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West Lindsey District Council - 10 November 2025

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 10 November 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Matthew Boles (Chairman)
Councillor John Barrett (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stephen Bunney	Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Eve Bennett	Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood	Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Frazer Brown	Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Christopher Darcel	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jacob Flear	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Key	Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee	Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Peter Morris	Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer	Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Trevor Young	

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)
Rachael Hughes	Head of Policy and Strategy
Ellen King	Policy & Strategy Officer – Corporate Strategy & Business Planning
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

In Attendance 1 Member of the Press
1 Member of the Public

Apologies

Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor Baptiste Velan

54 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND MINUTE'S SILENCE FOR FORMER REMEMBRANCE AND FORMER COUNCILLOR STEVE ENGLAND

Having just remembered former District Councillor Steve England in prayers prior to the meeting and it being the eve of Remembrance Day, in formally opening the meeting, the Chairman asked Members to remain standing for a minute's silence in respect of their former colleague, and for those who gave their lives in the Great Wars and those that followed.

On resuming seats, before moving to the agenda, the Chairman took a moment to reflect on his time serving alongside former Councillor England, who served as Chairman of the District Council for an unprecedented three consecutive terms of office. Councillor England would be remembered for his work in Neighbourhood Planning, supporting many local communities to help realise their Plans.

Other Members paid moving tributes to their former colleague, speaking of his tree planting work, and his passion for Meals in Schools. He had been a friend to many and would be sorely missed.

The Chamber offered their sincerest condolences to former Councillor England's friends and family, for a man who would be fondly remembered.

Bringing tributes to an end the Chairman formally welcomed all those attending with a special welcome to Mr Paul Burkinshaw, the new Chief Executive of West Lindsey District Council to his first meeting of Full Council.

55 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was:-

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 8 September 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

56 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this point in the meeting.

57 MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman introduced the report advising Members that it would be taken "as read" unless Members had any questions that they wished to raise.

In response to a Member query, it was confirmed that all committee appointments, outstanding from the last meeting, had now been appointed to.

With no further comments or questions and with no requirement to vote, the matters arising were **DULY NOTED**.

58 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman addressed the meeting advising it had been quite a busy period since Council last met. He offered thanks to his Vice-Chairman for assisting and helping at number of those events.

Particular highlights in the month were the new civic presentations being made to deserving citizen's brought to the attention of the Chairman. Recipients in the month had been Reggie, a primary school aged young man, with a passion for litter-picking in his local community in his spare time; and the founders of the Marton Grub Club, which had been running for 15 years, feeding local pensioners. Due to the retirement of the founders, the Club's future was uncertain but local Members were working with volunteers in a bid to see the Group continue. All recipients had been most deserving

The Remembrance Service, at the Parish Church in Gainsborough, the previous day, had been both a special and poignant occasion. The service and attendees seemed to grow year on year, something the Chairman considered to be fantastic.

In concluding his announcements, the Chairman took the opportunity to both remind Members and promote some up and coming events. The Gainsborough Christmas Light Switch on – Friday 14 November, a great event to bring families to, with something for everyone; and the Trinity Arts Annual Pantomime – a great show was anticipated, rehearsals and preparations were in full swing, all were encouraged to get their tickets, available now.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council addressed Council and made the following announcements: -

“Pride of Place

At the end of September, we were delighted to receive the news that an allocation under the governments Pride in Place Programme has been made to a part of Gainsborough known as Gainsborough West. The allocation will see our place receive £2m a year over the next 10 years, meaning £20 million in total. Whilst we wait for the publication of the full guidance, we were pleased to hear from Officers at last week's Prosperous Communities Committee where Members approved the initial communications plan. This will ensure that work starts right away whilst the details are finalised.

Scampton

Since the last Council I have visited the site with the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire, Scampton Holdings Limited and our Officers. I was pleased to hear first-hand from the Home Office that preparations are well underway for the marketing of the site. It was also very helpful to hear first-hand from Scampton Holdings about the recent Economic and Social Impact Analysis which I'm sure some of our Members saw published. Headlines figures included total benefit

from the proposed regeneration of a staggering £2.1bn and I have recently written, alongside our partners at LCC and City of Lincoln to the Prime Minister to urge that the Government act at pace to realise these benefits for West Lindsey and beyond.

Visit to Riseholme

On 9 October I was pleased to join a visit with other Members of the Council to the University of Lincoln's Riseholme Campus which is where the Lincoln Institute for Agrifood Technology are based. We heard from Professor Simon Pearson – the founding Director of the institute who told us about the incredible scale of growth and investment being attracted into our area by the University. We met businesses working out of the Barclays Eagle Lab as they receive help and support on their new business journey. We met a company developing a prototype robot to pick mushrooms and witnessed the latest in glass house technology being used to develop and perfect growing conditions for strawberries! It was simply breath-taking to see all this happening in our district and with so much potential for growth. I was pleased to hear that our Officers continue to work hard with the University and partners in our area to develop the sector further and maximise the growth for potential.

The Great Exhibition

On 22 October I attended the Great Exhibition in the heart of West Lindsey at the Lincolnshire Showground. Hosted by the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire, the event was a real showcase of the capacity and capabilities of businesses in Lincolnshire. I met some of the wonderful businesses that are based in our area and saw first-hand the real buzz of excitement at the potential for the future.

Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board

In October I attended my first meeting of the Employment and Skills Board where I am a member representing the Joint District Committee. It is still early days for the boards of the Combined Authority and at this meeting we considered the terms of reference, the position of the Local Skills Improvement Plan, the Get Britain Working White Paper, the Get Lincolnshire Working Plan and the Devolution of the Adult Skills Fund. I was able to make the point that District Councils and indeed West Lindsey have much to offer this agenda – citing some of our great successes in the recent UK Shared Prosperity Fund. There was acceptance from the Mayor that Districts should be engaged in this agenda moving forwards. Thanks to Councillor Boles who attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Combined Authority last week and I'm looking forward to attending the Transport Board on Wednesday and the District Joint Cttee on 8 September."

STEP Fusion

Tomorrow I'm delighted that we are hosting the STEP Fusion team here in Gainsborough as we hear more about their progress and future plans. My Deputy Leader, Councillor Westley attended the Strategic Collaboration Group in September on my behalf held at the University of Nottingham and was enthused by the progress being made on this fascinating programme of work. There is a community event being held on 27 November over at the Fusion Energy Café in Worksop and Members and our residents alike are invited to attend to hear

about progress and plans for 2026 and beyond.

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

In addressing the Chamber, the Chief Executive expressed his delight at having taken up the new role and placed on record his thanks and gratitude to the Members, Officers and the many partners across West Lindsey that he had managed to meet in the first six weeks, for the support and welcome that had been shown to him. He looked forward to meeting more in the coming weeks and months.

59 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman advised the meeting that no public questions had been received.

60 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

The Chairman advised the meeting that no questions, pursuant to Council Procedure 9 had been received.

61 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The Chairman advised the meeting that no Motions, pursuant to Council Procedure 10 had been received.

62 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Members considered a report which provided an update on the latest position regarding progress with plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), including details of the proposals for LGR that had been developed for Greater Lincolnshire, for submission to Government by the deadline of 28 November 2025, the options available to Members in response to the Minister's statutory invitation of 5 February 2025 to submit proposals for LGR, and the next steps and timeline in connection with LGR.

In presenting the report the Chief Executive highlighted the previous decisions taken by Council at its meetings in July and September 2025. The options which had been available to the Council and the rationale for the recommended position was brought to Members' attention.

Members were reminded that there would be opportunity to submit representations in response to any future statutory consultation which would be undertaken by the Government and the Council would be able to express its views then. It was further recommended at this

stage that the Council wrote to the Government advising why they had been unable to support proposals developed but of their commitment to work towards local reorganisation as necessary for the benefit of residents and businesses in the district.

Debate ensued and the opening speaker was of the personal view that there was a risk in not supporting any proposal and would have preferred that the Council moved a motion to formally support one of the proposals, suggesting this increased the likelihood of the Government imposing something on the District that would not benefit its residents, supporting a single proposal was a more pre-emptive approach in his view.

In responding to opening comments, the Leader of the Council outlined why she disagreed and why the recommended stance was the most sensible in her view. In doing so she referenced the letter from Government Minister Jim McMahon, 5 February 2025. It had been made clear all proposals must have regard to the entire area, as such she considered West Lindsey's stance more pragmatic.

The Leader of the Opposition was supportive of the Leader's stance. Members were being asked to make a decision on behalf of the residents without knowing any detail, making it both impossible, and risky. It was important to understand the financial standing of the other authorities, as such he was fully supportive of not formally supporting any proposal.

Many speakers shared the same view, questioning the rationale for LGR, the costs incurred, and the benefit to the community. Many had concerns around the entire process, particularly given that West Lindsey had a proven track record, and a balanced budget. The recent Surrey merger had required a £500m public bailout, there had been no evidence of savings so far in the Chamber's view. District Council's delivered for communities and their loss would be to the detriment of local communities.

There were also concerns raised about how mergers would affect Town and Parish Councils. The very grass roots of community representation, seemed to be overlooked, again this was something Members felt was a very important consideration. for an area like Lincolnshire.

The majority view expressed across the Chamber, was that given the circumstances, the approach recommended was the most appropriate way to proceed.

A lone Member suggested there may be merit in the Lincoln City proposal, however there was no support across the Chamber, with Members citing real concerns about the approach, and referencing feedback from residents they had which was not positive.

In response to hypothetical questions, Officers advised it was impossible to predict the impact but Members were reminded a proposal had to demonstrate it had regard for the wider area.

Having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that: -

(a) the matters in the report be noted;

- (b) having had regard to the options set out in the report, Council agree to not express support for any of the proposals for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire that have been developed in the report but provide a written response to Government setting out the council's position, and
- (c) the response to Government be drafted and approved by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council based on the content of the report, and a copy of the response be sent to all Members of the Council, for information.

63 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN AND PROGRESS UPDATE

Members considered a report which set out in full the Council's response to the recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, which had taken place in January 2025. The Action Plan would form the basis of a Peer Challenge Progress Review, which was expected to take place in the Spring of 2026. Members had received the Peer Challenge report at their meeting on 8 September.

With no questions raised, having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was: -

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the Action Plan in response to the recent Peer Challenge be received and the progress made against each action to-date be noted; and
- (b) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any necessary amendments to the Action Plan.

64 REVIEW OF WORKING GROUPS

Members considered a report which set out work undertaken in reviewing the Working Groups, Boards and Panels currently in existence across the Council and the arising recommendations. The work had been undertaken in response to a recommendation arising from the Peer Review in January 2025.

With no questions, having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was : -

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Groups/ Boards/ Panels shown in Grey on Appendix 1 of the report, namely: -
 - Markets Working Group
 - Cross Party Flooding Group
 - Scampton Local Plan Group
 - Transport Working Group

- Sports and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group
- Community Awards Panel

cease with immediate effect;

- (b) the Groups/ Boards/ Panels shown in Peach on Appendix 1 in the report, namely: -

- LCET (Leisure Culture Events and Tourism Working Group)
- Environment and Sustainability Working Group
- Savings Board

be reworked and refocussed, and this work be undertaken and reported through the relevant parent Committee in due course; and

- (c) the Groups/ Boards/ Panels shown in White on Appendix 1 of the report, namely: -

- Lincolnshire Show Group Task and Finish Group
- Funding Consultative Panel
- Community Rights Panel
- Editorial Advisory Board
- Appeals Board
- Community Grants Panel
- Member Development Group
- Honours Panel (inc Freeman/Freedom of District)

continue to meet and the Members, as set out in the table at Appendix 2 of the report, (and appended to these minutes) be appointed thereto, until the Annual General Meeting in May 2027.

65 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee presented the report which sought Council approval to appoint two Independent Members to that Committee. In presenting the report the skills and experience the candidates would bring to the Committee were outlined, and it was highlighted that if Council accepted the appointments, it would see the Committee's independent lay representation, return to its previous level of three in total.

A Member who served on the Governance and Audit Committee welcomed and fully supported the intention to increase the Committee's lay member representation.

Having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote, it was:-

RESOLVED - that Mrs Alison Adams and Mr Alexio Chandiwana be appointed to serve as Independent Members on the Governance and Audit Committee for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2029.

66 APPOINTMENT OF TWO PARISH COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Members considered a report which sought Council approval of the appointment of two Parish Councillor Representatives to the Standards Committee until May 2027.

The Chairman of the Standards Committee was thanked in his absence for the work undertaken. The Chairman advised however, having discussed the proposals with the wider Administration, it had been questioned as to whether two volunteers were required, given the Committee had operated effectively with one volunteer.

In light of this, a counter proposal was moved by the Chairman, that the report be referred back to the Monitoring Officer for further consideration, on the basis that Council consider only one volunteer is needed to fulfil the role on the Standards Committee.

The proposal was duly seconded and at the request of the Chairman the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the proposed action was within the gift of Council, should that be the wish of the majority of Members.

On being put to the vote it was: -

RESOLVED - that the report be referred back to the Monitoring Officer for further consideration, on the basis that Council consider only one volunteer is needed to fulfil the role on the Standards Committee.

The meeting concluded at 7.52 pm.

Chairman

Minute Item 64

APPENDIX TO COUNCIL MINUTES – 10 NOV – MINUTE 64

Name of WG/TF	Parent Cttee	Any requirements restrictions in Terms of Ref to Consider	Revised Membership from 10 November 2025
Lincolnshire Show Group T&F	CPR	MUST INCLUDE CHAIR OF COUNCIL Any other 6 members	Chair of Council – Cllr Boles Cllr J Barrett Cllr S Bunney Cllr A Lawrence Cllr M Palmer Cllr R Pilgrim Cllr P Swift
Funding Consultative Panel	CPR	appoint four Members and three reserves to serve on the Funding Consultative Panel – <u>At least one Member of the Panel should be from the Prosperous Communities Committee and one from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.</u>	Cllr O Bierley Cllr T Bridgewood Cllr K Carless Cllr R Patterson Reserves: Cllr I Fleetwood Cllr M Snee Cllr P Swift
Community Rights Panel	CPR	Any 3 Members <u>Serving Members of the Planning Committee cannot sit on this Panel</u>	Cllr S Bunney Cllr M Snee Cllr T Bridgewood
Editorial Advisory Board	CPR	Should be one Member from each political party or Grp (so the size changes)	Cllr P Key Cllr D Rodgers Cllr L Rollings Cllr J Brockway Cllr M Westley
Appeals Board	CL	Any 6 Members	Cllr S Bunney Cllr J Brockway Cllr I Fleetwood Cllr A Lawrence Cllr D Rodgers Cllr M Palmer
Community Grants Panel	PC	five cross party Members	Cllrs S Bunney Cllr M Palmer Cllr O Bierley Cllr L Mullally Cllr J Barratt
Member Development Group	G&A	up to seven Members cross party	Cllr S Bunney Cllr M Boles Cllr E Bailey Cllr O Bierley Cllr P Key Cllr P Morris Cllr R Pilgrim

Name of WG/TF	Parent Cttee	Any requirements restrictions in Terms of Ref to Consider	Revised Membership from 10 November 2025
			Cllr B Velan
Honours Panel (inc Freeman/Freedom of District)	CL	(selected at time of application to avoid conflicts of interest) – so no named Members appointed	
LCET (Leisure Culture Events and Tourism WG)	PC	Any 6 Members Should be cross Party Should include Chair of PC	Cllr E Bailey Cllr S Bunney Cllr J Flear Cllr P Swift Cllr M Palmer Cllr M Westley
Environ and Sustainability Working Group	PC/OS	Any 6 Members <u>Members serving should be on the Prosperous Communities or Overview and Scrutiny Committee</u>	Cllr S Bunney Cllr M Boles Cllr k Carless Cllr I Fleetwood Cllr M Palmer Cllr P Swift (reg attendees in visiting capacity – Cllr J Barrett Cllr E Bailey)
Savings Board	CPR	6 Members but must include the serving Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee – who will chair the Board. Plus 3 Administration Members and 2 Opposition members from CPR	Cllr T Young Cllr L Rollings Cllr O Bierley Cllr M Boles Cllr S Bunney Cllr I Fleetwood