

Guildhall Gainsborough
Lincolnshire DN21 2NA
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This meeting will be webcast and published on the Council's website

AGENDA

Prayers will be conducted prior to the start of the meeting.
Members are welcome to attend.

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA, on **Monday, 13th April, 2026 at 7.00 pm**, and your attendance at such meeting is hereby requested to transact the following business.

To: Members of West Lindsey District Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

a. Meeting of Full Council held on 2 March 2026

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 2 March 2026.

(PAGES 6 - 24)

b. Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council held on 16 March 2026

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council held on 16 March 2026.

(PAGES 25 - 28)

3. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members may make any declarations of interest at this point and may also make them at any point during the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

To note the current position of previously agreed actions as at 1 April 2026.

(PAGES 29 - 30)

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- i) Chairman of Council
- ii) Leader of the Council
- iii) Head of Paid Service

(VERBAL REPORT)

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions, if received, under this Scheme will be published by way of supplement following closure of the deadline.

(TO FOLLOW)

7. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

Questions received under this Scheme will be published by way of supplement following closure of the deadline.

(TO FOLLOW)

8. MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

Motion 1 – Squaddie Box

“Members - Council recognises the difficulties for ex Armed Forces personnel with no fixed address to accessing services and understand they can struggle to navigate complex transitions back into communities. The WLDC Armed Forces Covenant housing position recognises that this cohort can face challenges linked to relationship breakdown, mental health issues and the broader difficulties that can arise during transition to civilian life.

In those circumstances, services may technically be available, but engagement can still be fragile. Something as simple as having a stable and recognised correspondence address can make a meaningful difference to how individuals reconnect with services to gain help and support.

Members note the ‘Squaddie Box’ initiative ([Home - Squaddie Box \(CIC\)](#)) which

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helps by providing a secure personal mailbox with 24-hour access where veterans are able to collect their correspondence privately and at a time that suits them, without needing to attend public offices. Other vulnerable cohorts could also potentially benefit from this with the opportunity to expand this to civilians being explored.

Council resolves to ask the relevant committee to consider rolling out a pilot of this initiative to assess the benefits of such a scheme to vulnerable households in West Lindsey and consider whether it could be implemented to identify a need for this type of service across the District.

I so move”
Councillor Karen Carless

Motion 2 - Driving Test Centre Provision

“Members - This Council notes that young people living in rural districts such as West Lindsey face significant barriers when accessing employment, education, and training due to limited public transport.

The Council further notes that the nearest practical driving test centres for residents are currently located in Lincoln and Scunthorpe. As a result, learner drivers from towns such as Gainsborough must pay for extended driving lessons simply to travel to and practise around these locations.

This significantly increases the cost of learning to drive and places many young people and low-income residents at a disadvantage. In rural communities, the ability to drive is often essential for accessing employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and further education.

This Council believes that improving access to driving test facilities would support social mobility, economic opportunity, and fairness for residents living in rural areas.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Write to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency requesting that it reviews the availability of driving test facilities within West Lindsey District.
2. Lobby the Department for Transport to consider establishing a driving test centre in Gainsborough or elsewhere within the district.
3. Work with local MPs, including the Member of Parliament for the area, to advocate for improved access to driving test provision for rural communities including exploring whether a temporary satellite or periodic driving test facility could be established locally to reduce travel costs for residents.

I so move”
Councillor Lesley Rollings

Motion 3 – Amendment to Rule 9 (Questions at Full Council)

“This Council notes that:

- Under the current provisions of Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules, questions to Full Council must be submitted in advance within a specified notice period;
- This requirement can prevent councillors from raising urgent or time-sensitive matters that arise shortly before a meeting;
- Effective democratic scrutiny relies on the ability of elected members to respond promptly to emerging issues affecting their residents.

This Council believes that:

- Greater flexibility should be introduced to enable councillors to raise pressing concerns without unnecessary delay;
- Any such flexibility should be balanced with the need for orderly and well-managed meetings.

This Council resolves to:

1. Request that the Monitoring Officer facilitates a review of Rule 9 of the Council Procedure Rules; to include
 - (a) proposed amendments to allow questions to be submitted without prior notice on the day of a Full Council meeting, at the discretion of the Chairman;
 - (b) Ensuring that appropriate safeguards are included to maintain the efficient conduct of Council business;
2. the outcome of the review and any proposed constitutional changes be presented to a future meeting of Full Council within 3 months for consideration.

I so move”

Councillor Trevor Young

9. REPORTS FOR DETERMINATION

- a. Recommendation from Governance and Audit Committee - Revised Member Officer Protocol

(PAGES 31 - 56)

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b. Revised - Policy Committee Structure Proposal
(TO FOLLOW)

c. Appointment of Independent Persons (Standards)
(PAGES 57 - 60)

d. Appointment of Members to the Independent Remuneration Panel
(PAGES 61 - 64)

10. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11. EXEMPT REPORT(S)

a. To consider the granting of a dispensation for an Elected Member
(TO FOLLOW)

Paul Burkinshaw
Head of Paid Service
The Guildhall
Gainsborough

Wednesday 2 April 2026

Agenda Item 2a Public Document Pack

West Lindsey District Council - 2 March 2026

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 2 March 2026 at 7.00 pm.

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

Councillor Emma Bailey	Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood	Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Frazer Brown	Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Karen Carless	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Adam Duguid	Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Key	Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee	Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally	Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Pilgrim	Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Tom Smith	Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Baptiste Velan
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)
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager
Rachael Hughes	Head of Policy and Strategy
Ellen King	Policy & Strategy Officer – Corporate Strategy & Business Planning
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities

Also Present: 2 Members of the Public
1 Member of the Press
Mrs Katie Barry and Guest

Apologies Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Paul Swift

82 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all Members, Officers and Members of the Public to the meeting, with a special welcome extended to Katie Barry, Head Teacher of St Georges School in Gainsborough, who the Chairman would be formally recognising, later in proceedings, for her contribution towards the lives of young people in the town.

83 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 26 January 2026 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

84 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

85 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.

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

86 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman addressed Council indicating he wished to use his announcements this evening to "recognise one of those that make outstanding contributions to our communities - above and beyond" - something he had sought to do throughout his term of office.

He again welcomed Mrs Katie Barry, Headteacher of St George's School in Gainsborough, who was due to shortly to finish her position with school. The Chairman read aloud to the Chamber the achievements of Mrs Barry.

"Mrs Barry who has served as Headteacher of St George's since 2006. For nearly 20 years Katie has led the school with exceptional dedication, compassion and unwavering commitment to its pupils, staff and wider community. Under her leadership the school has achieved an excellent Ofsted outcome, reflecting a clear vision and the strong team she has championed throughout her tenure. Beyond the school gates, Katie has made a profound difference to local families, establishing food banks, securing vital grants and ensuring that no child or

parent in need went unsupported. Her impact on education and on the well-being of our community has been truly remarkable and her legacy will endure for many years to come. It is a privilege to present her with a certificate and recognition of her outstanding service”

The Chairman then presented Mrs Barry with a certificate and flowers and Members showed their appreciation with a round of applause with several paying their own tributes to Mrs Barry.

Mrs Barry in return expressed her thanks, paid tribute to her wider team at the School and spoke of the honour and privilege it had been to serve the Gainsborough community, its young people both of which she was very proud of.

With a further round of applause, Mrs Barry left the meeting and announcements continued.

The Chairman firstly reminded Members that they could make recommendations to the civic team for any “above and beyond- community recognition” awards, before outlining some of the events he had had the privilege to attend.

Events highlighted were the Lincolnshire Construction and Property Awards alongside Officer and teams from Gelder’s and the Savoy, as the cinema project had been nominated for an award, receiving a special recognition award for the building. Operators had also reported the cinema continued to be busy and well used which was pleasing.

The second event being the Council led Illuminate Event, at which the Chairman had had the honour of leading the parade. He spoke of his delight and seeing so many people engaged in the event and about during the event. He also thanked all those involved in hosting and preparing the event, including the school workshops, stewarding and pre-planning activities, acknowledging the key role many volunteers played on the day. He asked that a formal thank you, from him on behalf of all Members be sent to those Officers involved.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council made the following address to Council: -

“Since the last Full council I have been able to attend a number of meetings and events on our collective behalf. Without doubt, the only event I can possibly start with tonight is the wonderful Illuminate Festival which filled central Gainsborough with happy people, colourful costumes, a lively projection on the Old Hall and a spectacular Fire Garden. We owe significant thanks to the Officers who generously gave of their time and effort to support this event, with particular praise going to Cara Markham and her team for their dedication and imagination.

I drove to Humberside Airport to attend the inaugural meeting of Transport for Greater Lincolnshire, run by the Mayor, Dame Andrea Jenkyns. This gave me the opportunity to discuss local and county transport issues with other Councils, with representatives from County-wide transport companies and representatives from the Department for Transport. This will be reported on when more information comes back to this Council.

The Deputy Leader and I have spent time this month looking in some detail at prominent buildings and other assets in and around Gainsborough and have held initial talks with people involved in running those assets, to see how best to rationalise and use them to best effect. This work is ongoing.

Along with Officers I regularly attend the District Joint Committee meetings, as well as the Transport and Education and Skills committees of the GLCCA. District Leaders update each other about all the GLCCA Committees so that we have a collective understanding of the progress of the new Combined Authority.

Three further delightful events came my way this month: The first was a trip to the Gelder site in Sturton where, amongst other things, I took a look at environmental initiatives and work being done with apprentices. Perhaps the best bit of that visit was seeing a group of small children having huge fun in the mud and rain before retreating to a tepee to eat their lunches with leaders from Wild in the Wood. I visited Gainsborough Academy to join pupils in an English class where they are studying a Steampunk novel. I took my costumes along and we had fun dressing up and taking photos, while learning about Steampunk and its association with the Victorian fantasy novel. I was also invited on our behalf to go along to a Rock Gospel event in Carholme Road, Lincoln, where I enjoyed a noisy, lively and friendly session of Gospel music.

All in all, Chairman, a very busy and enjoyable month”

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

In addressing the Chamber, the Chief Executive advised of two matters he wished to bring to Council's attention. The first; Members were formally advised that the Government's consultation on proposals for Local Government Re-organisation, across Greater Lincolnshire, had formally been launched on 5 February. Members had received a briefing on 11 February and Officers had also held a session for town and parish councils across the District.

As of early February a Greater Lincolnshire Local Government Reorganisation website, shared across all local authorities in Lincolnshire, hosted by WLDC had been established and in the first few weeks there had been over 7,000 visits to that website. An Extraordinary Council meeting had been called to allow Members to debate the council's response to the Government consultation and would be held on Monday the 16 of March 2026.

The Chief Executive was also pleased to share that Cliff Dean, who led the ICT partnership across West Lindsey and North Kesteven District Councils, had been shortlisted for the Cyber Security Advocate and Educator of the Year at the Computing Security Excellence Award. The award recognised individuals who strengthened the national cyber community through leadership, collaboration, and the sharing of good practise. He and Members wished Cliff the best of luck at the Awards.

87 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

88 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

The Chairman advised the meeting that five questions had been received pursuant to Procedure Rule No.9, The questions had been circulated to all Members, separately to the agenda, and published on the website.

The Chairman invited Councillor Velan to put his question to the Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee, Councillor Emma Bailey, as follows:-

“There has been a clear and ongoing increase in rubbish and litter on road verges across West Lindsey, which is damaging the appearance of the district and raising concerns about environmental harm and public perception. Given the scale and persistence of the problem, can you as the Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee set out what specific actions the Council is currently taking, how frequently verge clearance is being carried out, what enforcement measures are in place, and whether the Council considers current resources and arrangements to be adequate?. Furthermore, what measurable improvements and timescales can residents expect to see?”

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities responded as follows:

Thank you for your question and I would agree that there is rubbish and litter on verges across West Lindsey. I am not sure that there is an ongoing increase as WLDC do not weigh their rubbish that is collected currently for a comparison year on year. The worse reported areas are the A46 and A57 both of which are high speed roads.

Litter anywhere is an eyesore and the most common places for high volumes of litter is along high-speed roads. It amazes me with the number of bins that each household has that people still throw things out of windows and on the floor rather than disposing it properly at home or in roadside bins.

I regularly litter pick in my area and have helped to organise several group litter picks in my ward over the years. WLDC provide bags, sticks, gloves, hi vis and risk assessments and then collect the rubbish. I appreciate that the H & S involved in having crews working along the verges is complicated and potentially dangerous should there be an accident. This is one of the reasons why these clearances only happen twice a year in line with other maintenance of verges in high-speed areas, (dual carriage ways) . I have also approached probation to see if community payback could also apply to these jobs but unfortunately this is not the case.

We have recently promoted a young person called Reggie, who has been doing a fabulous job in his local area!

Some towns in the district have dedicated litter pickers in them (Mkt Rasen and Caistor have ones paid and managed through the town councils, WLDC say what they are to do and fund 20 hours per week).

The mobile street cleaning teams cover the whole district every week (some areas more frequent, dependant on the need), they will empty all dog/litter bins and if there are any places that are bad within the 30mph, litter pick those.

During 2025 the following FPNs were issued 34 FPNs (2 x breach of PSPO, 12 fly-tipping duty of care, 14 fly-tipping, 4 littering, 2 SWW Waste). I have spoken to the enforcement team about how we should publicise more when we have had been successful and issued FPNS, we WLDC do not do that currently.

Whilst there have been no concerns regarding environmental harm specifically raised with WLDC, the appearance and the public perception is something that WLDC is aware of that needs improving. This is why the council is currently undertaking a full cost analysis of the section of the A57, this is to include permit gaining, traffic management, operational costs, time taken to undertake the set length of road, pictures before, during and after and the weight of litter collected. This data will be put in a report for members to understand all aspects of the high-speed road cleaning and then discussions about setting budgets accordingly. This paper should be available after 16th March when it will commence.

This obviously highlights that the council does not think that the current resources and arrangements are adequate or the report due would not be taking place, finding a balance that does not put further financial pressures on residents is difficult.

As an example the A57 clearing is going to cost around £7k, some roads that WLDC clear would have issues getting permits for, (A15 & parts A46). The average cost is about £10k per week for a stretch of road (some roads would cost more for traffic management to be in place). This would mean a dramatic increase in council tax.

This report will provide the detail for having more measurable improvements within a short timescale. Thank you for highlighting this and allowing further discussion on the important job that our waste team does in difficult budget restraints and to give thanks to all the residents that frequently take part in litter picking in their area.

The Chairman invited Councillor Young to put his question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jackie Brockway, as follows:-

“The development adjacent to the old Lea Road School in Gainsborough has been left incomplete and abandoned by the developer for over two years. This derelict site is a significant eyesore, adversely affecting local residents and deterring further investment in the town.

Given the Council's powers under planning and enforcement legislation, why has this situation been allowed to persist for so long, and what enforcement actions or interventions are being pursued to ensure that the developer either completes the development or that the site is remediated without further delay?"

The Leader of the Council responded as follows:

The Council also shares the concerns raised about the site on the corner of Lea Road and Carr Lane and has been making efforts to resolve the situation. The site at Carr Lane and the Old School site are both subject to Section 215 notices which require clearance of the land and the overgrown vegetation on and around the school building. Some initial clearance work was undertaken on the site in August 2025; however, clearance of the surrounding land remains incomplete. The Council also issued a Community Protection Notice Warning in October 2024, to ensure that the persistent fly-tipping that was occurring at the entrance to the site was dealt with and this waste has also been cleared as a result. The site was also an initial focus of our out of hours ASB hotspot patrolling as a result of the fly-tipping and it has continued to be one that we monitor to ensure that it remains secure and free from any additional waste.

We have consistently attempted to engage with the owners of the site and the enforcement position is regularly under review. A recent check of the Land Registry identified a pending application against the land surrounding the school and it was very recently listed for auction by a receiver, but the lot was withdrawn on the day of the auction. We are therefore seeking to establish whether there is a new owner of the site. Once we understand whether there is a new owner, we will engage with them to understand their objectives and make them aware of what we require them to do in regard to the land and the notices served upon it.

I think we all agree that the development of this site would bring great benefit to the immediate and surrounding area and we hope that a change in ownership may be the catalyst for this. I hope that this also provides reassurance that the Council seeking to utilise the relevant tools and powers to improve the situation."

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Young posed a supplementary question, indicating whilst pleased with the action taken thus far, he sought to understand what would happen if the action did not deliver the desired outcome, would or could the Council use its Compulsory Purchase powers?

The Chief Executive addressed the supplementary question advising as outlined in the Leaders response, the Council were hopeful the possible change in ownership would be a catalyst. If this was not the case, then the Council would have to reassess the powers at its disposal and determine which powers it may wish to use to achieve the actions that had been raised in the question and which the Leader had also recognised needed to be addressed.

The Chairman invited Councillor Dobbie to put his question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Brockway, as follows:

"Leader, while the Council has invested millions of pounds of public money into

improving the physical fabric of Gainsborough Town Centre, many residents remain concerned that bricks and mortar alone will not revive the high street. Empty units persist, national retailers are absent, and footfall remains fragile.

Regeneration must be about economic delivery, not just capital spend.

Given this, can you explain:

- Why the authority has not yet appointed a dedicated, specialist officer focused solely on attracting high street retailers and more inward investment into Gainsborough?
- What proactive, targeted strategy the Council is using to compete with neighbouring towns for retail operators?
- What measurable outcomes and timelines residents can expect to see as a return on the significant public investment already made?
- If the Administration believes the current approach is sufficient, on what evidence does it base that confidence?"

The Leader of the Council responded as follows:

"Thank you Councillor Dobbie for your question. Reviving our high streets is a challenge we have embraced. Retail consolidation, bank closures and the shift to online shopping have all contributed to rising vacancy rates. Collectively we have been working to reverse this trend and counteract the negative impacts events such as Covid and the Cost of Living Crisis have had on shopping habits and local footfall.

Our commercial specialist partner Eddisons, appointed in mid-2025, has worked with us to benchmark against competitor towns, engage with agents and work with vacant property owners in order to tackle long term vacancies and develop a more balanced tenant mix. They have also engaged with a large volume of local and regional investors as well as national retail groups to promote Gainsborough's investment potential. We have developed action plans for vacant properties, provided retail business support, enhanced free parking, developed a footfall-generating events programme, provided grant funding to improve shop frontages and continue to review progress via our town centre vacancy audits and newly established town centre business group.

We must acknowledge that although there is no measurable 'quick fix' to decades of retail decline, these interventions – as well as our Levelling-Up programme, mean Gainsborough now has the built infrastructure, pedestrian connectivity and a cinema led leisure offer to compete more effectively for investment. We remain focused on attracting operators that will strengthen footfall, retail mix and town centre vibrancy - ensuring residents (and visitors) can experience a flourishing Gainsborough over the coming years.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Dobbie posed a supplementary question which sought to understand whether the Council was investigating introducing a safety zone, similar to Retford and Worksop, as way of supporting a desire to increase the night time economy within Gainsborough town centre.

In responding the Leader outlined the various organisations she and the wider Council had been engaging with to understand the night time economy and any barriers to access. It was also hoped the work of the Greater Lincolnshire County Combined Authority through its emerging Transport Plan, would increase access for wider groups. Boosting the the night-time economy and ensuring participation in it was available to more sections of the community remained a focus.

The Chairman invited Councillor Rollings to put her question to Councillor Bailey, Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee, as follows:-

“In light of the significant role the Indoor Bowls Club plays within our district, supporting not only sport but also the physical health, mental wellbeing and social inclusion of many residents, as Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee can you please confirm the Council’s continued commitment to investing in and delivering a new indoor bowls facility?

Furthermore, can you as the Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee provide an update on the proposed timeline and next steps to ensure this important community asset is progressed without delay?”

The Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee responded as follows:

Thank you for your question.

The previous Leader of the Council did announce at Full Council last year a commitment to invest in indoor bowls in the District, however I think it is important to be clear that this was not underpinned by any formal council decision or allocation of any funding for such a project and as such no formal and actual commitment to back this up.

Without borrowing, and also with constraints on borrowing arising from the recent Government Financial Settlement, you are fully aware of the restraints on funding available for large projects. As a result of this when deciding on where funding should be directed the council and members need to decide on what is best value.

Given the time constraints that are now upon us due to Local Government Reorganisation, and the financial controls that will be put on the council as part of that process, it is important that we also look at what can be achieved in that timeframe with the money available to the council that benefits the whole of the district.

I have done much research and had various communications not only with the Bowls Club representative but also the Bowls Sports development officer and also the Indoor Bowls Association. I have fed this back to officers and other councillors so that informed decisions can be made regarding bowls and any provision.

This Administration is however committed to, and progressing proposals for

enhancements to sports and leisure provision as set out in the Corporate Plan and Thematic Business Plans that we will consider shortly, and the Prosperous Communities Committee will be asked to approve and adopt a new Sports and Physical Activity Strategy later this month.

The Council is already progressing a number of objectives set out in this strategy and assessing the scope and opportunities for enhancement of leisure and sports facilities. This includes improvements to West Lindsey Leisure Centre in Gainsborough as well as other facilities and opportunities.

Following the All-Member Briefing regarding the leisure centre held on 26th February at which you attended, it is planned that a report will be brought forward to Members in April to approve progressing this project to the next stage which is an exciting development.

This work will involve engaging with stakeholders, including the bowls community, and considering the facilities the council is able to provide with a report back to Members later this year, hopefully in the summer. As Members will appreciate, this specific work and assessment of other options to enhance sports and leisure facilities will need to have regard to the budget and financial resources available to the Council. As we will discuss later the recent Government Financial Settlement has not been a positive one that we would have hoped for and one which would have enabled us to invest even more.

On hearing the response, the former Leader of the Council called for a Point of Order. With the Chairman ruling the point of order out of order, there ensued heated exchange regarding the interpretation of Standing Orders and a warning regarding conduct being issued. The Chairman advised the former Leader he would allow a point of personal explanation, during which he disputed the opening statement, suggesting the Indoor Bowls Plan was supported, had been costed and could have been delivered.

With a further warning to abide by the Chairman's ruling, Councillor Rollings was permitted to pose a supplementary question during which she raised the lack of direct reference to providing an indoor bowls facility in both the Corporate Plan and the Member Leisure Workshop, and sought to understand where the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities personally stood on re-introducing an indoor bowling offer.

The Chairman of Prosperous Communities responded directly, outlining previous challenge she had offered when serving in the previous Administration and reminded the questioner that the decision would be one for the Committee as a whole and of the collective ethos of the current Administration.

The Chairman invited Councillor Howitt-Cowan to put his question to Councillor Brockway, Leader of the Council as follows:

“Given the tight timescales for Local Government Reorganisation, many residents are concerned that insufficient progress has been made on asset transfer to parish and town councils. What specific steps is the Council taking

now to ensure these transfers are completed in time, and what contingency plans are in place if deadlines are not met?”

The Leader of the Council responded as follows:-

“Thank you Councillor Howitt-Cowan for your question.

The Council is currently designing a Community Asset Transfer Policy, as it currently does not have one, this will be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources committee in due course.

Once approved this will allow Officers to be able to progress any expressions of interests received from town and parish councils or groups from the community and voluntary sector and assess whether any assets can be transferred.

This will take into account things like the suitability of the applicant, how the asset will be safeguarded in the future and the means of transfer amongst other criteria. It is envisaged any expressions of interest will be dealt with in a timely manner to ensure the process is timely and transparent.”

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Howitt-Cowan posed a supplementary question which sought to understand what consultation was being undertaken with local councils and local councillors regarding asset transfers, where they been engaged in decision making.

In responding the Leader confirmed local councils would be consulted in due course but outlined the work the Council needed to undertake in the first instance at pace. It was important that asset transfers were undertaken in a timely manner but also in the best interest and that a balance was struck, providing security for the wider district into the future.

This brought Rule No.9 questions to an end.

89 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The Chairman advised the meeting that motions under Council Procedure Rule 10 had been received.

90 WLDC CORPORATE PLAN

Councillor Bierley, Chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, introduced the report and in doing so explained that approval was being sought for a new Corporate Plan covering the period 2026 to 2030 and the corresponding thematic business plans which set out how the council intended to deliver the plan in the coming years.

He highlighted the background to the Plans development noting that in January 2025, the Council had participated in a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge which had recommended that the Council refreshes its Corporate Plan and business

planning arrangements to ensure the Administration's priorities were clearly reflected in both strategy and delivery.

Additionally, the Government's announcement on Local Government Reorganisation, and new political and officer leadership for the Council had provided an appropriate opportunity for a review and refresh of strategic priorities and delivery arrangements, building on already strong foundations.

The new Corporate Plan focused on the delivery of well-managed, forward-thinking local government services that were grounded in good governance and committed to enhancing our places and improving the lives of people across the District.

To ensure effective and focused delivery of the Corporate Plan, Corporate Policy and Resources Committee had been advised of new internal governance arrangements that have been developed, and which were set out clearly in the report before Members.

Importantly, work to develop the Corporate Plan had been closely linked to development of the latest Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, ensuring the Corporate Plan was appropriately financed and resourced and had enabled a balanced budget to be presented to Council for consideration later in the evening.

Councillor Bierley thanked Officers for their work and collaboration over recent months to produce a Corporate Plan and delivery programme before moving the recommendations.

The Leader of the Council, seconded the recommendations and addressed the Council on behalf of the Administration, indicating she believed the Plan was strong and ambitious and clearly set out not only the priorities of the new Administration, but also the key principles, values and behaviours that would guide working together to deliver in the years ahead.

Referring to the 10 Point Plan, the Leader had previously presented to Full Council which had set out a clear commitment from the new Administration to embed a new way of working, reflecting on the recommendations of the Peer Challenge; she believed the new Corporate Plan delivered on that commitment.

The Plan aimed to deliver for the whole of the district, in the best interests of the residents. Working closely with local communities, introducing initiatives to reduce deprivation, supporting the delivery of key strategic programmes such as STEP Fusion and the redevelopment of RAF Scampton were key priorities.

Engaging with employers to create new opportunities and remove barriers to local employment, delivering the Pride in Place programme, supporting and working with parish and town councils and working with the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor to drive economic regeneration across the region were also key.

Councillor Brockway fully endorsed the Corporate Plan and seconded the recommendations.

The Deputy Leader addressed the Chamber and spoke of how the Plan would enable over the next years, projects which could be delivered at the very heart of communities, aimed at addressing the issues of social isolation and lack of youth provision, particularly within our

rural areas. The Plan aimed to ensure the Council worked closely with its communities to identify and provide the infrastructure required for them to develop and thrive into the future. She commended the draft Plan and the work undertaken in its development.

Opposition Members did not support the proposals. The considerable work undertaken by Officers was recognised, however it was considered that the plan lacked ambition, a clear direction and represented a missed opportunity to deliver meaningful results in the last couple of years as a district council. It was questioned whether it would make a difference for people living across the district. The forthcoming peer challenge was highlighted and it was suggested that the proposals were rushed and did not give a strong base once Local Government Reorganisation was resolved.

In response it was emphasised that the Corporate Plan was a strategic document and delivery of the aims would follow. Specifics were highlighted to counter the points made by the Opposition. Furthermore it was suggested that Local Government Reorganisation was still unclear and as such it was important to continue with priorities for the District.

Some Opposition Members suggested there should be more focus on addressing the 24.4 % economic inactivity in the district, which was higher than the national average, and to address the issues faced by 19.6 % of children who were living in poverty.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Council's Corporate Plan for 2026-2030, 'Our West Lindsey, Our Future', (Appendix 1) be adopted;
- (b) the three corresponding Thematic Business Plans, which set out key deliverables and key performance indicators assigned to each Corporate Plan theme (Appendices 2 – 4) be approved;
- (c) the Corporate Plan and Thematic Business Plans be subject to annual review and approval by Council alongside the annual budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan each year; and
- (d) the new governance arrangements as outlined in para. 5 of the report, which ensure effective and efficient delivery of the council's priorities be noted.

Note: Councillors Dobbie, Young, Rollings and Howitt-Cowan requested that their vote against the above decisions be recorded in the minutes.

91 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 27/28-31/32, THE BUDGET 27/28, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 27/28 TO 31/32

Members gave consideration to a report which presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2026/27 onwards, alongside the 2026/27 Budget and the Capital Programme from 2026/27 to 2031/32.

Councillor Bierley, as Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee presented the report, advising the MTFPs purpose was to set a robust overall framework for the Council's Financial Strategy and spending plans over the next five years in support of delivering the Corporate Plan.

The report set out the revised financial plans within the financial analysis for changes in Government Funding, the economic environment, local engagement and the priorities of the Council. The Plan reflected revisions to previous estimates and covered the period 2026/27 to 2030/31.

A balanced budget for 2026/27 was proposed, without the requirement to support it with funds from the general fund balance. The final local government finance settlement had been delivered in February and had set funding allocations for the next three years. This had encompassed a reset of Business Rates and a wider review of local government funding.

For 2026/27 the West Lindsey part of Council Tax was proposed to increase by 2.97% which equated to a rise of £7.38p per week for a band D property. The 2026/27 Budget totalled £21.414m, was fully funded and represented a balanced budget within the requirements.

Councillor Bierley moved the recommendations before handing over to the Leader who seconded the recommendations before making the following budget speech.

“On behalf of the West Lindsey Administration Group, I am delighted to second the recommendations in this paper.

Building on what Councillor Bierley has outlined, it is a busy time for the Council at the moment and this budget provides us with a stable base to continue to deliver award winning and highly efficient services whilst also working on a number of initiatives.

We are currently rolling out the food waste service which is the biggest new service the Council has delivered in many years and thanks go to not only the waste team but also teams across the Council in helping to roll out this service to residents.

The future of the former RAF Scampton site will hopefully be resolved during this year with the Council hoping to successfully bid for the site and together with Scampton Holdings deliver a once in a generation regeneration scheme. This will regenerate the site and create jobs and bring visitors to the area in what will be a landmark scheme for the area.

Part of Gainsborough has been awarded Pride in Place funding which will be up to £20m over a ten year period. The Council will look to work with the Pride in Place neighbourhood board when it is established to help to deliver long term improvements that matter to local people.

With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon work has already started within the Council on ensuring we are in best shape we can be whilst also ensuring residents' voices are heard when shaping any new authority.

With the new Corporate Plan (having been approved tonight) we as an Administration are looking to deliver on our bold ambitions across the district. These being to improve leisure and recreational facilities, making best use of our assets and ensuring that residents' needs are being met.

All of these are being delivered whilst we continue with business as usual for our residents and working together with our partners.

Although the Local Government finance settlement could have been better for us we knew that reductions in funding would come at some point and therefore the medium term financial plan has been carefully planned to avoid the need to reduce service levels. Due to the change between the provisional and final settlements we have planned for a small drawdown of reserves in year three to balance over the medium term. We will continue however to lobby Government for a fairer settlement for rural districts such as ours which takes into account the challenges of delivering services in our area. It is hoped therefore that by year three we may not need to draw on reserves at all."

In opening the matter of the debate the Chairman reminded Members that in accordance with the statutory requirements, any and all votes taken in relation to the item would automatically be a recorded vote, and the way in which a Member voted would be recorded in the minutes.

The Leader of the Opposition was first to address the Chamber and suggested the increase in council tax, was not a considered position but rather a default position, suggesting that the rise could have been lower, without impacting the Council budget too much. It was suggested there should have been more consideration for the difficulties residents were facing in respect of the cost of living and that not enough had been done to find efficiencies, noting the Savings Boards had not met.

Councillor Young then proposed an amendment; -

"that the Council increase the council tax by 2%"

Members were advised this equated to identifying savings of £80,000 which Councillor Young was of the view was deliverable and would not impact the Council's delivery plans to a great degree.

With the amendment seconded, Members then debated the amendment.

The relevance of the Savings Board was disputed, with the Administration advising efficiencies were always being and continued to be found and this work did not need to go through a savings board. Savings Boards in other authorities, which had been referred to had actually been cutting services, and still increasing Council tax. The budget proposed, ensured residents continued to receive all services and to a quality level.

It was also suggested that Opposition Members should have presented their revised proposals in advance of the meeting and worked with the Administration in contributing to achieving a balanced budget.

At the request of the Opposition, the Monitoring Officer advised it was constitutionally acceptable to table amendments on the night of the debate. The Leader clarified her comment.

Opposition Members suggested more work should be being undertaken to transfer assets which would in turn reduce the District Council's budget. In responding Administration Members outlined the exploratory and preparatory work being undertaken regarding assets transfer and were mindful that asset transfers need to be undertaken in responsible manner, to ensure those taking on assets were in a position to do so, if assets were to be safeguarded in the future. Some assets generated incomes which supported the budget, all factors needed to be considered in a responsible way.

Members were reminded that points raised should be related to the amendment. With no further speakers indicating, the amendment was put to a recorded vote, with votes being cast as follows: -

For: Councillors Dobbie Howitt-Cowan, Rollings, Velan and Young (5)

Against: Councillors Bailey, Barrett, Bierley, Boles, Brockway, Bridgwood, Brown, Bunney, Carless, Duguid, Flear, Fleetwood, Key, Lawrence, Lee, Morris, Mullally, Palmer, Pilgrim, Smith, Snee M, Snee J, and Westley (23)

Abstentions: (0)

With a total of 5 votes cast for the amendment and 23 votes against, the amendment was declared **LOST**.

Debate continued with Opposition Members wishing to bring to the attention of the Chamber that post LGR, Council tax levels would need to be harmonised and his understanding was that taxes would rise to match that set by the highest charging authority. He urged that work be undertaken to both increase Members' understanding of these matters and cushion residents from any sharp future increases.

Bringing comments to a close, with the recommendations proposed and seconded, in accordance with Procedure Rule 14.4 and as required by regulations, the motion was put to a recorded vote, with votes cast in the following manner: -

For: Councillors Bailey, Barrett, Bierley, Boles, Brockway, Bridgwood, Brown, Bunney, Carless, Duguid, Flear, Fleetwood, Key, Lawrence, Lee, Morris, Mullally, Palmer, Pilgrim, Smith, Snee M, Snee J, and Westley (23)

Against: Councillors Howitt-Cowan, Rollings, Velan and Young (4)

Abstentions: Councillor Dobbie (1)

With a total of 23 votes cast in favour, 4 against and 1 abstention, the motion was declared carried and it was

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the external environment and the financial challenges which the Council could face in the medium to longer term depending on the outcome of future government policy and the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) be formally recognised;
- (b) the Statement of the Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer) on the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves at paragraph 1.10 be accepted;
- (c) the Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31 be accepted along with the risks associated as detailed at Appendix 2.
- (d) the formal Council Tax resolution as detailed in Appendix 8, which proposed a Band D equivalent amount of £256.14, be accepted;
- (e) the Revenue budget 2026/27 detailed at paragraph 1.4 be approved;
- (f) the movement in earmarked reserves detailed at paragraph 1.6 be approved;
- (g) the level of fees and charges for 2026/27 as detailed at Appendix 3, be approved;
- (h) the Capital Investment Strategy at Appendix 4, be approved;
- (i) the capital Programme 2026/27 – 2030/31 and financing as detailed at Appendices 5 and 6 be approved;
- (j) the Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 be approved and the Treasury Investment Strategy, the Borrowing Strategy, the Treasury and Borrowing Prudential Indicators and the Treasury Management Practices detailed at Appendix 7 be adopted;
- (k) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy as contained in the Treasury Management Strategy at Appendix 7 be approved;
- (l) the 2026/27 Pay Policy Statement at Appendix 13 be approved; and
- (m) delegation be granted to the Corporate Policy and Resources committee to approve any change to an existing Fees and Charges required during the year, which are required after the budget is set.

92 SCAMPTON EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Members considered a report which sought approval for the submission of an expression of interest for the purchase of former RAF Scampton in partnership with the Council's development partner 'Scampton Holdings Limited'.

Securing a positive future for the community at Scampton and maximising the economic and social potential of regenerating the key site had been a priority for the council for many years now. There was a much clearer understanding of the Government's disposal strategy and some of the associated time scales. It was considered the marketing materials reflected the Council's work to-date, particularly in creating a planning framework for the site and in setting out the priority and opportunity for investment in the defence sector, as well as the utilisation of key assets on the site, including the runway and the technical buildings. The hugely significant heritage of the site had also clearly been articulated and the need for it be incorporated in future plans.

The paper before Members included a short options appraisal, which considered the Council's options going forward, along with an updated risk register, included at Appendix 2.

At this stage of the process, interested parties were only required to submit an outline of their plans and outline details of how these would be taken forward.

Following submission of the EOI, shortlisted parties would be invited to submit a site proposal, summary business plan, financial offer and evidence of funding.

The District Valuation Office were completing a refreshed site valuation, which had been jointly commissioned by the Home Office and West Lindsey District Council, to help inform any future financial offer. Work continued to finalise the details of the legal agreements between the Council and Scampton Holdings and Officers outlined how the acquisition transfer to Scampton Holdings would be implemented and safeguards which would be put in place to ensure the site was delivered in alignment with the proposed master plan. If the Council's EOI advanced to Phase 2, this would be the subject of further Committee decisions.

Debate ensued and Members across the Chamber wholeheartedly supported the submission of the EOI. They spoke passionately of the work and efforts, and the highs and lows of the Scampton journey, thanking Officers for continuing to press for the best outcome for the District. In the context of LGR this could be the District's legacy. The Plan for the site had the ability to transform Lincolnshire and its economy and have long lasting positive implications for the people of Lincolnshire. Members were encouraged by the information they had heard in the All Member Briefing.

In response to questions, it was confirmed, in the context of LGR, that should Lincoln City's proposals for re-organisation be successful, the site would sit outside of the current District. Others spoke of how the master plan complemented the work and wider aspirations of the GLCCA. At the request of Members, Officers outlined the specialist nature of the site, the unique facilities and opportunities it presented, its significance in UK operations both historically and potentially in the future. This site was not about housing, this site offered so much more and risked a lot more being lost.

Members were thoroughly committed to the Master Plan, the partnership with Scampton Holdings Limited and the desire to deliver something unique and ground-breaking on the site, bringing technologies and industries not currently hosted in the UK.

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

RESOLVED that - the submission of the Expression of Interest with Scampton Holdings Limited be approved and final completion of the expression of interest documentation be delegated to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

The meeting concluded at 8.52 pm.

Chairman

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2b

West Lindsey District Council - 16 March 2026

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 16 March 2026 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 David Dobbie	Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Jacob Flear	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Sabastian Hague	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Key	Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Jeanette McGhee	Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally	Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Patterson	Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Jim Snee	Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Paul Swift	Councillor Baptiste Velan
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 (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Also Present: 2 Members of the Public

Apologies

Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers

93 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

94 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Chief Executive introduced the report by outlining the background to the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process across Greater Lincolnshire, reminding Members that, on 5 February, the Minister for English Devolution had issued formal invitation for proposals for new local government structures. This invitation had triggered the statutory consultation process.

Six submissions for Greater Lincolnshire had been made in total, representing four distinct geographical models for potential unitary arrangements. These proposals were now subject to Government consultation, which required all consultee authorities to respond to a prescribed set of questions for each proposal.

The Chief Executive highlighted that, in November 2025, Council resolved not to submit its own proposal but had agreed to contribute fully to the consultation.

Members had also approved assessment criteria to evaluate the proposals, covering service delivery, financial sustainability, representation, and alignment with local geography. Officers had since undertaken a detailed evaluation using these criteria, forming the basis of the recommended response.

Members were reminded that Appendix 2 was deemed exempt and that any detailed discussion of its content would require the meeting to move into closed session.

Members engaged in a wide-ranging discussion reflecting differing perspectives on the potential impacts of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on West Lindsey and its communities.

In response to a question Officers re-iterated the direction of travel in respect of asset transfers and confirmed the early discussions had commenced with Gainsborough Town Council.

Several Councillors expressed concern about the compressed timescales imposed by Government, noting that the seven-week consultation period was significantly shorter than other major national consultations, such as the recent 13-week National Planning Policy Framework review. Members felt that the speed of the process limited the ability of councils, residents and town/parish councils to fully engage with the technical detail.

A number of Members raised issues relating to planning policy and decision-making, cautioning that re-organisation taking place alongside national reforms to planning policy could leave future authorities vulnerable. It was suggested that if a new unitary body were created before updated local plans were in place, planning decisions could be taken out of local control, increasing the risk of undesirable or speculative development.

The Leader, reflecting on West Lindsey's position and it having not submitted a bid, proposed the following additional recommendation, which was duly seconded.

““that Council delegate authority to the Leader of Council in consultation with the Chief Executive to write to Government in relation to LGR in Greater Lincolnshire, expanding on the following points:

1. Setting out why WDLC didn't submit a final proposal, recognising the political instability in the Council during a key period of the process.
2. Concerns around the extent that any of the proposals have regards to the best interests of West Lindsey residents.
3. Raise the issues around the complexity of public service coverage and geography of Greater Lincolnshire.
4. Request the opportunity to meet with Ministers to discuss these concerns further prior to any decision being made.

Members then debated the amendment and reflected on the process leading up to the consultation, including differing interpretations of how effectively districts across Greater Lincolnshire had collaborated, the political context at the time bids were being formed, and the implications of West Lindsey not submitting a proposal of its own. Members acknowledged the substantial work undertaken by Officers.

The debate also touched on broader concerns about democratic representation, including the likely reduction in the number of Councillors in any new unitary structure. Members noted that significantly larger electoral divisions could dilute representation, place higher demands on Councillors, and make it harder for working-age or younger people to serve in elected roles. Similar concerns were raised about the increasing responsibilities that may fall to parishes and community groups without accompanying resources.

During the debate there were a number of heated political exchanges, warnings issued around conduct and a failure to observe the Chairman's ruling, resulting in the Chairman invoking Procedure Rule 18.2.

With continued disruption a procedural motion, under Procedure Rule 18.3 was moved by the Chairman, namely that Councillor Young not be heard further. With the motion duly seconded, on immediately being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried.

Debate continued with Members continuing to reflect on the merits of sending additional representations.

Bringing comments on the amendment to a conclusion, the amendment was put to the vote, and was declared **CARRIED**.

Note: Councillors Dobbie, Hague, Rollings and Young requested their vote against the amendment be recorded in the minutes.

Permitting further debate, Members again commented on the importance of local identity, geography and community alignment and the advantages and disadvantages each of the proposals posed.

Across the chamber, there was broad agreement that none of the current proposals were ideal, and that the Council needed to focus on securing the "least worst" outcome for residents. Whilst views differed on which geographical model best served local communities,

and opinions continued to differ on the style and level of previous collaboration, there was collective recognition that additional engagement with Government was essential to ensure West Lindsey's concerns were properly understood before any final decision was taken.

With the recommendations moved and seconded, including the additional recommendation supported earlier in the debate, on being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the timeline and requirements of the Government's LGR Statutory Consultation exercise be noted;
- (b) the Council submits a response based on the assessment of the proposals against the Council's principles and with regards to the statutory questions in the consultation as set out in this report and appendices;
- (c) authority be delegated, to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise and submit the final Statutory Consultation response and a copy be circulated to all Members of the Council for information; and
- (d) authority be delegated to the Leader of Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to write to Government in relation to LGR in Greater Lincolnshire, expanding on the following points:
 - 1. Setting out why WDLC didn't submit a final proposal, recognising the political instability in the Council during a key period of the process.
 - 2. Concerns around the extent that any of the proposals have regards to the best interests of West Lindsey residents.
 - 3. Raise the issues around the complexity of public service coverage and geography of Greater Lincolnshire.
 - 4. Request the opportunity to meet with Ministers to discuss these concerns further prior to any decision being made.

The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm.

Chairman

Council Matters Arising Schedule

Purpose:

To consider progress on the matters arising from previous Council meetings.

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

Matters arising Schedule

Meeting	Full Council				
Status	Title	Action Required	Comments	Due Date	Allocated To

Green	Review of Working Groups - Groups to be refreshed	Council on 10/11/25 - resolved that the following Grps should remain but be refreshed and the refresh reported through the relevant parent Committee in due course; and - LCET (Leisure Culture Events and Tourism Working Group) -CPR - Cara Markham - Environment and Sustainability Working Group - PC - Steve Leary Rachel Hughes - Savings Board - CPR - Pete Davy These reviews need to be programmed into the parent cttee work plan - by the Leads for Groups	Lead Officers have been communicated with. Reviews currently planned in as follows: - Savings Board Review Complete Jan 2026 LCET – have been begun their review in Feb 26 – review completed march 26 Only the Environment and Sustainability Working Group review remains outstanding .	01/05/26	Katie Storr
Black	Revised Members Allowances	Statutory Notice of New Scheme be displayed New rates be published in constitution from 1/4/26	Statutory Notice complete. New rates published from 1 April	01/04/26	Katie Storr
Black	Scampton – Expression of Interest	EOI to be submitted	EOI has been submitted	06/03/26	Sally Grindrod-Smith
Black	LGR – consultations responses	Consultations responses be submitted against the four proposals for Lincs a final copy of the response be circulated to all Members of the Council for information.	Responses have been submitted and circulated to all Members	25/03/26	Rachael Hughes

Black	LGR - write to Government in relation to LGR in Greater Lincolnshire, expanding on the points agreed by Members at the EO Mtg including a request to meet Ministers	Leader to write letter	Letter will have been issued before Council meets on 13 April	01/04/26	Rachael Hughes / Paul Burkinshaw
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Full Council

13 April 2026

**Subject: Recommendation from Governance and Audit Committee -
Review of Member and Officer Protocol**

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Lisa Langdon

Lisa.langdon@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

To consider the revised Member and Officer Protocol for approval as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee at their meeting on 10 March 2026.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee be accepted and the Member and Officer Protocol be approved for adoption.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Whilst there is no legal requirement to have a Member and Officer Protocol in a local authority Constitution, it is recognised as good practice across the sector with most local authorities having adopted a protocol.

The Member/Officer Protocol forms part of the Council's Constitution.

Financial:

There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

Staffing: The function primarily sits within the Monitoring Officer role in conjunction with the Deputy Monitoring Officer role.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The Protocol promotes equality amongst officers and members and recognises that all individuals should be treated with dignity and respect.

Data Protection Implications:

The Protocol recognises that Members do have access to documents and information and that this is done in accordance with data protection requirements.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None from this report

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None directly arising from this report

Health Implications:

None from this report

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

None.

Risk Assessment:

The Protocol provides a framework of guidelines outlining how members and officers will work together within the organisation, in addition to outlining how disputes will be dealt with. To not have a protocol in place could risk undermining good governance within the organisation and result in an increase of member/officer related disputes.

Call in and Urgency:

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

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

Yes

No

Key Decision:

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

Yes

No

1. Background

- 1.1 A Member and Officer Protocol is a document used by local authorities to outline the framework for constructive, respectful and transparent relationships between elected councillors and council officers. It forms part of the Council's Constitution and should outline the different roles and responsibilities members and officers have, promotes good governance and sets standards of conduct.
- 1.2 The current Member/Officer Protocol was last reviewed in June 2021. In light of new guidance received from the Local Government Association dated November 2025 [Good practice guidance on member-officer relations protocols | Local Government Association](#) the previous protocol has been reviewed and the revised version is at Appendix A of this report.
- 1.3 The Governance and Audit Committee considered this Protocol at their meeting on 10 March and have recommended it to Full Council for approval.

2. Revisions made to the existing Protocol

- 2.1 The revised Protocol has been re-formatted on the organisation's current branding template, and the following changes have been made:
 - Amended wording to make the Protocol concise and easier to read
 - Inserted key officer roles and explanations
 - Inserted tables and bullet points to avoid long narrative sections
 - Included a new section regarding concerns and disputes
 - Referenced the Council's values and behaviours as outlined in the Corporate Plan

- Updated press release section to include social media
- 2.2 This draft Protocol has been circulated to all members and the senior officers within the Council.
- 2.3 Should the revised Member/Officer Protocol be approved, it is intended to socialise this across the organisation's wider management team which will include a political awareness training session being provided for officers at management level and a session for all Members on the content of the document.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee be accepted and the Member and Officer Protocol be approved for adoption.



Member/Officer Relations Protocol

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Member/Officer Relations Protocol

1. The purpose and scope of this Protocol

1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to set out the principles and standards governing the relationship between elected Members and Council Officers. A Council Officer is someone who is employed by the Council and encompasses all members of staff. Ethical, effective, respectful and professional relationships between Members and Officers is essential to good government and this protocol promotes high standards of governance to ensure the Council operates lawfully, efficiently and within the best interests of the West Lindsey residents.

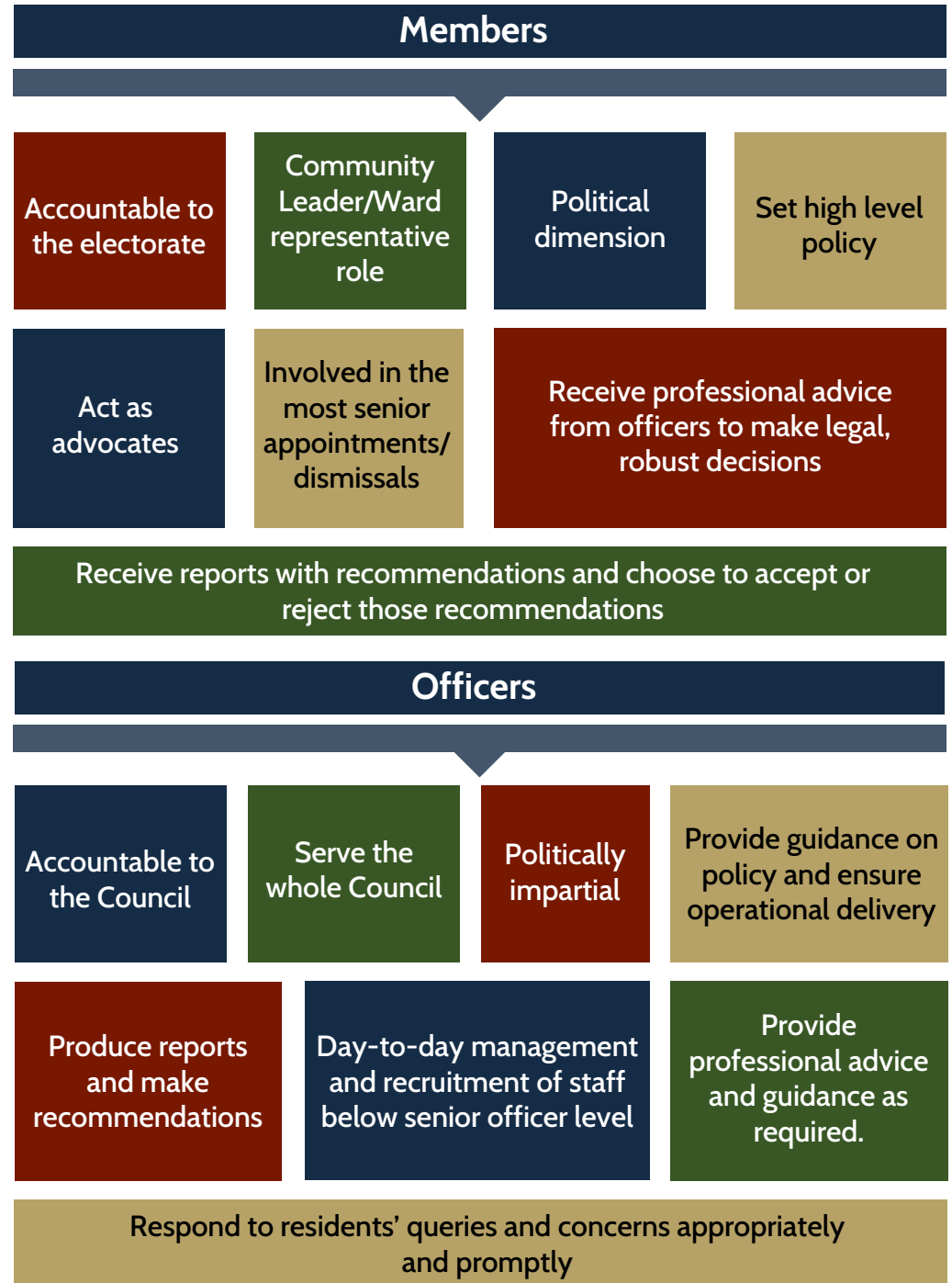
1.2 This protocol applies to all elected Members of the Council, all Council Officers and includes temporary and contracted staff. This protocol forms part of the Council's Constitution and should be read in conjunction with the rest of that document. The protocol also complements the Council's Corporate Plan which references the Values and Behaviours which are expected to be displayed across the organisation by Members and Officers. This protocol applies equally to all those people who are not elected members of the Council but who are members of any of the Council's committees or any other bodies.

2. Member and Officer roles

2.1 Members are responsible for determining Council policy and showing democratic leadership, setting the strategic direction of the organisation, holding decision makers to account, and representing their communities. Officers provide professional advice to Members, they are impartial and operate the Council on a day-to-day basis, ensuring the business of the Council is delivered. Officers give advice and information to Members, and implement the policies and decisions determined by the Council.

2.2 Both Members and Officers should visibly model, promote and uphold the authority's standards, values and behaviours, and should be committed to preventing conflicts.

2.3 The table opposite provides a summary of Member and Officer roles:



3. Key Officer roles

3.1 Statutory Officers

Certain Senior Officers hold posts with mandatory statutory responsibilities, and these are the Head of Paid Service (who is also the Chief Executive), the Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Finance Officer appointed under S151 Local Government Act 1972 (also known as the S151 Officer). These Officers have mandatory, legal responsibilities and their role is to ensure the Council operates ethically, lawfully and remains financially stable providing value for money for the residents. Members must respect these responsibilities and accept that these Officers may be required to give advice or make decisions which Members may not agree with or support.

3.2 Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service

In the Council the Chief Executive also encompasses the Head of Paid Service role and is the most senior officer within the organisation. The Chief Executive provides leadership to the Directors, works closely with elected members, provides strategic advice and direction, implements policies set, and represents the Council's interests externally in various forums.

3.3 Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer has responsibility for reporting to the Council any case where they are of the opinion that a proposal or decision of the authority has given rise to or is likely to give rise to any illegality, maladministration or breach of statutory code. The Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring the appropriate processes to deal with allegations of breaches of the Member Code of Conduct are dealt with appropriately and legally.

3.4 Chief Finance Officer

This role is responsible for the strategic arrangements for the Council's finances, delivering good value for money and ensuring strong financial management across the Council. This includes safeguarding public money and ensuring it is used appropriately, effectively and in accordance with the legal rules regarding public finances. The duties in this role arise from Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 and this role is commonly known as the Section 151 Officer.

3.5 Directors and Assistant Chief Executives

Provide strategic direction for the organisation as a whole and manage the Service for which they have responsibility, ensure statutory responsibilities are properly discharged, are responsible for the management of their staff in respect of work and delivery, account for the efficiency and effectiveness of the professional practice of their area.

3.6 Heads of Service

Responsible for a defined service area of the Council and the management of the officers within that area. Are responsible for ensuring the operational elements of the specific work areas within their remit and ensure adherence to Council rules and procedures.

4. The Professional relationship between Members and Officers

4.1 Mutual trust and respect between Members and Officers is essential to good local government. Trust is earned by respectful behavior, and respect for each other's position should be given from both sides. Close personal familiarity between individual Members and Officers can damage this relationship and prove embarrassing to other Members and Officers. Whilst there should be a close working relationship between Members, the Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Chief Executives and other senior officers, relationships should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question an officer's ability to deal impartially with the Member(s) concerned or other Members.

4.2 Working collaboratively is central to the Council's ethos and Members and Officers should display the organisation's Values and Behaviours by being helpful, kind, open, reliable and creating trusting professional relationships. This will support a culture that is focused on delivering the Council's vision and providing the best possible service for the residents of West Lindsey.

4.3 Members can expect the following behaviors from Officers:

- Promote equality, treat all members equally with dignity, respect and courtesy regardless of political group or position
- Comply with legal duties, provide professional advice, and implement Council policy
- Avoid close familiarity and friendships with Members and follow guidelines on personal relationships
- Deal with Member enquiries effectively and efficiently
- Explain and give reasons for decisions made under delegated powers

- Integrity and appropriate confidentiality

4.3 Officers can expect the following behaviours from Members:

- Compliance with the Councillor Code of Conduct
- Promote equality and treat Officers with respect
- Provide political leadership and direction
- Apply rules of procedure to meetings
- Request advice and direction on matters that arise from being an elected Member (and not in their personal/political capacity)
- Respect Officer free time (non-Council time)

5. Relationship between Group Leaders and the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team

5.1 Group Leaders shall meet collectively and informally with the Chief Executive from time to time to discuss matters of common interest or concern either raised directly by a Group Leader or by the Chief Executive or other Statutory Officer. The Chief Executive will invite Directors, Assistant Chief Executives, and Heads of Service to these meetings as he deems appropriate.

5.2 Such meetings will have no formal standing or powers. There is an expectation that proceedings in the meeting are something that Group Leaders are expected to share with the Members of the Group. Any items which are not to be shared will be clearly identified at the meeting.

6. Relationships between Committee Chairmen and Officers

6.1 Officers will regularly brief Chairmen on matters affecting their committee.

6.2 Any Chairman or spokesman may have a briefing from officers, at a mutually agreed time, on matters to be discussed at a forthcoming committee meeting.

6.3 Reports always contain a recommendation unless the issue is clearly one where political judgement is required. Reports will also always include the contact details of the report author. Members should raise issues with that Officer prior to the committee meeting where practicable, in order that Officers can have the relevant information to hand Members

are also permitted and encouraged to raise queries and comments in advance of a meeting with the relevant Committee Chairman.

6.4 The senior officer will always be fully responsible for the contents of any report submitted in their name. Wherever possible, Chairmen will be given the opportunity to view and discuss the draft agenda and reports for their committee. All agendas should be agreed by the Chairman of a committee before publication. Any issues arising between a Chairman of a committee and a Director regarding the content of an agenda will be referred to the Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive for resolution in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

6.5 The Chairmen and members of the policy committees shall give Officers the opportunity to give any advice they wish to give.

6.6 In relation to action between meetings, it is important to remember that the local government legislation only allows for decisions (in relation to the discharge of any of the Council's functions) to be taken by a committee or an officer (where delegated to do so). No Individual Member, in any capacity, has individual decision making powers.

6.7 All Members shall seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer where they consider there is doubt about the legality for a decision or whether the decision is being made in the correct forum. The Monitoring Officer meets regularly with the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer and will ensure any concerns are also discussed with them if appropriate.

6.8 Members and Officers should be mutually supportive to minimise any potential embarrassment to the Council. Criticism of officers should be dealt with in private and, by the same token, Officers will never be publicly critical of the Council or its policies.

6.9 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be bound by the same provisions set out in this section above. In addition, they shall -

- consider the seniority of the officers asked to appear before it to ensure that more junior officers are not put under undue pressure;
- when asking officers to give evidence, confine questions, so far as possible, to questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions;
- where they consider it appropriate, ask officers to explain and justify advice given to members of the policy committees prior to decisions

- being taken; and
- not question officers in such a way as to be in breach of the Council's policy on harassment nor deal with matters which are of a disciplinary nature.

6.10 This section also applies to the Chairmen of all Regulatory Committees and Sub-Committees.

6.11 The Chairman and Members of the Planning Committee must also act in accordance with the requirements set out in the document entitled the "Local Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters".

7. Officer Relationships with Party Groups

7.1 There is statutory recognition for political groups and it is common practice for such groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of Council business in advance of consideration by the relevant Council body. Meetings between the Chief Executive, the Senior Leadership Team, the Leader and Deputy Leader, Committee Chairmen and/or group leaders will be held when appropriate albeit that they have no executive powers.

7.2 In order to ensure that Members are properly briefed on complex matters briefings will be arranged and all Members will be invited. These will usually be held on MS teams but may on occasion take place in a physical setting. As a rule, Officers will not normally attend meetings of any political group. A request may be made via the Head of Paid Service that a senior officer be asked to brief the group and offer appropriate professional advice concerning Council business. Any such invitation will be deemed to include an invitation to the Head of Paid Service and relevant Director.

7.3 Officer support will not extend beyond providing factual information or professional advice in relation to matters of Council business. Officers must not be involved in advising on matters of party business, and therefore should not be expected to be present at meetings or parts of meetings when such matters are to be discussed.

7.4 Party group meetings are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council, and conclusions reached at such meetings do not rank as formal decisions. If an officer attends, this confers no formal

status on such meetings in terms of Council business and must not be interpreted as doing so. Where officers provide factual information and advice to a party group in relation to a matter of Council business, this is not a substitute for providing all the necessary information and advice when the matter in question is formally considered by the relevant part of the Council.

7.5 Officers will respect the confidentiality of any party group discussions at which they are present and, unless requested to do so by that party group, will not relay the content of such discussions to another party group or to any other members. This shall not prevent an officer providing feedback to other senior officers on a need-to-know basis.

7.6 An officer accepting an invitation to the meeting of one party group shall not decline an invitation to advise another group about the same matter. He/she must give substantially the same advice to each.

7.7 No Member will refer in public or at meetings of the Council to advice given by officers to a party group meeting.

7.8 Any particular cases of difficulty or uncertainty in relation to this part of the protocol should be raised with the Monitoring Officer and the relevant party group leader.

8. Members in their Ward Role and Officers

8.1 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the Members representing the ward or wards affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend the meeting. Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise on a local issue, the ward Members should be notified at the outset of the exercise.

8.2 Any requirement to consult with Members on delegated decisions are effecting their Ward are set out in the "Responsibility for Functions" in Part IV of this Constitution.

8.3 Further to paragraph 10.2 when a Member refers a planning application for his/her Ward to the Planning Committee for determination, there is an expectation that the Member will attend the Committee meeting to explain their reasons for referral.

8.4 Officers will seek both to inform and to keep Members informed

about any initiative(s) which they are developing. However, Members must be aware of the pressures on officers' time and that officers may exercise judgement as to how much information is provided.

8.5 Matters of a complex nature, or with significant implications, such as financial or reputational, will be the subject of an all Member Briefing/ Workshop prior to them being considered by the relevant Committee. Members are encouraged to attend such briefings and workshops when requested to do so.

8.6 It is the duty of the Chief Executive and Directors to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local Members informed and that the timing of such information allows Members to contribute to the decision making process.

9. Inter Member Relations

9.1 Notwithstanding the differences of political opinion which will inevitably arise, it shall be unacceptable for Members to submit notices of motion or questions which name another Member or Group. Motions which identify political positions held within the Council will be deemed acceptable.

10. Member Access to Documents and Information

10.1 The Council believes in open government. Information will generally be freely available to all Members, but any rules on confidentiality must be observed.

10.2 The approach to information being freely available has to be qualified in relation to certain appropriately confidential information. Any provision of information will be compliant with Data Protection.

10.3 Where, in an officer's view, a request for information will require a significant amount of staff resources to provide the information, which he/she feels unable to commit, he/she should seek guidance from his/her Assistant Director so that a satisfactory solution, in consultation with Members, can be found. In the event of a dispute, a decision will be made by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the leader of the group whose Member is requesting the information or the Leader of the Council.

10.4 Members have a statutory right to inspect any Council document which contains material in relation to any business which is to be transacted at a Council, committee or sub-committee meeting. This right applies irrespective of whether the Member is a member of the committee or sub-committee concerned and extends not only to reports which are submitted to the meeting, but also to any relevant background papers.

10.5 In addition to the inspection of reports to Council, committees and sub-committees, and papers on which the production of those reports relied, which are available to the public under the access to information legislation, the common-law right of Members is much broader. It is based on the principle that any Member has a right to inspect Council documents so far as his/her access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the Member properly to perform his/her duties as a member of the Council.

10.6 The proper exercise of this common-law right is on a need to know basis and depends on whether it is reasonably necessary for the Member to have the information in order properly to perform his/her duties. The propriety of a request for information must initially be determined by the particular Director who has responsibility for the particular Service. In the event of a dispute, the matter will be referred to the Monitoring Officer, who will consult with the Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee and provide direction.

10.7 Any Council information provided to a Member must only be used by the Member for the purpose for which it was provided, i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Member's duties as a member of the Council. A Member should never disclose or use non-public information for the personal advantage of him/herself or of anyone known to him/her, or to the disadvantage or discredit of the Council or anyone else.

11. Press Releases and Social Media Channels

11.1 Relations with the media need to be handled with care to ensure the Council's position on any issue is represented properly. Day to day contact with the press and media will normally be handled by the Communications Team, together with the appropriate Committee Chairman, Leader and relevant officers, and where appropriate, the relevant Ward Member.

11.2 On occasions, Members may be approached directly by the media and asked to make a comment or to appear for interview. Members are asked, where practicable, to ensure the Head of Paid Service and/or the Head of Service for Communications and Engagement is made aware of the approach. Unless Members have been authorised to speak on behalf of the Council, they should make it clear that any views they express are not necessarily those of the Council. In all cases, Members and Officers should uphold the good name and integrity of the Council.

11.3 Council press releases are drafted by officers and will often contain quotations (within the limits of the Local Government Act 1986) from Members. Such press releases are issued on behalf of the Council and quotations from Members will not indicate their party political affiliation or to attribute the policies or initiatives to a particular group.

11.4 Council press releases will be sent to all Members in advance of them being released to the Media. This is for information only.

11.5 The timing and content of the Councils Electronic News and the publication of information and news articles on the Council's social media channels is controlled by the Head of Service for Communications and Engagement who must ensure that the content reflects a corporate point of view.

11.6 Members and Officers must avoid posts which may damage working relationships or the reputation of the Council. Officers should not engage in political debate online.

12. Correspondence (including e-mails)

12.1 Correspondence between an individual Member and an officer should not be copied by the officer or Member to any other Member or Officer without the consent of both parties unless it constitutes a 'background paper' to a committee report. Where correspondence relates to Council policy, or the interpretation of Council policy, a copy may be sent to the chairman of the relevant committee, the Head of Paid Service and/or the relevant Director and this will be made clear to the original Member. Under no circumstances should 'silent/blind (BCC) copies' be made available to a third party, and copies should only be sent to third parties with the express permission of the Member involved.

12.2 Similarly, Members should not copy for third parties, correspondence from officers without the author's consent unless it is apparent that the content is to be shared.

12.3 Official letters on behalf of the Council should normally be sent out in the name of the appropriate officer, rather than in the name of a Member. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government minister) for a letter to appear in the name of a Member, but this should be the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, it is not legal for letters which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council to be sent out in the name of a Member as this would constitute an act which cannot be delegated to an individual Member.

13. Behaviour at Meetings

13.1 Members involved in taking a decision must be fully aware of all of the facts and it is suggested, therefore, that if a Member leaves the room during a debate he/she should consider not taking part in the ensuing decision making.

13.2 In respect of licensing and planning application decisions, a Member who has left the meeting during consideration of the item or who arrived late, will not be permitted to take part in that decision. The Lead Officer in attendance will be responsible for reminding Members of this fact and enforcing the requirement.

13.3 The use of communication devices is permitted within meetings in accordance with the Provisions of the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 provisions.

13.4 However as a matter of courtesy mobile 'phones/ devices should not affect the business of the meeting and should remain on silent for the meetings duration.

13.5 The tweeting, blogging or recording of proceedings heard in closed session is strictly prohibited.

13.6 Members should note that any correspondence may be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection legislation and other provisions for access to information.

14. Resolving concerns and disputes

14.1 Attempts should always be made to resolve any issues through informal routes and respectful discussion. Informal resolution can be beneficial to the Member and Officer concerned, and is often pragmatic and cost effective. A breakdown in the relationship between Members and Officers can seriously undermine the effectiveness of the Council and its ability to run effectively and serve its community can be compromised. Any concerns should in the first instance be raised with the Monitoring Officer who can provide appropriate assistance.

14.2 Should informal attempts at resolution be unsuccessful, a formal complaint about an elected Member can be made using the Member Code of Conduct and accompanying arrangements. Serious breaches can be escalated to the Standards Committee under the arrangements in place for dealing with such complaints.

14.3 Should Members have any concerns regarding an Officer within the Council's leadership team they should first refer this to the Chief Executive. Member concerns regarding Officers below senior leadership team level should be referred to the Director or Assistant Chief Executive responsible for that area.



West Lindsey District Council

Member/Officer Relations Protocol



Member /Officer Relations Protocol

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Member/Officer Relations Protocol

1. Underlying Principles

- 1.1 Both Members and officers serve the public. They depend on one another, but their responsibilities are distinct. Members are responsible to the electorate and are responsible for setting policy. Officers are responsible to the Council; their job is to give advice to Members and to carry out the Council's work.
- 1.2 Mutual respect between Members and officers is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between individual Members and officers can damage this relationship and prove embarrassing to other Members and officers. It is clearly important that there should be a close working relationship between Members, the Chief Executive, Assistant Directors and other senior officers. However, such relationships should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question an officer's ability to deal impartially with the Member(s) concerned or other Members.
- 1.3 Members must respect the impartiality and integrity of all the Council's officers. Similarly, all officers must respect the role of Members as elected representatives. It is important that any dealings between Members and officers should observe proper standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position.
- 1.4 On occasions, Members may have reason to make a formal complaint about the conduct or performance of an officer. All such complaints should be made personally to the appropriate Assistant Director. It is important that complaints are made this way and the details noted.
- 1.5 If an officer is concerned about a Member's conduct, it should be brought to the attention of the Monitoring Officer, who may inform the Member. If appropriate, matters of concern will be dealt with through the adopted procedures.

2. Roles of Members and Training Requirements

- 2.1 Members have four main areas of responsibility -
 1. determining the policy of the Council and giving it leadership;
 2. monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Council in implementing that policy and delivering services;
 3. representing the Council externally in an informed and positive manner
 4. acting as advocates on behalf of their constituents and the wider community.
- 2.2 Members should undertake their role without placing undue pressure on Officers, in particular the Council's Statutory Officers have responsibilities in law over and above their obligations to the Council. Members must respect these obligations, must not obstruct these officers in their discharge of responsibilities and must not victimise officers for discharging their responsibilities.
- 2.3 In undertaking their role, Members are asked to commit to the Training and Development

opportunities that are afforded to elected Members, including a full Induction Programme at the commencement of each term of office.

- 2.4 There are also mandatory training requirements for a number of the Regulatory Committees to which Members, appointed to serve on these Committees, are required to commit to.

3. Roles of Officers

- 3.1 Officers give advice and information to Members, implement the policies determined by the Council and manage the day to day business of the Authority.
- 3.2 In giving such advice to Members and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations. Whilst an officer might report the views of individual Members on an issue, a Member should not seek to pressure the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, Neither should the Member seek to have a report withdrawn from the agenda for such reasons. Where a recommendation is contrary to current Council policy, the officer shall draw attention to this in the report.
- 3.3 Certain officers, e.g. Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer, have responsibilities in law over and above their obligations to the Council and to individual Members. Members must respect these obligations, must not obstruct these officers in the discharge of their responsibilities and must not victimise officers for discharging these responsibilities.
- 3.4 Officers below Assistant Director level are accountable to their Assistant Director. Whilst they should always seek to assist Members, they must not, in so doing, go beyond the bounds of whatever authority they have been given.
- 3.5 The Authority which has been delegated to Officers, is that which is set out in the Officer Scheme of Delegation (Part IV of the Constitution) and subsequent internal sub-delegations which are in writing and held by each service area.

4. Relationship between Chairman of the Council and Leader of Council and Officers

- 4.1 The Chairman of the Council and Leader of the Council shall be bound by the same provisions set out in section 2 above when acting as Chairman or Leader as he/she would be when acting as an ordinary Council Member.

5. Relationship between Group Leaders and the Chief Executive and Assistant Director

- 5.1 Group Leaders shall meet collectively and informally with the Chief Executive from time to time to discuss matters of common interest or concern either raised directly by a Group Leader or by the Chief Executive or other Statutory Officer.
- 5.2 Such meetings will have no formal standing or powers. There is an expectation, that proceedings in the main are something that Group Leaders are expected to share with the Members of the Group. Any items which are not to be shared will be clearly identified at the meeting.

- 5.3 An individual Group Leader can also request a meeting with the Chief Executive.
- 5.4 Again Such meetings will have no formal standing or powers and shall, unless otherwise agreed, be confidential other than to that Group Leader.

6. Relationships between Committee Chairmen and Officers

- 6.1 Officers will regularly brief Chairmen on matters affecting their committee.
- 6.2 Any Chairman or spokesman may have a briefing from officers, at a mutually agreed time, on matters to be discussed at a forthcoming committee meeting.
- 6.3 Reports always contain a recommendation unless the issue is clearly one where political judgement is required. They will also always include the contact details of the report author. Members should raise issues with that officer prior to the committee meeting where practicable, in order that Officers can have the relevant information to hand. Members are also permitted and encouraged to raise queries and comments in advance of a meeting with the relevant Committee Chairman.
- 6.4 An Assistant Director will always be fully responsible for the contents of any report submitted in his/her name. Wherever possible, Chairmen will be given the opportunity to view, and discuss the draft agenda and reports for their committee. All agendas should be agreed by the Chairman of a committee before publication. Any issues arising between a Chairman of a committee and an Assistant Director regarding the content of an agenda will be referred to the Monitoring Officer for resolution in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 6.5 The Chairmen and members of the policy committees shall give officers the opportunity to give any advice they wish to give.
- 6.6 In relation to action between meetings, it is important to remember that the law (LGA '72/'00) only allows for decisions (in relation to the discharge of any of the Council's functions) to be taken by a committee or an officer (where delegated to do so). No Individual Member, in any capacity, has individual decision making powers.
- 6.7 All Members shall seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer where they consider there is doubt about the vires for a decision or the Monitoring Officer and other appropriate officers where they consider a policy committee decision might be contrary to the policy framework.
- 6.8 Members and officers should be mutually supportive in order to minimise any potential embarrassment to the Council. Criticism of officers should be dealt with in private and, by the same token, officers will never be publicly critical of the Council or its policies.

7. Relationships between Chairman and Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Officers

- 7.1 The Chairman and members of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee – the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be bound by the same provisions set out in section 2 above. In addition, they shall -

- consider the seniority of the officers asked to appear before it to ensure that more junior officers are not put under undue pressure;
- when asking officers to give evidence, confine questions, so far as possible, to questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions;
- where they consider it appropriate, ask officers to explain and justify advice given to members of the policy committees prior to decisions being taken; and
- not question officers in such a way as to be in breach of the Council's policy on harassment nor deal with matters which are of a disciplinary nature.

7.2 Officers are required at all times to guide/advise the whole Council. Given the respective roles of elected members and officers, it is accepted that officers, while remaining politically neutral, will inevitably give advice on a wide range of issues. Members must continue to respect the political neutrality of officers and accept that officers are obliged to respond positively to any requests from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for appropriate information and advice relevant to the issue being considered by the Committee.

8. Relationships between Chairmen and Members of Other Committees and Officers

8.1 The Chairmen of all Regulatory Committees and Sub-Committees shall be bound by the same provisions as set out in section 2 above.

8.2 The Chairman and Members of the Planning Committee must also act in accordance with the requirements set out in the document entitled the "Local Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters".

9. Relationship between Policy Committee Chairmen and Officers

9.1 The Chief Executive and/or Assistant Directors will meet jointly with the Policy Committee Chairman on a regular basis to discuss matters which cross cut both committees. Members will be permitted to share the content of such meetings with wider Members as they deem appropriate unless explicitly advised not to do so.

10. Officer Relationships with Party Groups

10.1 There is statutory recognition for political groups and it is common practice for such groups to give preliminary consideration to matters of Council business in advance of consideration by the relevant Council body. Meetings between the Chief Executive, Assistant Director, the Leader and Deputy Leader (if there is one), Committee Chairmen and/or group leaders will be held when appropriate albeit that they have no executive powers.

10.2 In order to ensure that Members are properly briefed on complex matters any political group may request via the Head of Paid Service that senior officers be asked to brief the group and offer appropriate professional advice concerning Council business. Any such invitation will be deemed to include an invitation to the Head of Paid Service or relevant Assistant Director.

10.3 Officers have the right to refuse such requests, and will not normally attend a meeting of a party group where some of those attending are not members of the Council.

- 10.4 Officer support will not extend beyond providing factual information or professional advice in relation to matters of Council business. Officers must not be involved in advising on matters of party business, and therefore should not be expected to be present at meetings or parts of meetings when such matters are to be discussed.
- 10.5 Party group meetings are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council, and conclusions reached at such meetings do not rank as formal decisions. The presence of an officer confers no formal status on such meetings in terms of Council business and must not be interpreted as doing so. Where officers provide factual information and advice to a party group in relation to a matter of Council business, this is not a substitute for providing all the necessary information and advice when the matter in question is formally considered by the relevant part of the Council.
- 10.6 Officers will respect the confidentiality of any party group discussions at which they are present and, unless requested to do so by that party group, will not relay the content of such discussions to another party group or to any other members. This shall not prevent an officer providing feedback to other senior officers on a need-to-know basis.
- 10.7 In their dealings with party groups, officers must treat each group in a fair and even-handed manner. The duration of an officer's attendance at a party group meeting will be at the discretion of the group, but an officer may leave at any time if he/she feels it is no longer appropriate to be there.
- 10.8 An officer accepting an invitation to the meeting of one party group shall not decline an invitation to advise another group about the same matter. He/she must give substantially the same advice to each.
- 10.9 No Member will refer in public or at meetings of the Council to advice given by officers to a party group meeting.
- 10.10 Any particular cases of difficulty or uncertainty in relation to this part of the protocol should be raised with the Monitoring Officer and the relevant party group leader.

11. Members in their Ward Role and Officers

- 11.1 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the Members representing the ward or wards affected should, as a matter of course, be invited to attend the meeting. Similarly, whenever the Council undertakes any form of consultative exercise on a local issue, the ward Members should be notified at the outset of the exercise.
- 11.2 Any requirement to consult with Members on delegated decisions are effecting their Ward are set out in the "Responsibility for Functions" in Part IV of this Constitution.
- 11.3 Further to paragraph 10.2 when a Member refers a planning application for his/her Ward to the Planning Committee for determination, there is an expectation that the Member will attend the Committee meeting to explain their reasons for referral.
- 11.4 Officers will seek both to inform and to keep Members informed about any initiative(s) which they are developing. However, Members must be aware of the pressures on

officers' time and that officers may exercise judgement as to how much information is provided.

11.5 Matters of a complex nature, or with significant implications, such as financial or reputational, will be the subject of an all Member Briefing/Workshop prior to them being considered by the relevant Committee. Members are encouraged to attend such briefings and workshops when requested to do so.

11.6 It is the duty of the Chief Executive and Assistant Directors to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local Members informed and that the timing of such information allows Members to contribute to the decision making process.

12. Inter Member Relations

12.1 Notwithstanding the differences of political opinion which will inevitably arise, it shall be unacceptable for Members to submit notices of motion or questions which name another Member or Group. Motions which identify political positions held within the Council will be deemed acceptable.

13. Member Access to Documents and Information

13.1 The Council believes in open government. Information will generally be freely available to all Members, but any rules on confidentiality must be observed.

13.2 The approach to information being freely available has to be qualified in relation to certain appropriately confidential information. Any provision of information will be compliant with Data Protection. Moreover, devoting a significant amount of staff resources to identify and collate information with marginal benefit cannot be justified.

13.3 Where, in an officer's view, a request for information will require a significant amount of staff resources to provide the information, which he/she feels unable to commit, he/she should seek guidance from his/her Assistant Director so that a satisfactory solution, in consultation with Members, can be found. In the event of a dispute, a decision will be made by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the leader of the group whose Member is requesting the information or the Leader of the Council.

13.4 Members have a statutory right to inspect any Council document which contains material in relation to any business which is to be transacted at a Council, committee or sub-committee meeting. This right applies irrespective of whether the Member is a member of the committee or sub-committee concerned and extends not only to reports which are submitted to the meeting, but also to any relevant background papers.

13.5 In addition to the inspection of reports to Council, committees and sub-committees, and papers on which the production of those reports relied, which are available to the public under the access to information legislation, the common-law right of Members is much broader. It is based on the principle that any Member has a right to inspect Council documents so far as his/her access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the Member properly to perform his/her duties as a member of the Council. There is, however, no right for a Member to conduct a roving commission.

13.6 The proper exercise of this common-law right is on a need to know basis and depends on whether it is reasonably necessary for the Member to have the information in order properly to perform his/her duties. The propriety of a request for information must initially be determined by the particular Assistant Director who holds the source in question. In the event of a dispute, a decision on the point will be made by the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee.

13.7 Any Council information provided to a Member must only be used by the Member for the purpose for which it was provided, i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the Member's duties as a member of the Council. A Member should never disclose or use non-public information for the personal advantage of him/herself or of anyone known to him/her, or to the disadvantage or discredit of the Council or anyone else.

14. Independent / Lay Persons

14.1 This protocol applies equally to all those people who are not elected members of the Council but who are members of any of the Council's committees or any other bodies.

14.2 This Protocol applies equally to such non Council members on Council bodies as it does to Council members.

15. Press Releases

15.1 Relations with the media need to be handled with care to ensure the Council's position on any issue is represented properly. Day to day contact with the press and media will normally be handled by the Communications Team, together with the appropriate Committee Chairman, Leader and relevant officers, and where appropriate, the relevant Ward Member.

15.2 On occasions, Members may be approached directly by the media and asked to make a comment or to appear for interview. Members are asked, where practicable, to ensure the Head of Paid Service and/or the Communications Team is made aware of the approach. Unless Members have been authorised to speak on behalf of the Council, they should make it clear that any views they express are not necessarily those of the Council. In all cases, Members and Officers should uphold the good name and integrity of the Council.

15.3 Council press releases are drafted by officers and will often contain quotations (within the limits of the Local Government Act 1986) from Members. Such press releases are issued on behalf of the Council and it would not, therefore, be appropriate when repeating quotations from Members to indicate their party political affiliation or to attribute the policies or initiatives to a particular group.

15.4 Council press releases will be sent to all Members in advance of them being released to the Media. This is for information only.

15.5 The timing and content of the Councils Electronic News is controlled by an editorial team advised by the cross party editorial board who must ensure that the content reflects a corporate point of view.

16. Correspondence (including e-mails)

- 16.1 Correspondence between an individual Member and an officer should not be copied by the officer or Member to any other Member or Officer without the consent of both parties unless it constitutes a 'background paper' to a committee report. Where correspondence relates to Council policy, or the interpretation of Council policy, a copy may be sent to the chairman of the relevant committee, the Head of Paid Service and/or the relevant Assistant Director and this will be made clear to the original Member. Under no circumstances should 'silent/blind (BCC) copies' be made available to a third party, and copies should only be sent to third parties with the express permission of the Member involved.
- 16.2 Similarly, Members should not copy for third parties, correspondence from officers without the author's consent unless it is apparent that the content is to be shared.
- 16.3 Official letters on behalf of the Council should normally be sent out in the name of the appropriate officer, rather than in the name of a Member. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government minister) for a letter to appear in the name of a Member, but this should be the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, it is not legal for letters which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the Council to be sent out in the name of a Member as this would constitute an act which cannot be delegated to an individual Member.

17. Behaviour at Meetings

- 17.1 Members involved in taking a decision must be fully aware of all of the facts and it is suggested, therefore, that if a Member leaves the room during a debate he/she should consider not taking part in the ensuing decision making.
- 17.2 In respect of licensing and planning application decisions, a Member who has left the meeting during consideration of the item or who arrived late, will not be permitted to take part in that decision. The Lead Officer in attendance will be responsible for reminding Members of this fact and enforcing the requirement.
- 17.3 The use of communication devices is permitted within meetings in accordance with the Provisions of the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 provisions.
- 17.4 However as a matter of courtesy mobile 'phones/ devices should not affect the business of the meeting and should remain on silent for the meetings duration.
- 17.5 The tweeting, blogging or recording of proceedings heard in closed session is strictly prohibited.

Note:

- Members need to be aware that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to information recorded in any form, which is 'held' by the Authority at the time a request is received. This includes information which is held by another body, for example, a contractor, on behalf of the Authority



Council

13 April 2026

Subject: Appointment of Three Independent Persons (Standards)

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Lisa Langdon
Monitoring Officer
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Purpose / Summary:

To approve the appointment of three Independent Persons until May 2030.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following candidates be appointed to serve as Independent Persons (Standards), for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2030.

- Mr Stephen Beard (re-appointed)
- Mr Phillip Jones
- Mr Shawn Lewis

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Under the Localism Act 2011 local authorities must appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) to undertake the role specified in the Act. This is a mandatory requirement.

Best practices suggest local Authorities should appoint at least two. There are no limits on the number of IPs a Council may appoint.

Financial : FIN/5/27/CL/SL

The role allows for the claiming of £60 per meeting, and mileage (£0.45p/mile) and subsistence, although most consultation meetings with IPs are now held remotely.

Increasing the number of IPs has no financial impact as only one Member will be used per complaint as is the current process.

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment : None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities

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

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

No

x

1. Background

- 1.1 Under the Localism Act 2011, it is a mandatory requirement for a Local Authority to appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) who the Monitoring Officer must consult with on all decision made regarding complaints received against Councillors under the Code of Conduct. Those that make complaints and those who are subject to a complaint also have a right to consult with an appointed IP.
- 1.2 Best practice recommends that each Authority should appoint at least two such Independent Members.
- 1.3 The Council has for a number of years operated with two such Members. Mr Stephen Beard (appointed until May 2026), and Mr Andrew Middleton (Appointed until May 2028)
- 1.4 The role carries a small allowance of £60 per meeting plus 0.45p mileage and the term of office for the role is 4 years.
- 1.5 With the term of office for Independent Person, Mr Beard due to expire in May 2026, the role was advertised on the Council's website and social media platforms.
- 1.6 Recruitment to these roles has historically been difficult, with it not uncommon for Local Authorities to have to share their IP Members, however on this occasion a total of 6 applications were received, including a re-application from Mr Beard.
- 1.7 Interviews were held on Wednesday 5 March 2026, and the interview panel comprised Councillor Adam Duguid, Chairman of Standards Committee, and Mrs Lisa Langdon, Monitoring Officer.
- 1.8 Candidates were of a high calibre and given historic issues in recruiting to this position, the debilitating impact on the Council's ability to operate in the absence of an IP, and an opportunity to afford additional flexibility, it was considered prudent to make provisional offers of appointment (subject to Council approval) to three persons on this occasion.
 - Mr Stephen Beard
 - Mr Phillip Jones
 - Mr Shawn Lewis
- 1.9 Mr Beard, of course, has experience of serving as an Independent Person in this role and is regarded as having been highly effective in the role. It is therefore recommended that Mr Stephen Beard be re-appointed.
- 1.10 Mr Jones has a background in occupational psychology and has worked for over 30 years solely within public sector organisations, having worked extensively in the field of organisational governance, developing governance systems, investigating and repairing failures of governance.

- 1.11 Mr Lewis has a career grounded in the Royal Air Force and its Legal Services providing advice on a diverse range of legal disciplines and advising on complex, sensitive and nuanced cases.
- 1.12 The Council is in a very fortunate position to have received so many quality applications, and this additional capacity and independence is to be welcomed. It is therefore recommended that both Mr Lewis and Mr Jones also be appointed as an Independent Persons, bringing the total number of Standards Independent Persons to four.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the following candidates be appointed to serve as Standards Independent Persons, for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2030.
- Mr Stephen Beard (re-appointed)
 - Mr Phillip Jones
 - Mr Shawn Lewis



Council

13 April 2026

APPOINTMENT OF THREE INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL(IRP)

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

Lisa Langdon
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Purpose / Summary:

To approve the appointment of three Independent Members to the Independent Remuneration Panel until May 2030

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following candidates be appointed to serve as Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel, for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2030.

- Mr Richard Quirk (re-appointed)
- Mrs Deborah Barker-Overton
- Mr Phillip Beisty

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, English local authorities are legally required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The IRP must have at least three members who are not councillors or committee members.

Financial : FIN/4/27/CL/SL

Each Panel Member receives a small allowance of £200 p/a, with the Chairman of the Panel receiving £400 p/a.

Mileage (£0.45p/mile) and subsistence are also payable.

The recommendations if accepted in their entirety would see the Panel increase from 5 to 6 Members – this is an additional amount of £200 p/a but could be met from within existing budgets

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment : None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities

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

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

No

x

1. Background

- 1.1 Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, English local authorities are legally required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The IRP must have at least three members who are not councillors or committee members, and they are tasked with recommending Councillor allowance levels.
- 1.2 The Council's Term of Reference for the IRP allow for up to seven Members and has most recently been operating with 5 Members.
- 1.3 Recruitment to these roles can often be difficult, hence the flexibility afforded in the Panel's Term of Reference and the fluctuation in Panel size historically.
- 1.4 The term of office for each Panel Member is a four -year period and it carries a small allowance of £200 p/a , with the Chairman of the Panel receiving £400 p/a, regardless of the number of meetings held.
- 1.5 Due to the current term of office for two members of the Panel, (Mr Richard Quirk and Mr Trevor Hall) expiring in May 2026, the roles were advertised on the Council's website and social media platforms. The posts were also advertised through voluntary sector organisations. However, only one application was received and this was a re-application from Mr Quirk.
- 1.6 The Council at the time were also advertising for Independent Persons for the Standards regime (IP) and received a good number of applications for the positions. Having interviewed for the IP role on 5 March, two of the candidates interviewed that day were considered to be highly suitable for the Remuneration Panel and confirmed they would be interested in the alternative role of Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 1.7 Provisional offers of appointment (subject to Council approval) have been made to three persons on this occasion.
 - Mr Richard Quirk
 - Mrs Deborah Barker-Overton
 - Mr Phillip Beisty
- 1.8 Mr Quirk has experience of serving as a Member of the Remuneration Panel for several years, including this year serving again as Chairman of the Panel and he is regarded as been effective in this role. It is therefore recommended that Mr Richard Quirke be re -appointed.
- 1.9 Mrs Deborah Barker-Overton has a keen interest in the local community and has played an active role, as founding member of the successful and awarding winning Caistor in bloom, the establishment of Caistor Multi-Use Centre (now Caistor Charity Shop) and latterly securing funding the Caistor Arts & Heritage Centre.

- 1.10 Mr Phillip Beisty has a career grounded in clinical and safeguarding supervisory roles, which demand objectivity, independence, and impartiality in complex and sensitive situations and is a serving Magistrate.
- 1.11 Increased engagement from the local community with a wide range of experiences and a desire to serve is to be welcomed. It is therefore recommended that both Mrs Deborah Barker-Overton and Mr Phillip Beisty also be appointed as Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which would see the total number of Members on the Panel increase to 6.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the following candidates be appointed to serve as Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel, for a term of office expiring at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2030.
- Mr Richard Quirk (re-appointed)
 - Mrs Deborah Barker-Overton
 - Mr Phillip Beisty