations submitted to the Council, provide a summary of the representations, including those raised by key stakeholders and detail the key issues to be considered.

- 13.5 This report will be presented to Planning Committee where members will consider the key issues raised. The Committee will give weight to the views of those considered key stakeholders relative to the reason the application was considered to be in the public interest initially. The Committee will make decision on the application, whether to support or refuse the name change. The Committee’s decision will be final.

- 13.6 Where an application to rename a building or site is approved WLDC will notify any necessary statutory consultees of the update to the address details and place the information on the website.

14

14. LISTED BUILDINGS

- 14.1 If the building to be renamed is a listed building it may be necessary for consultation with relevant parties to be completed before a decision can be made. These will typically include West Lindsey District Council’s conservation officer, Historic England and other heritage groups known to the Council at the time of the application, as well as the Ward Member for the area.

- 14.2 The Council shall consider the representations made by key stakeholders as provided in paragraph 14.1. A report will be created which will, provide a summary of the representations made, including the detail of the key issues to be considered.

- 14.3 In cases where there are objections to the proposed name change this report will be presented to Planning Committee where members will consider the key issues raised. The Committee will give weight to the views of key stakeholders and particularly the buildings prominence and linkages to the area’s broader history and distinction. Not all applications to rename Listed Buildings will go to Committee, however where they do The Committee will make decision on the application, whether to support or refuse the name change. The Committee’s decision will be final.

- 14.4 There is no right of appeal against the renaming of a property for third parties. Therefore, a neighbour cannot object to the naming of a neighbouring property.

Para (New Procedure)	Current	Proposed
1.2	<p>The District Council holds property related information for the purpose of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of post by Royal Mail • Responses to emergencies by ambulance, police and fire services • Timely provision of authority services • Record keeping e.g. legal transactions, taxation 	<p>Address and street data held in a common standard can be used by government, local authorities, businesses and citizens to deliver better services. Good addressing of properties is very important as it enables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency and health care services to find a property quickly • Mail and goods to be delivered efficiently • Service connections by utilities companies • Occupiers to apply for a credit card, benefits, pensions or obtaining goods by mail order • Financial verification of addresses and fraud detection • Visitors to find where they want to go • Reliable delivery of services and products • Service provider records to be maintained and kept in an efficient manner • Digital processing of addresses without corrupting the data
2.1	<p>any applications for names should be easy to say and spell, so as not to cause confusion, particularly in an emergency situation.</p>	<p>any applications for names should be easy to say and spell, so as not to cause confusion, particularly in an emergency situation. It is important to note that in the majority of cases apostrophes or any other</p>

		punctuation will not be held in postal address databases. This is to assist emergency services etc when trying to locate premises in a quick and efficient time frame.
2.1	Any street name that has a royal family name or the word Royal can be applied for, but permission must be obtained from the Queen or the relevant royal family member via the Lord Chamberlain's Office	Any street name that has a royal family name or the word Royal can be applied for, but permission must be obtained from the HM King Charles III or the relevant royal family member via the Lord Chamberlain's Office
4.5	When developments are nearing completion and ready for occupation the developer should contact WLDC who will in turn contact the Post Office to have the addresses "made live". Addresses are not "made live" at the initial stage to avoid unnecessary deliveries during the construction stage.	It is standard practice for all new addresses to be placed on Royal Mail's "not yet built" file in order to avoid unnecessary deliveries during the construction stage. When the properties are complete and accessible the developer should contact WLDC who will then contact Royal Mail to make the addresses "live". Alternatively the developer is able to activate newly built properties themselves by using this form - online contact form
8.1	Roads, streets, drives or similar shall be numbered as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odd numbers on left hand side and • Even numbers on right hand side • Number 13 to be omitted • Cul-de-sacs may be numbered consecutively in a clockwise direction. • Building names or numbers shall be 	Roads, streets, drives or similar shall be numbered as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odd numbers on left hand side and • Even numbers on right hand side • Number 13 and all other such like numbers to be included unless requested otherwise by the developer • Cul-de-sacs may be numbered consecutively in a

	<p>allocated to the road serving the principal entrance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only dwellings or business premises with a proper, secure delivery point should be numbered/named, ie-private garages, etc shall be ignored. 	<p>clockwise direction up to and including a maximum of 12 properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building names or numbers shall be allocated to the road serving the principal entrance. • Addresses can be issued to the majority of buildings. However, for properties to be deliverable and held on Royal Mail's database they do need to have a secure delivery point with a residential or commercial requirement.
8.7	<p>The District Council is responsible for numbering the properties and will confirm the numbering at suitable stages during development.</p>	<p>The District Council is responsible for numbering the properties and will confirm the numbering when requested by the developer. However, we would advise that numbers are allocated as and when properties are at foundation level or above to avoid the issue surrounding point 8.8 below.</p>
12.4	<p>Should an occupier wish to use a name it must be used in conjunction with the number. WLDC can register this name with the Post Office as an alias.</p>	<p>Should an occupier wish to use a name it must be used in conjunction with the existing number. It is important to realise that house names do not replace numbers in any circumstances. WLDC can register this name with Royal Mail as an alias (this can take up to one month for their records to be updated). This means that Royal Mail will hold the address details for the property in two formats. Firstly, just making reference to the postal number and secondly with the house name and the postal number (alias address). Please note postal address data is purchasable and so not all companies will purchase the alias information for their records.</p>

CP&R Work Plan (as at 11 December 2023)

Purpose:

This report provides a summary of items of business due at upcoming meetings. Please note this is subject to confirmation of additional meeting dates.

Recommendation:

1. That Members note the contents of this report.

Date	Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of the report	Date First Published
19 DECEMBER 2023				
19 Dec 2023	Council Debt Write Offs 2023/24	Alison McCulloch, Revenues Manager	Write offs for 2023/24 in relation to council tax, national non domestic rates, sundry debtor accounts and housing benefit overpayments.	01 September 2023
19 Dec 2023	Council Tax Empty Homes Premiums 2024/25	Alison McCulloch, Revenues Manager	Council Tax Empty Homes Premium Charges for 2024/25	01 September 2023
19 Dec 2023	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25	Alison McCulloch, Revenues Manager	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/24	01 September 2023
19 Dec 2023	Contact Centre Technology	Darren Mellors, Performance & Programme Manager	Options for the procurement of Contact Centre Technology	01 November 2023
19 Dec 2023	Street naming and Numbering Policy	Daniel Reason, Senior Enabling Technology Officer	Update to the Street Naming and Numbering Procedure	
JANUARY 2024 - DATE TO BE CONFIRMED				
Jan 2024	Lincolnshire Good Homes Alliance	Sarah Elvin, Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager	To inform all Members of the work undertaken on the Good Homes Alliance through the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group and agree funding for the pilot project Good Homes Lincs.	

	2024-25 Budget Update	Emma Foy, Director of Corporate Services and Section 151		
Jan 2024	Committee Timetable 24/25 for Approval (draft 25/26- 27/28)	Katie Storr, Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager	To approve the 24/25 Committee Timetable and to note the dates at this stage for the following three civic years	01 November 2023
Jan 2024	2024/25 Measure and Target Setting for Progress and Delivery	Claire Bailey, Change, Projects and Performance Officer, Darren Mellors, Performance & Programme Manager	A report to present the proposed 2024/25 Measure and Targets for Progress and Delivery	13 September 2023
Jan 2024	Annual Review of Earmarked Reserves 2023/2024	Peter Davy, Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)	To consider the proposals informed through the annual review of reserves process.	
Jan 2024	Business Plan following Market Street Renewal Share Purchase	Emma Foy, Director of Corporate Services and Section 151	As resolved by Committee a business plan be brought to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee no later than December 2023 which sets out financial forecasts and any revised operational and governance arrangements required for approval where necessary. this is arising from the decision to purchase all shares made by the Committee in September 2023	01 November 2023
8 FEBRUARY 2024				
8 Feb 2024	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee Draft Budget 2024/2025 and estimates to 2028/2029.	Sue Leversedge, Business Support Team Leader	The report sets out the draft Revenue Budget 2024/2025 including that of this Committee and those recommended by the Prosperous Communities Committee for the period 2024/2025. It also includes estimates to 2028/2029 to be included in the Medium Term	13 September 2023

			Financial Plan.	
8 Feb 2024	Budget and Treasury Monitoring - Qtr 3 2023/2024	Sue Leversedge, Business Support Team Leader	This report sets out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1st April 2023 to 31st December 2023.	13 September 2023
8 Feb 2024	Temporary Excess Waste Solution for Residents	Ady Selby, Director - Operational & Commercial Services	To consider an opportunity to provide large bins for residents on a temporary basis to clear short term waste disposal demands	
MARCH 2024 - DATE TO BE CONFIRMED				
Mar 2024	Refresh of the current Complex, Difficult and Dangerous Customer Procedure	Lyn Marlow, Customer Strategy and Services Manager	To review the Complex, Difficult and Dangerous customer procedure and support changes to be adopted.	01 November 2023
Mar 2024	Commercial Waste Business Plan	Ady Selby, Director - Operational & Commercial Services	For Members to approve the annual Business Plan for the Commercial Waste Service	01 November 2023
Mar 2024	Surestaff Annual Business Plan	Ady Selby, Director - Operational & Commercial Services	For members to approve the annual Business Plan for Surestaff	01 November 2023
11 APRIL 2024				
11 Apr 2024	Wellbeing Lincs Partnership bid	Sarah Elvin, Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager	Report to agree submission of a bid for the new LCC contract currently held by District Councils as Wellbeing Lincs	01 November 2023
11 Apr 2024	Launch of Customer Experience Strategy	Lyn Marlow, Customer Strategy and Services Manager	To engage with members in regard to the Experience Strategy, the action plan and timetable for delivery of the strategy in years 1 and 2	01 September 2023
11 Apr 2024	Lea Fields Crematorium Business Plan	Ady Selby, Director - Operational & Commercial Services	For Members to approve a refreshed Crematorium Business Plan	01 November 2023

Agenda Item 8a

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 8b

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted