

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 24 March 2026 commencing at 4.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Moira Westley
Alison Adams
Andrew Morriss

In Attendance:
Peter Davy Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Paul Burkinshaw Chief Executive
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

Apologies: Councillor Eve Bennett

Membership: Councillor Moira Westley substituting for Councillor Eve Bennett

Also Present : Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Matthew Boles

65 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

66 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

67 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Committee considered a report outlining proposals for a new Committee structure which would see the Council operate with three policy Committees instead of two. It was clarified that as the proposal involved a change to the organisation's constitution, the Committee were being asked to consider the proposals and make any comments or recommendations prior to this matter being considered at a Full Council meeting.

A Councillor sought clarification of the responsibilities of each committee as it appeared there could still be occasions when an item would need to be considered by different committees. The concern was acknowledged and it was explained that there was still the ability to hold concurrent meetings if needed. In respect of financial issues this would be considered by one committee in line with CIPFA requirements. A member asked if delegated budgets could be provided to individual committees. It was confirmed that this would be the case with each committee receiving budget monitoring reports.

A member expressed support for the idea but that more detail was needed about the interconnection of each meeting. It was explained that the proposal was a mix between the cabinet and committee models. The current system was not being fundamentally changed and the benefit was that all councillors were involved. Confirmation was given that the Strategic Delivery panels would not be decision making bodies. The Chair and Vice-chair of each committee would be on the panels so that they have awareness of what is coming forward. This would provide clarity and was not a fundamental change but just aligned with themes and associated work.

A member stressed the importance of ensuring residents had an understanding of which committee was responsible for which services. The Corporate Plan was a strategic document that would not be easily understood so clarity was essential. It was agreed that this and the roles of members and officers in the process needed clarifying before consideration at council. Officers asked if members had any suggestions for renaming the committees to make their roles clearer than that would be welcome.

A member supported the request for more information and highlighted the need to look at the additional cost of having more chairs and vice-chairs. Clarification was also needed of membership numbers and whether members could sit on a policy committee and scrutiny. It was advised that membership would be in accordance with political balance and would be decided at the Council AGM. Leaders of the groups would be involved in co-ordinating this.

A member referred to the issue of non-attendance at meetings and asked whether extra meetings would exacerbate this issue. In response it was confirmed that there were not extra meetings being proposed but was making better use of the time available. Members agreed this was an issue that needed consideration as part of the discussion at council.

A concern was raised that the involvement of chairs and vice-chairs in the early stages could lead to a disparity in understanding and the wider views of members could be lost.

The chair summarised the discussion and expressed disappointment at lateness of the report to members. It was suggested that the key issues raised were that more information was needed including a chart of activities for each committee, personnel structures, the role of chair/vice chair, scrutiny arrangements and the size of committees and composition.

Clarification was given that there were no changes proposed to the requirements for membership of Overview and Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees. It was confirmed that to have two opposition members any committee needed to consist of nine members or above. It was noted that the committee timetable would be approved by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in due course.

Discussion ensued regarding the requirements on Chairs/Vice Chairs and the need for training to be provided to ensure that the roles were delivered effectively. It was suggested this would be undertaken by the Member Development group. The links between committees, the Corporate Plan and supporting structures were reiterated.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and be forwarded with the comments made at the meeting to Full council for a decision

The meeting concluded at 5.15 pm.

Chairman