

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 11 December 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Swift (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

In Attendance:

Peter Davy	Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Alan Bowley	Interim Director of Operational and Commercial Services
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Claire Bailey	Senior Change, Projects and Performance Officer
Tom Hamilton	Senior Systems Development Officer
Alison McCulloch	Revenues Manager
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Lynne Thomsett	People Services Manager
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Baptiste Velan

Membership:

66 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

67 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The Chairman explained there were two sets of minutes, one for approving and one for

noting.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday, 13 November 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

With no comments or questions, the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 27 November 2025, were **NOTED**.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest as this point in the meeting.

69 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions as at 3 December 2025, was **DULY NOTED**.

70 PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT: MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the People Services Manager, and following recommendation from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC). It was explained that approval was sought to introduce two new employment procedures. The first, Workforce Development, was a new approach to replace traditional appraisals and one-to-one meetings. This was intended to promote regular conversations between managers and employees, focusing on wellbeing, performance, relationships, and professional development. The second, the Capability Procedure, had been updated to address underperformance through a structured and supportive process. Both approaches had equality and diversity implications, ensuring fair treatment, inclusive practices, and legal compliance under the Equality Act 2010.

Members were provided with a summary of each procedure, as well as the engagement and feedback received from staff, and were asked to formally approve both procedures.

The Committee expressed their support for the procedures and thanked officers for their work, and also the JSCC, for their thorough review and feedback. In response to a question as to whether Councillors could feed into the processes, it was explained that any comments or concerns should, in the first instance, be raised through the appropriate channels, for example line managers or the service Director.

The Chairman reiterated thanks to staff and members of the JSCC, and, having been proposed and seconded, the vote was taken. It was

RESOLVED that following the recommendation by the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, two new employment procedures be approved, namely:

- Workforce Development (replacing the previous appraisal process)

- Capability Procedure

71 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME

Members heard from the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, who provided an update on the Community Grants Programme spend and explained that approval was sought to allocate funds from the earmarked reserve. It was highlighted that during the 2025/26 financial year, the Community Grant Programme had experienced very high demand to support a wide range of community projects in locations throughout West Lindsey. As of November 2025, the Programme had made 39 grant awards with a total of £451,276 being awarded, with £2,426 remaining for new grant awards. This excluded funds from the Environmental and Climate Change earmarked reserve.

Members heard that there were 29 new grant applications waiting for review with the Community Grants Panel. These represented a wide range of impactful projects that could greatly benefit people and places. Therefore, with the support of the Community Grants Panel, it was requested that additional funds be allocated to enable more grant applications to be approved during the 2025/26 financial year.

Members of the Committee expressed their support for the request, and with the recommendation proposed and seconded, and no further comments from the Committee, the Chairman took the vote. It was

RESOLVED that the release of £80,000 from the Communities at Risk earmarked reserve to support the delivery of the Community Grants Programme be approved.

72 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER TWO (2025/26)

The Committee gave consideration to the Progress and Delivery Quarter Two report for 2025/26, including the Performance Improvement Plan. The Senior Transformation and Performance Officer highlighted that 81% of all KPIs were exceeding target, 6% were within tolerance, and 17% were below target. This figure equated to six measures, five of which were covered by the Performance Improvement Plan. The Officer provided further context to those measures included in the plan, and summarised actions being taken to improve performance.

It was also explained that work was underway to review the Progress and Delivery measure sets for the 2026/27 performance framework. The recommendation was to align measures with the refreshed themes of the Corporate Plan and to transition from portfolio/service-based formats to strategic theme-based structures. The review would also consider introducing new indicators where gaps existed, and reassess targets for measures which consistently exceeded expectations. Those measures not directly aligned to the Corporate Plan themes were proposed to be used to monitor operational service delivery and would form a new operational report.

Members heard that as part of the review process, approval for the proposed approach would be sought from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with engagement from Group Leaders to ensure broader member involvement. Following the review, the

proposed measures and targets would be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval in February 2026.

In response to a question regarding secondary sales at the Lea Fields Crematorium, it was explained these included memorial items such as plaques. The reason for the significant drop from previous years was not known, however Officers undertook to request that information from the team. It was also enquired as to why the number of services had reduced, and it was agreed for Officers to share benchmarking data with Members.

A Member of the Committee thanked Officers for the detail provided in the report, however questioned whether there was sufficient focus on improving outcomes, particularly for those areas which were include in the Performance Improvement Plan. He highlighted the connection between the two policy committees and enquired as to why there was no information provided as to what had been raised or noted when the report was presented to the Prosperous Communities Committee. He queried whether the Chairman of that committee could also be present at the meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in order to present the outcome of their debate, with the aim of having a consensus across the two committees as to whether sufficient work was being undertaken to improve those areas where it was required.

Members of the Committee agreed with the need for both policy committees to address those performance concerns, and for the policy committees to take responsibility for, and drive forward, continuous improvement. Officers highlighted the inclusion of the Performance Improvement Plan had been as a result of debate and recommendations from the policy committees in the past, and also reiterated the work in progress to review the Progress and Delivery measure sets for the 2026/27 performance framework.

There was significant debate regarding the role of the policy committees, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in a fourth option council compared to an executive model of governance. Reference was made to a previous communication from Government which aimed to bring all councils into the executive model, however this was no longer a certain outcome. The Monitoring Officer explained the position to date, and offered to address any questions arising in due course.

With regard to the interaction between the two policy committees, and how to ensure performance improvement was driven forward, it was requested that the review of the process and the KPIs was returned to the Committee in a timely manner in order for the focus to be maintained. Officers were in agreement and highlighted the proposed measures and targets would be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval in February 2026.

With the Chairman thanking all for their comments and involvement in the debate, and having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made had been indicated, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report.

73 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Revenues Manager, seeking to adopt a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27. It was explained that 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 1 April 2013 relatively minor changes had been made, which had 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%. This was just in the top quartile collection rate in the country.

Members heard that in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, 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. No such grant had been made available since 2023/24 and therefore those still struggling financially since the pandemic had not had any additional assistance since 31 March 2024.

It was highlighted that any significant change to the LCTS scheme for 2026/27 was likely to have a negative impact on the collection rate and reduce the yield over the year. It currently remained an affordable system which was able to provide assistance to low income households. When considering the scheme for 2026/27, consideration needed to be given to the government's plans for Local Government Reorganisation which would see West Lindsey District Council restructured into an upper tier Unitary Council. This restructure would mean that the current council tax reduction scheme would require modifications to consider new populations and to consider all the schemes in force at each district council at that time. Therefore, it was possible that any significant changes for 2026/27 could be changed again within a year or two, with potential negative impacts on council tax support claimants navigating entitlement to new awards.

Members were reminded that the finalised LCTS scheme was required to be approved and adopted by Full Council, by 31 January 2026.

With thanks to the Officer and her team for their continued hard work and dedication, the recommendation contained within the report was duly proposed and seconded. On taking the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the content of the report be noted; and
- b) the adoption of Option 1 of the report for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey District Council for 2026/27 be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council. 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 apply any additional changes to mirror government welfare benefit regulations during the year which are intended to increase the income of benefit recipients to avoid unintended consequences to customers.

74 MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT THE DISTRICT COUNCILS NETWORK (DCN) CONFERENCE 2026 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

The Chairman introduced the next report, seeking approval for additional Members to attend both the District Councils Network (DCN) and Local Government Association (LGA) conferences in 2026. He explained that it was right for elected Members to engage as widely and as fully as possible whilst the opportunity to do so remained in place, and to try to influence decisions that impacted the district as best they could. In response to a question as to how the additional places would be allocated, the Chairman explained that would be in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

Having been moved from the Chair, and duly seconded, the vote was taken and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that two additional Member spaces be reserved at both the District Councils Network (DCN) Conference and the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference, and delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to determine which Members shall attend.

75 REVIEW OF CIVIC TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Members heard from the Senior Democratic and Civic Officer, who highlighted the previous reports presented to the Committee in February 2024 and February 2025 regarding the provision of the civic car. She explained that the review of civic transport arrangements had been undertaken since the previous report earlier in the year, and noted that having regard to the limited use of the vehicle, the operational requirements associated with employment of a chauffeur, and management and maintenance of the vehicle, the report recommended option one, that being to dispose of the civic car.

The Committee expressed their full support for the recommendation, highlighting the need to make savings where possible and the fact that the vehicle was rarely used. The Chairman of the Council stated his support, noting the arrangements which he had used to good effect.

In response to a question regarding the much reduced number of civic events compared to times gone by, it was explained that the covid-19 pandemic had put a stop to a great number of events, with civic offices across the country simply not returning to pre-pandemic levels of business. The cost of living crisis was also attributed, with councils unable to afford, or justify the costs, of many civic functions.

Having been proposed and seconded, and on taking the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the civic car be sold and proceeds from the sale be held in an earmarked reserve, and Officers undertake to arrange civic transport for the

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council on an 'as required' basis. Use of the earmarked reserve to be reviewed in line with current Financial Procedure Rules.

76 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

A Member of the Committee reiterated the request for a review of the KPIs to return to a future meeting. With no further comments or questions, the Committee Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

77 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED 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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting entered into closed session at 7.26pm

78 COUNCIL DEBTS FOR WRITE OFF 2025/26

Members considered a report which detailed debts in respect of Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments which were now deemed irrecoverable, and for which approval was being sought for the debts to be written off.

All the accounts listed for write off had been through a rigorous collection process and/or trace enquiries prior to the submission for write off. Details of the recovery action taken were included at section six in the report, along with an explanation of the Insolvency Act 1986.

None of the accounts listed currently had any possibility of payment. However, assurance was given that in the event of any dividends or other payments being received, debts could and would be written back onto the accounts.

Members of the Committee raised significant concerns that businesses listed within the report had also been recipients of grant funding through the council, and questioned how that could be the case. Officers undertook to conduct further in depth analysis, and work with a cross-spread of council officers and teams to address such concerns. The Vice-Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee offered his assistance if required.

Having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon it was

RESOLVED that the following arrears be approved for write off:

- a) Council Tax arrears to the value of £91,199.70; and
- b) National Non-Domestic rates arrears to the value of £187,145.47; and
- c) Housing Benefit Overpayments arrears to the value of £9,555.11

Note: Councillor T. Young requested that his vote against the proposal be on record.

79 CONTRACT EXEMPTION REPORT - CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Committee heard from the Section 151 Officer regarding a procurement exception for the provision of the Customer Relationship Management System. It was explained that the contract for the current provider was due for renewal, and the costs involved required approval from the Committee. However, renewal of the contract remained the most cost effective option, as well as retaining continuity of service. It was also highlighted to Members that the quoted cost was a fixed price.

Having been proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that a procurement exception be approved to continue for a three year period with the existing provider of the Customer Relationship Management System, for the agreed cost.

80 BUILDING CONTROL AND COMMERCIAL WASTE SERVICES FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27

The Chairman introduced the final report, regarding the Building Control and Commercial Waste Services Fees and Charges for 2026/2027, which had been deferred from the previous meeting. He referenced the workshop which had taken place between meeting dates, and thanked the officers for their assistance with understanding the financial detail.

On being proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that Members **recommend** to Full Council for approval and inclusion within the 2026/2027 Revenue Budget, the proposed Fees and Charges for Building Control at Appendix A, as recommended by Prosperous Communities Committee.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm.

Chairman