

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 30 September 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Paul Swift
Alison Adams
Andrew Morriss

In Attendance:

Paul Burkinshaw	Chief Executive
Peter Davy	Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Badar Abbas	Senior Manager - KPMG
Rob Barnett	Partner - RSM
Katy Allen	Corporate Governance Officer
Natalie Kostiuk	Customer Experience Officer
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Eve Bennett

22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2025 were approved as a correct record.

24 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers at this juncture.

25 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The committee received the updated matters arising schedule.

A member referred to a recent council meeting where reference was made to the possible shortfall in the budget in coming years and expressed support that it had been brought to the attention of members. The Chairman indicated that this issue would be discussed at a future meeting.

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

The Committee, at the request of the Chairman, agreed to a change in order so that Agenda Item 6 (i) - Procurement Lincolnshire Update would be considered after Item 6 (vi)

26 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT Q2

The committee considered the report of the Corporate Governance Officer outlining progress with internal audits for Quarter 2.

It was noted that the programme was on track and the committee would be advised if this changed. Members were advised that officers had been very supportive and engaged with the audit process.

RESOLVED that the Governance and Audit Committee had reviewed the progress to date and the content of the report, be agreed.

27 INTERNAL AUDIT FOLLOW UP REPORT

The committee received an update on progress with identified actions. The overall conclusion was that eight of the twelve actions had been completed. The other four now had action plans for completion and would be reported back accordingly.

A member whilst acknowledging the work being undertaken on project management and wanted confirmation that projects would not slip. The Chief Executive referred to business planning as a priority and the issues would be actively addressed in the proposed timescale and there would be improved project oversight. An update could be provided at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the Governance and Audit Committee had reviewed the progress to date and the content of the report, be agreed.

28 VALUE FOR MONEY RISK ASSESSMENT 2024/25

The committee was advised that the paper outlined the process for looking at the Value for Money assessment and there were no identified concerns and there would be regular reviews.

A member referred to previous discussions about the need for a savings board to oversee issues and asked what the present position was. In response it was explained that when government settlements were known then assessment could be made against the Medium-Term Financial Plan and other approaches would also be considered.

A councillor expressed concern at lack of funding for drainage boards and the business rates system. It was suggested that identifying savings could be problematic. It was noted that the finance team were constantly monitoring the situation. The committee noted that money from DEFRA for the food waste collections was still awaited but this was a manageable risk.

A member referred to the identified risks and an assurance was given that plans were in place and would be monitored by internal audit.

RESOLVED that the Value for Money risk assessment, be agreed.

29 PROGRESS REPORT: DISTRICT JOINT COMMITTEE

The committee received an update report on the work of the District Joint Committee and the governance arrangements were detailed. The appendix showed current appointees. The work of the committee had been successful and was progressing well.

It was noted that there were some concerns around the impact that West Lindsey could have in the process and it was hoped that this would strengthen as the committee continued its work.

RESOLVED that the progress to date and the content of the report, be noted.

Councillor Swift left the meeting at this juncture.

30 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER REPORT 2024/25

A report was received outlining complaints referred to the ombudsman and the outcomes. Overall the picture was positive. There had been fourteen complaints of which only two went to investigation with one complaint in respect of noise problems being upheld and a recommendation on improving communication was made and implemented.

A councillor referred to the upheld case and asked about any training requirements. It was confirmed that as well as updating website information the relevant officers had also received relevant training.

RESOLVED that the progress to date and the content of the report, be noted.

Councillor Dobbie joined the meeting at this juncture.

31 PRESENTATION ITEM: PROCUREMENT LINCOLNSHIRE UPDATE

The committee received a presentation from Megan Rice, Lincolnshire County Council, providing a procurement update.

A member referred to the ISO9000 quality framework used in the private sector and asked if there was an equivalent for public authorities. It was explained that it was governed by the Procurement Act which provided a legislative framework. It was asked how performance was judged and by what criteria. In response it was clarified that feedback was sought from external stakeholders and partners. It was agreed that non-cashable items were difficult to quantify and there was also a need to look at how contracts were delivering. It was important to have multiple options for looking at performance.

A member referred to standardising contracts across district borders and whether this was possible. It was indicated that this was done when possible. It was emphasised that there was also an important role as critical friend to individual councils.

A councillor asked about taking account of the longer term implications of a contract. Confirmation was given that whole life span of the contract was assessed including factoring in all costs. Issues such as social value were considered and reported annually.

In response to a question it was noted that the service was subject to internal audit at the county council. Concern was raised that this was not shared with partner organisations and members agreed this was an issue that should be taken up by officers. A member asked about the value for money for the district in respect of costs against savings. It was clarified that ungoverned procurement was a risk and the service provided a level of expertise and an objective view of the contracts. It was agreed that the annual report should be made available to members.

Members asked about the monitoring of costs to the district council to ensure they weren't excessive or duplicating work. In response it was noted that officers carefully evaluated contracts to ensure that value for money was being achieved. The council has been part of the partnership for some 20 years and the service provided had always been good. It was suggested that no changes were needed. Members thanked officers for the assurances.

Confirmation was given that training was given to officers on how to use the system including updates as needed when there was legislative changes.

A member referred to the documentation associated with procurement and whether the complexity could deter some businesses, particularly smaller ones, from bidding. It was clarified that accessibility was important and documentation was reviewed to ensure it was clear and there was also liaison with business hubs and small business forums. As a result engagement was improving year on year.

The Chair thanked Megan Rice for her attendance and that officers would follow up on the issues raised.

RESOLVED that the update presentation, be noted.

32 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee received the Committee Work plan outlining reports that would be coming to future meetings.

A member reiterated the potential budget risks for the Council and that this should be monitored at forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED that the content of the report, be noted.

The meeting concluded at 3.16 pm.

Chairman