

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, 7th September, 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

To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 29 June 2026.

(PAGES 5 - 23)

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

Setting out the current position of previously agreed actions as at 27 August 2026.

(PAGES 24 - 26)

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, if 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 - Review of Bagged Waste Collection Services in Parts of West Lindsey.

“Council notes that:

- Some households in West Lindsey continue to receive waste and recycling collections in bags rather than wheeled bins.
- The current arrangement is outdated and resource-intensive and may contribute to litter, vermin and adverse environmental conditions.
- Residents have raised concerns about the service’s effectiveness, cleanliness and long-term sustainability.
- Recycling performance in areas served by bagged collections requires improvement.

Council resolves to:

1. Instruct the Director responsible for waste and environmental services to commence a comprehensive review of the bagged waste and recycling collection service within three months of the date of this motion.
2. Require the review to assess operational performance, costs, environmental impacts, health and safety, recycling outcomes and value for money.
3. Conduct a formal consultation with residents in all affected areas, elected members and other relevant stakeholders on future collection

Agendas, Reports and Minutes will be provided upon request in the following formats:

Large Clear Print: Braille: Audio: Native Language

- arrangements, completing it within four months of the review's commencement.
4. Evaluate alternative service models, including wheeled bins, communal collection points and other appropriate arrangements, taking account of accessibility, storage, collection efficiency, local circumstances and the needs of vulnerable residents.
 5. Produce a detailed options appraisal for each viable option, covering capital and revenue costs, funding requirements, implementation risks, anticipated environmental benefits and delivery timetable.
 6. Develop proposals to increase recycling, reduce litter and vermin, improve neighbourhood appearance and deliver a more efficient and sustainable service.
 7. Require the Director to present the completed review, consultation findings, preferred option and fully costed implementation plan to the relevant committee within six months of the date of this motion.
 8. Require regular progress reports to the relevant committee until the review and any agreed implementation programme are complete.

The Council's objective is to replace or improve existing bagged collection arrangements through a properly assessed and resident-informed programme that delivers a cleaner, safer, more efficient and environmentally sustainable service, improves recycling performance and provides value for money.

I so move."

Councillor Trevor Young

Motion 2 – FENS 2100 Programme

"West Lindsey District Council understands that the FENS 2100 programme has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the challenges and opportunities associated with flooding, coastal change and future water supply across the Lower River Witham Basin and The Wash.

The Council requests that a summary of the programme's findings be made available to Members, together with confirmation that these findings have informed decision-making by Lincolnshire County Council and other relevant authorities.

Furthermore, West Lindsey District Council would welcome the opportunity to invite representatives from Lincolnshire County Council and the FENS 2100 programme to present this important work to Members and outline its implications for the future management of flood risk, coastal change and water resources within the area.

I so move"

Councillor Chris Darcel

9. REPORTS FOR DETERMINATION

a. Local Government Reorganisation

Draft Terms of Reference for the two Voluntary Joint Committees (Appendix 5) will be issued by way of supplement once available.

(PAGES 27 - 55)

b. Recommendation from Governance and Audit Committee - National scheme of delegation for planning decisions

(PAGES 56 - 79)

Paul Burkinshaw
Head of Paid Service
The Guildhall
Gainsborough

Thursday, 27 August 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 29 June 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 Christopher Darcel	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jacob Flear	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Sabastian Hague	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Key	Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee	Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Peter Morris	Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Patterson	Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings	Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Trevor Young	

In Attendance:

Paul Burkinshaw	Chief Executive
Peter Davy	Director Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Chief Executive - Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Ellen King	Head of Policy
Katie Storr	Head of Democratic Services and Elections (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Also in Attendance: 3 representatives from Saxilby with Ingleby Neighbourhood Planning Group

Also Present: 4 Members of the Public
1 Member of the Press

Apologies

Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor Baptiste Velan

17 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND MOMENT OF REFLECTION - MR JIM HARRISON AND MR MICHAEL WRAGG

Having just remembered former District Council Director Jim Harrison, and Mr Michael Wragg, of the Royal British Legion-Local Branch, in prayers prior to the meeting, in formally opening the meeting, the Chairman asked Members to remain standing for a moment's reflection as a mark of respect to both gentlemen.

On resuming seats, before moving to the agenda, the Chairman and other Members paid moving tributes to both gentleman speaking of their dedication to the District, the former's commitment to Council Services and its staff, the latter for his unwavering commitment to the local community, especially veterans, and his heavy involvement in creating two well established events in Gainsborough, the Annual Remembrance Service and the Christmas Day lunch.

The Chamber offered their sincerest condolences to the families of both, with official condolences to be sent from the civic office.

Bringing tributes to an end the Chairman formally welcomed all those attending with a special welcome to representatives from the Saxilby with Ingleby Neighbourhood Planning Group, who would later in the meeting formally present their Reviewed Plan to Council.

18 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Full Council held on 11 May 2026 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

19 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

20 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**.

21 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman addressed the meeting highlighting some of the great events, he had had the pleasure to attend and support, many hosted by West Lindsey, including the “Go Fest” spread over two days and over two sites, Market Rasen and Gainsborough.

The Chairman spoke of how positively the activities had been received in Market Rasen and of his pleasure at seeing many young families from all sections of the community enjoying the activities. Both events had been well attended and the Chairman placed on record his thanks to those Teams involved in producing and staffing the events over weekends.

The Chairman had had the pleasure of attending the Lincolnshire Show on both days and again the level of engagement from local communities and visitors to the area, alike was something to be congratulated. West Lindsey’s marquee was busy throughout both days , with the Step Fusion Robo Dogs proving a real hit once again.

It had been an honour and a privilege for the Chairman to raise the Armed Forces flag outside the Guildhall, the previous Friday. Again engagement had been high and he thanked those Members who had supported him at the event and spoke of the thanks he had received from the veteran community for recognising the day with a formal raising of the flag.

Whilst the Chairman had been unable to attend the Armed Forces Day organised by the town Council the previous week, he took the opportunity to congratulate organisers on what he understood had been a very successful day. West Lindsey’s Armed Forces Member Champion, Councillor Carless was requested to pass on formal congratulations and thanks to the organisers.

The final event which Chairman referenced was the Curley’s Viking Running Event which had taken place on a baking hot day at the Roses Sports Field. The Chairman congratulated those who had got involved despite the extreme heat and he spoke of his hopes that the event would become an annual fixture and go from strength-to-strength.

Leader

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

Scampton

The Leader was pleased to confirm that following the last meeting of Full Council, the Council’s bid, alongside Scampton Holdings, for the purchase of RAF Scampton had been submitted. Thanks and praise were extended to Officers in acknowledgement of the considerable effort. Members would be kept updated as soon as there was any further progress to share. An outcome was expected by the summer Parliamentary recess, with the Home Office targeting completion of the disposal before the end of the calendar year.

Local Government Re-organisation

The Government was still expected to make its announcement regarding Local Government

Reorganisation in Lincolnshire during week commencing 13 July.

Local Council's Network

Both the Leader and Deputy alongside Senior Officers had attended the regional meeting of the Local Councils Network, where information about LGR processes was shared by organisations who had already undergone the process. The Leader had taken confidence that West Lindsey was well placed to deal with the upcoming demands.

Great Town Award

The Judging Panel of the Academy of Urbanism, had visited Gainsborough, which was shortlisted for the "Great Town" Award and the Leader had the pleasure of speaking with the Panel. Again, the work of Officers, in showing the incredible work being done by this council to enhance residents', experience was praised. The outcome was expected later in the year.

Other matters of mention included the Leader having attended meetings regarding the STEP Fusion project, a Government funded initiative intended to enable development of new sustainable power, with Members urged to familiarise themselves with the concept of fusion; attending meetings with Lincolnshire Police to work on the Safer Gainsborough Programme; and attending meetings of the District Joint Committee, and the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Council Authority meetings.

Finally the Leader applauded those who had organised the Council's marquee at the Lincolnshire Show, which had been very well attended and had been an inclusive, family and disability friendly experience, which was most welcome.

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive, addressed the Chamber and spoke in greater detail regarding the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process. Members were reminded of previous decisions taken by Council at their Extraordinary meeting on 16th of March, which had included delegating authority to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to write to the Government with regards to LGR, expanding on a number of points, including to request the opportunity to meet with ministers to discuss the concerns prior to any decision being made.

Members were advised that a response had been received from Alison McGovern, the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, advising that she had asked MHCLG civil servants to engage with the council.

Since the last Full Council meeting, the Chief Executive was pleased to advise that a meeting had been held with MHCLG on the 18 May to discuss the Council's views on LGR as set out in response to the consultation, this had been followed up with a visit by them, to the District on the 16 June. MHCLG had confirmed that the council's representations would be included in their advice to the Minister to inform any decision.

It was considered a positive step, that whilst the council did not submit or support a proposal for local reorganisation, it had secured the same opportunity for making representations as those councils who did submit proposals.

As referred to by the Leader a decision on all local government reorganisation tranche three areas, which included Greater Lincolnshire, was expected in July prior to the Parliamentary recess.

Also, since the last meeting of Full Council, a letter was received seeking views on the Structural Changes Order (SCO) which was a key statutory instrument that would give legal effect to local government reorganisation. It would dissolve existing councils, establish new unitary authorities and dictated the legal framework for the transition process and elections.

A copy of that letter had been shared with all Members along with confirmation that a response was submitted within the deadline set.

In concluding announcements, the Chief Executive concurred with the Leader's comments regarding the really positive work being undertaken by Officers of the council, making specific reference to the first public sector challenge in Lincolnshire having taken place on 13 June and which had entailed around 100 public sector workers in Greater Lincolnshire walking 27 miles across the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Finally the Chief Executive placed on record his thanks to all employees, particularly the frontline workers and not limited to the waste, recycling and street cleansing teams and those at the crematorium who did a fantastic job the previous week to deliver services across the district despite the extreme hot weather.

The sentiments were echoed by the Chairman.

22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

23 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

The Chairman advised the meeting that two 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 Trevor Young to put his question to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jackie Brockway, as follows:-

"The Savoy Cinema has now been open for approximately 11 months and, whilst the cinema itself has been a welcome addition to the town centre, it is disappointing that the retail units beneath the development remain vacant.

Can the Leader please inform Members:

- What interest has been shown in the large retail unit beneath the cinema since the development opened?

- What progress has been made towards securing a tenant and when does the Council anticipate the unit will be occupied?
- What specific actions is the Council taking to attract retailers and businesses to these vacant units and strengthen the town centre offer?
- Can the Leader provide assurance that Gainsborough will not experience a similar situation to that seen in Grantham, where retail units beneath the Savoy Cinema remained unoccupied for a considerable period of time?

Given the significant public investment in the development, I am sure residents will wish to understand what steps are being taken to ensure these commercial units contribute fully to the regeneration of the town centre.”

The Leader advised that Councillor Bierley, in his capacity as Chairman of the Thriving Council Committee, would respond on her behalf.

The Chairman of the Thriving Council Committee, responded as follows: -

“Thank you for the questions.

From its opening in July 2025 to early June 2026, the Savoy Cinema has welcomed over 85,000 visitors. The cinema is clearly establishing itself as a vibrant and positive addition to Gainsborough town centre, increasing footfall and supporting wider regeneration objectives.

In terms of interest in the commercial units, there has been a good level of engagement from the market since the marketing went live last summer. This continues, and over the past 120 days, the units have generated more than 2,000 listing views, and our appointed agents have directly contacted 112 food and beverage operators across the local, regional and national markets. This has resulted in a number of site visits, including from well-known national brands such as Nando’s and Edinburgh Woollen Mill, demonstrating that the opportunity has been actively considered by a range of occupiers.

Significant progress has been made in securing tenants. I am pleased to confirm that two of the three commercial units are now let. These lettings both support the growth of an existing local business and introduce a further national operator into the town centre. Blush Florist is due to open by the end of July, relocating from Marshall’s Yard and expanding its offer to include a flower school and enhanced wedding services. In addition, Subway is expected to open by the end of the summer, further strengthening the town centre’s food and beverage provision.

With regard to the remaining unit, despite extensive marketing and interest, this reflects a challenging market context for the retail and leisure sector at local, regional and national levels. Feedback from some operators has referenced factors such as catchment size, footfall and investment return. However, discussions are ongoing with a prospective local operator, and we are continuing to explore a range of alternative options in line with our regeneration ambitions. Due to the commercial sensitivity of these negotiations, it is not possible to share further detail at this stage. Whilst a fixed occupation date cannot be confirmed, work is actively progressing and we remain focused on securing a sustainable tenant at the earliest opportunity.

The Council is taking a proactive and comprehensive approach to attracting businesses and strengthening the town centre offer. Working with our specialist agents, Eddisons, we are actively promoting investment opportunities to national, regional and local operators and benchmarking Gainsborough against comparable locations. Alongside this, we are actively managing vacant properties through targeted action plans and direct engagement with landlords.

This is supported by a wider programme of interventions, including business support, grant funding to improve shopfronts, and ongoing public realm investment. We continue to deliver a strong programme of town centre events and initiatives, alongside measures such as free parking, to drive footfall and increase dwell time. These actions are underpinned by regular vacancy monitoring, data-sharing with partners, and engagement through the town centre business group.

Members can be assured that this position is not comparable to that experienced in other towns. Two of the three units have been successfully let within the first year of the cinema opening, and active discussions are ongoing regarding the final unit. Whilst the wider market conditions remain challenging, we are taking a proactive, intervention-led approach to ensure that the unit is brought into use as quickly as possible with a viable and sustainable occupier.

More broadly, our regeneration work continues to be recognised externally. A recent visit by the Academy of Urbanism highlighted Gainsborough as a positive example of collaborative, place-based regeneration despite challenging market conditions. Looking ahead, the STEP Investment Plan, due for completion later this year, will set out the next phase of growth and development for the town and the wider district.

In summary, we are seeing tangible progress, with strong footfall, new occupiers secured, and continued active engagement with the market. We remain confident in the role of the cinema-led development as a catalyst for further investment and will continue to take an active approach to securing the best possible outcome for the remaining unit and the wider town centre”.

With permission of the Chairman, Councillor Young posed a supplementary question and statements suggesting that empty retail units were increasing, that the previous administration’s priority was to employ a specialist to attract businesses to the town and sought to understand whether the current administration would be putting more focus into this area, suggesting it was needed.

In responding the Chairman of the Thriving Council Committee shared his views on the significant progress and investment the town of Gainsborough had received particularly through Levelling-Up.

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

“Residents across West Lindsey continue to raise concerns regarding poor internet connectivity, despite previous assurances from officers that broadband provision in our district compares favourably with many other parts of the country.

In today's digital age, reliable high-speed internet is no longer a luxury but an essential service. Many residents depend on it for work, education, accessing public services, healthcare appointments, and staying connected with family and friends.

Can the Leader please inform Council:

- What action is being taken by the Council, working with broadband providers and partner organisations, to improve internet connectivity across West Lindsey?
- Which areas of the district are currently identified as having the poorest broadband and mobile internet provision?
- What broadband infrastructure improvements are planned over the next 12 to 24 months?
- What timescales can residents expect for the delivery of improved services in those communities that continue to experience poor connectivity?

Finally, can the Leader assure residents that improving digital connectivity remains a priority for the Council and that every effort is being made to secure the level of internet service that residents and businesses require to thrive in the modern economy?"

The Leader of the Council responded as follows: -

"Thank you for your question

The latest figures show that in West Lindsey 93.75% of premises have access to Superfast coverage (30Mbps or higher) and 74.26% of premises have access to Gigabit coverage (1Gbps or 1,000Mbps). Whilst we continue to see high speed coverage increase we currently have 5.23% of premises with coverage below 15Mbps.

As a District Council we continue to work closely with Lincolnshire County Council and key services providers such as Openreach, Virgin, Quickline and Grain Communications. Our Officers maintain regular contact with providers who have been issued BDUK Government contracts to deliver broadband infrastructure improvements.

There are areas of the district that struggle with slow connection speeds. These are being identified as part of BDUK's Project Gigabit which aims to support fast and reliable broadband and mobile coverage in hard-to-reach places. This national work includes looking at alternative ways of supplying service such as satellite or air wave delivery.

Infrastructure improvement works are delivered as part of contracted Lot's issued by BDUK. In particular Lot 10 covers improvement work in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire but is currently waiting for a new provider to be announced. Lot 23 was awarded to Quickline to deliver improvements in Lincolnshire which includes various communities in West Lindsey.

I have requested Officers prepare a list of locations we are aware of planned

improvement works in West Lindsey and to share these with all Members for information. Where possible this will include details of timescales for planned works.

Improving digital connectivity continues to be a priority for the Council and is reflected under our objective of 'Supporting our communities to thrive' within our Corporate Plan 2026-2030. Whilst infrastructure works are governed by BDUK, including where and when service upgrades can be introduced, we will continue to pro-actively engage with partners such as Lincolnshire County Council and broadband providers to influence positive improvements for West Lindsey residents.

At a local community level we also continue to deliver Wi-Fi Hotspots in community locations, such as village halls, further enabling digital access and supporting community activity".

The Leader also outlined some of her experiences at speaking with the big providers and the reasons they give for not investing.

With permission of the Chairman, Councillor Rollings posed a supplementary question and statements suggesting that more needed to be done, that it was unacceptable that many areas had very limited connection and that this hampered modern life and the ability to run businesses. Councillor Rolling's suggested the Council needed to advocate more on this issue, understand better the gaps in provision and considered it would be a good topic for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.

In responding the Leader indicated that it would be passed on to the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for her consideration.

This brought Rule No.9 questions to an end.

24 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10

The Chairman advised the meeting that one Motion had been submitted pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.10 and this was as set out in the agenda.

As the mover of the motion Councillor Emma Bailey was invited to read aloud her motion to the meeting, as follows: -

Improving Rural Transport Access for Young People in West Lindsey

West Lindsey is a predominantly rural district where many young people rely on public transport to access education, employment, training, healthcare, leisure activities, and social opportunities.

Limited bus services, high travel costs, and poor connectivity between villages and market towns create barriers to opportunity and contribute to social isolation among young people.

Apprentices particularly under 18, often face even greater difficulties. Their

income is minimal and they do not have the same financial support as someone in full time education. Some may not have independent transport, and bus services in our area do not align with early or late working hours typical of apprenticeships. This adds further pressure on working families. Improving transport links supports economic growth, educational attainment, workforce development, and community wellbeing.

The Wheels to Work scheme has already proven successful in other rural areas, providing affordable scooter or bicycle hire schemes, enabling young people, including apprentices, to overcome transport barriers.

Young people, particularly apprentices, should not be disadvantaged because they live in a rural area. Resources should be directed towards addressing structural barriers faced by young people. Affordable and reliable transport is essential for helping young people, particularly apprentices under 18, to remain connected to education, employment, apprenticeships, volunteering, and community life.

Strategic Transport is now the responsibility of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority. The Mayor has recently established a Rural Transport Group and a Transport Taskforce. Our Leader Cllr Jackie Brockway is a member of the Greater Lincolnshire Transport Board.

In order to highlight the barriers faced by our young people in rural communities and to instigate proactive planning to address this: -

Council Resolves To:

Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire to:

1. Highlight the barriers faced by young people in rural communities such as West Lindsey and feed these issues into the emerging Local Transport Plan.
2. Seek a review of rural transport provision for young people, including bus services and accessibility for apprentices.
3. Request that action planning arising from the Rural Transport Group, Transport Taskforce and emerging Local Transport Plan include consideration of the following potential interventions:
 - Wheels to Work
 - Improved rural bus services
 - Affordable travel options for under 25s
 - Targeted Support scheme for driving lesson and tests for 16-18 year olds
 - Means tested bursaries for travel for apprentices and young people in villages with no evening or weekend bus services

I so move
Councillor Emma Bailey”

With the motion duly seconded debate ensued, with several Members speaking in support of the motion. Members acknowledged the existence of the issues, referred to in the motion, across the District, and of the need for these matters to be brought to the attention of the Mayor, requesting action.

The Leader of Opposition, whilst supportive of the motion, indicated he felt it could be stronger and moved the following amendment: -

- “4. That the Council request that the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority undertake a specific assessment of transport needs of young people in rural communities, including apprentices, students, young carers and people with disabilities and report back on the feasibility, cost and expected benefits of the proposed interventions, identifying opportunities for the external funding and pilot schemes within West Lindsey.”

Reason for the addition was offered including that it broadened the scope, and the mover of the amendment, suggested seeking evidenced-based planning, rather than simply requesting an action would differentiate the request.

With the amendment seconded, Members debated the merits of the amendment. Some were in agreement that the addition added strength, and again spoke of the barriers young people in general faced in accessing transport, and the knock-on effects, as such the broadening of the scope was also welcomed. Some expressed caution that the amendment requested a considerable amount of work and data collation to enable it be answered. The motion as submitted, however, enabled answers to be expected in a reasonable time frame.

It was suggested that the mover of the amendment, may wish to submit their amendment as a stand-alone motion to a future meeting, to keep traction in this area.

Debate on the amendment continued, with Members sharing their experiences, the high level of NEETS across Lincolnshire, and how travel access and costs may be contributing to this.

The mover of the original motion explained why her motion had sought to focus on apprentices, noting that she understood the Mayoral Authority had already undertaken research into this area. Members spoke of the additional financial burden sometimes created for families when choosing apprenticeships.

The mover of the amendment, reaffirmed that he supported the original motion, but felt having data to back up where and what type of intervention was required would have ensured the most strategic decisions were made, noting major employment developments on the horizon and the changing needs and opportunities.

Following much debate on the amendment, on being put to the vote the amendment was declared **LOST**.

Note: Councillor Dobbie requested that his vote for the amendment be noted in the minutes.

Members returned to debating the motion as submitted, and a further amendment was moved to recommendation two, so that it read: -

- “2. Seek a review of rural transport provision for young people, including bus services and accessibility for apprentices, *across West Lindsey, supported by meaningful engagement with schools, colleges and apprenticeship providers, employers, youth organisations and young people themselves, to better understand the transport barriers they face.*”

The mover of the amendment suggested it sought to ensure any review was not a simple desk based review but included meaningful engagement.

With the amendment seconded, the mover of the original motion, indicated her agreement to the addition, followed by there being general consensus indicated across the wider Chamber.

Many Members spoke of the barriers young people faced as a result of inadequate public transport, of their concerns for the rising number of young people not in training, employment or education, how the cost of travel impacted a young person's desire to continue working and of fears for a lost generation, if changes or investment was not made.

On being put to the vote the motion, **AS AMENDED**, was declared **CARRIED** on that basis it was **RESOLVED** that: -

The Leader of the Council writes to the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire to:

1. Highlight the barriers faced by young people in rural communities such as West Lindsey and feed these issues into the emerging Local Transport Plan.
2. Seek a review of rural transport provision for young people, including bus services and accessibility for apprentices, across West Lindsey, supported by meaningful engagement with schools, colleges and apprenticeship providers, employers, youth organisations and young people themselves, to better understand the transport barriers they face.”
3. Request that action planning arising from the Rural Transport Group, Transport Taskforce and emerging Local Transport Plan include consideration of the following potential interventions:
 - Wheels to Work
 - Improved rural bus services
 - Affordable travel options for under 25s
 - Targeted Support scheme for driving lesson and tests for 16-18 year olds
 - Means tested bursaries for travel for apprentices and young people in villages with no evening or weekend bus services.

25 ADOPTION OF THE SAXILBY WITH INGLEBY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

The Chairman, prior to introducing the report, again welcomed representatives from Saxilby

with Ingleby Neighbourhood Planning Group, Liz Hillman, Martin Furnish and Pete Crowther who would have opportunity to address the Chamber and formally present their Plan.

Members gave consideration to a report which sought Members' approval to adopt the review of the neighbourhood plan for the parish of Saxilby. The reviewed plan would replace the original neighbourhood plan for Saxilby to form part of the development plan and thereby had a major influence on planning application decisions in the Saxilby parish.

A referendum, held been held on 6 May; the outcome of this was shown in section 3.6 of the report with 90.71% of residents who voted being in favour of the Revised Plan.

As such the Plan was now ready to be adopted or "made" by Full Council as it had completed all its stages and had the support of its local community.

The Chairman moved the recommendations before inviting Ward Councillors to address the Chamber, with both speaking of their support and admiration of the work undertaken in completing a Neighbourhood Plan Review.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group were then invited to address Members, with Mrs Hillman making the following statement to the Chamber: -

"Good evening Chair and Councillors,

Thank you for inviting representatives of the Saxilby with Ingleby Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to address Members this evening and formally hand over our revised Neighbourhood Plan. I am pleased to be joined by Martin Furnish and Pete Crowther, members of the Steering Group.

The Parish Council considered it essential that the Plan was updated to reflect changes in national planning policy, emerging priorities such as climate change and biodiversity, and the evolving nature of our parish. Since the original Plan was adopted, around 366 new dwellings have been built. It was therefore important to understand the views of newer residents, alongside those of longer-established members of our community, on how the parish should continue to develop.

Community consultation lies at the heart of neighbourhood planning. The policies contained within the revised Plan are based on the views, priorities and aspirations expressed by local residents through surveys, consultation events and ongoing engagement. Those conversations helped shape the Plan before you today.

I had the privilege of chairing the first Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in 2017. When we began this review, we expected it to take around a year. In reality, it took three years and involved a number of challenges, including delays caused by changing funding arrangements. We are particularly grateful to West Lindsey District Council for its support during the final stages of the process.

Despite those challenges, the revised Plan is underpinned by a strong evidence base, including the Design Codes and Guidance document and the Housing Needs Assessment. Together, these provide a robust framework for guiding future development in a way that reflects the character, identity and priorities of Saxilby with Ingleby Parish. We have retained the format used in the original Plan, combining planning policies with photographs, illustrations and explanatory text to make it accessible and easy to use.

I would like to place on record our sincere thanks to our planning consultant, Luke Brown, for his expertise throughout the review; to Nev Brown, Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer at West Lindsey District Council, for his guidance and support; to all past and present members of the Steering Group; and to the Parish Clerk and Administration Officer for their invaluable assistance.

I would also like to recognise the dedication of the final core group: Brett Fegan, Martin Furnish, Sheila Hughes and Pete Crowther whose commitment over the past three years ensured the successful completion of this review. As Chair of the Steering Group, it has been a privilege to work alongside them and to help bring this review to completion.

Most importantly, I would like to thank the residents of Saxilby with Ingleby who participated in consultations, shared their views and ultimately voted in the neighbourhood plan referendum. The revised Plan received overwhelming support, with more than 90% of those voting backing its adoption, providing a clear mandate from the community for the policies it contains.

On behalf of the Parish Council and the Steering Group, thank you for your support throughout this process. We are delighted that the revised Neighbourhood Plan has reached this final stage, and it gives me great pleasure to formally hand over the Saxilby with Ingleby Neighbourhood Plan. Thank you.

At the conclusion of the address the Chairman of Council then formally received the Plan from the Neighbourhood Planning Group to a round of applause from all Members.

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

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the Saxilby with Ingleby Neighbourhood Plan Review, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 201, be formally adopted (made)
- (b) the newly adopted (made) Saxilby with Ingleby Neighbourhood Plan Review June 2026, replace the Saxilby with Ingleby_Neighbourhood Plan adopted May 2017, to form part of the West Lindsey Development Plan for Saxilby with Ingleby parish area.

26 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS ON COMMITTEES

Members considered a report which set out the details of the political groups on the Council, the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each Committee and the allocation to different political groups of seats on the Committees as a result of a new Group having been formed as detailed in Section 1 of the report.

Having been proposed and seconded, with no questions or comments, it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the details of political groups, as set out in Appendix A, be noted; and
- (b) that the allocation to different political groups of seats on committees, and the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each Committee as set out in Appendix B, be approved.

27 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEES FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2026/2027 CIVIC YEAR

The Chairman of the Council presented the report which set out the wishes expressed by the political groups in respect of the appointment of Members to serve on each of the Council's formal Committees for the remainder of 2026/2027 Civic Year.

Members were advised that an updated report could be found within the supplement pack which included all nominations put forward by Group Leaders based on their allocations.

Councillor Bailey advised she would take the seat on the Planning Committee, allocated to the Community Independents Group still showing blank in the report.

With no further adjustments made, having been proposed and seconded, including the verbal notification above, it was

RESOLVED – that in accordance with the provisions of Section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the wishes expressed by political groups, Members be appointed to serve to the Council's Committees for the remainder of 2026/2027 civic year as follows: -

Chief Officer Employment Committee (9 Members)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Baptiste Velan
Councillor Moira Westley

Thriving Council Committee (7 Members)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Paul Swift

Thriving Places Committee (7 Members)

Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Moira Westley

Thriving People Committee (7 Members)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Trevor Young

Governance and Audit Committee (7 Members)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Paul Swift

Licensing Committee (10 Members)

Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Stephen Bunney

Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Trevor Young

Regulatory Committee (10 Members)

Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Trevor Young

Planning Committee (9 Members)

Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Sebastian Hague
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Jim Snee

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 members)

Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Mandy Snee

Standards Committee (6 Members)

Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Moira Westley

28 LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - WLDC PROGRESS REVIEW 2026

Members considered a report which presented the findings from the Council's recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review, which was designed to assess the Council's progress against the eight main recommendations made during the full Corporate Peer Challenge, which took place in January 2025.

Members were asked to note the Peer Team's findings, having regard to the considerable progress that the Council were considered to have made in all areas since the original Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2025.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the findings of the 2026 Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review be noted; and
- (b) the significant progress made by the Council in implementing the original recommendations within the 2025 Corporate Peer Challenge Report be noted.

29 RECOMMENDATION FROM THRIVING COUNCIL COMMITTEE - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26

The Chairman of the Thriving Council Committee introduced the report which stood recommended from his Committee.

The report was required under the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and provided Members with assurance on the Council's borrowing, investments and treasury indicators during a period of continued economic uncertainty.

Having been proposed and seconded, with no questions posed, on being put to the vote it was: -

RESOLVED - that the recommendation from the Thriving Council Committee be accepted and the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2025/26 be approved.

30 RECOMMENDATION FROM THRIVING COUNCIL COMMITTEE - NEW STATUTORY FEES

The Chairman of the Thriving Council Committee presented the report which sought approval of new statutory fees for inclusion in the fees and charges schedules for 2026/27, as recommended by the Committee at their meeting on 25 June.

Having been proposed and seconded, with no questions or comments, on being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that: -

- (a) the recommendation from the Thriving Council Committee be accepted and the new statutory fee be approved for inclusion in the fees and charges schedule for 2026/2027 'Building Safety Levy' (paragraph 1.3 of the report) for implementation on the 1st October 2026; and
- (b) the recommendation from the Thriving Council Committee be accepted and the new statutory fees be approved for inclusion in the fees and charges schedule for 2026/2027 'Planning Applications (Operations)' (paragraph 1.4 of the report) for immediate implementation.

The meeting concluded 20:37

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

Page 24	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	Only the Environment and Sustainability Working Group review remains outstanding - this is now programmed into the Forward Plan for September.	30/09/2026	Ellen King/ Katie Storr
	Green	Public Question – 13 April - land between Margaret Close and Mayfield Avenue (Gains)	A resident submitted a question – relating to land between Margaret Close and Mayfield Avenue - would the Council consider installing a formal, all-weather footpath across this land to ensure it is accessible, safe, and usable throughout the year?” Leader advised investigations would commence and the resident would be kept updated	29/6 - All Members and the resident have rec'd an update on this matter- investigations continue. 27/8 - Work is continuing to obtain costs and develop a specification for improvement works. External funding opportunities are being explored by officers to support the delivery of this work. Outcomes on external funding requests are expected to be received during Q2 of 2026/27. Officers will complete local resident engagement	30/09/26	Grant White/Leader of the Council

			during Q3 of 2026/27 with details of proposed improvement works.		
Green	Squaddie Box Motion – 13 April	RESOLVED 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.	This is an agenda item for Thriving People in July – Council will be updated of the outcome through this action tracker. Thriving People have made a recommendation to Thriving Council for the release of funding for a pilot.	30/9/2026	Sarah Elvin
Green	Driving Test Centre Provision – Motion	RESOLVED that the Leader of the Council write to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency requesting that it review the availability of driving test opportunities within West Lindsey District.	Letter was issued on 12 May – a response is awaited but this matter has been chased.	16/6/26	Ellen King
Green	Broadband Provision – Arising from Rule 9 Q	requested Officers prepare a list of locations we are aware of planned improvement works in West Lindsey and to share these with all Members for information. Where possible this will include details of timescales for planned works.	Officers have obtained details, where possible, of completed works and upcoming planned works to deliver full fibre in West Lindsey. This information was sent to all Members by email on 26/08/26 and will be repeated in Members News Officers will continue to gather this information and routinely share with Members for their awareness.	30/08/26	Grant White
Green	Motion - Improving Rural Transport Access for Young People in West Lindsey	Resolved - The Leader of the Council writes to the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire to highlight the 3 points in the motion (as amended)	Letter has been issued – a response is awaited	30/08/26	Sally Grindrod Smith
Black	Broadband Provision – Arising from Rule 9 Q	It was suggested the Council needed to advocate more on this issue, understand better the gaps in provision and considered it would be a good topic for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.	This item has been added to the O/S Work Plan for October	30/08/26	Grant White

Black		In responding the Leader indicated that it would be passed on to the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for her consideration.			
	Political Balance and Amendments to Committees	All web pages and distribution lists updated accordingly.		30/08/26	Democratic Team



Council

Monday, 07th September
2026

Subject: Local Government Reorganisation

Report by:

Chief Executive – Paul Burkinshaw

Contact Officer:

Rachael Hughes
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Executive Summary:

This report provides an update on the recent decision of the Secretary of State in connection with Local Government Reorganisation.

The report also seeks Full Council approval for the establishment of Voluntary Joint Committees as set out in the report.

Appendices to Report

- Appendix 1 - Secretary of State Decision Letter dated 16th July 2026
- Appendix 2 - Map of the proposed administrative geographies for Lincolnshire
- Appendix 3 - Letter from MHCLG to Lincolnshire Chief Executives requesting further information regarding the Structural Changes Order
- Appendix 4 - Glossary of terms for LGR
- Appendix 5 – Draft Terms of Reference for the two Voluntary Joint Committees – to follow

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council;

- a) Notes the updates provided in this report, including the Government's decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Greater Lincolnshire and the implications for West Lindsey;
- b) Approves the establishment of voluntary joint committees for the two new unitary council areas, as set out in the report, to exercise the functions as set out in the Terms of Reference.
- c) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree the final Terms of Reference for the voluntary joint committees and any ancillary matters
- d) Appoints a Member to serve on each of the two Voluntary Joint Committees referred to in the report.
- e) Approves an increase in the Chief Finance Officer's delegated authority for use of reserves related to LGR expenditure from £50,000 to £100,000, in consultation with the Chief Executive
- f) Notes that a further report on resource and financial implications will be presented to the Thriving Council Committee when transition design and implementation requirements become clear.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the statutory invitation issued by the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution on 5 February 2025, on 16 July 2026, the Secretary of State announced the government's intention to proceed with a four-unitary model for Greater Lincolnshire in a letter to Council Leaders on 16th July 2026 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The decision means that North Lincolnshire Council and North-East Lincolnshire Council will remain unchanged. Within the current Lincolnshire County area, two new unitary councils will be established: a Lincoln Unitary comprising the City of Lincoln, 12 wards from North Kesteven and seven wards from West Lindsey; and a Lincolnshire Unitary comprising Boston, East Lindsey, South Kesteven, South Holland, the remainder of North Kesteven and the remainder of West Lindsey districts. A map showing the geography of the two new unitary authorities is set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.3 The decision means that the existing and established West Lindsey and North Kesteven districts will be divided between two successor authorities; Additionally, the decision requires the disaggregation of district and county council services, resources and systems.
- 1.4 On 24th August, the Council received written notification that Lincolnshire County Council has issued a pre-action protocol letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in respect of the decision taken to reorganise local government structures in Lincolnshire. The letter seeks clarity on a number of matters, principally the rationale behind the decision that was taken by MHCLG on 16th July 2026. The letter does not amount to a formal Judicial Review at this stage. Whilst the letter has been sent to all Councils in Lincolnshire on an interested party basis, West Lindsey has not been involved in drafting the letter, and the decision to send this letter has been taken by Lincolnshire County Council. West Lindsey does, however, reserve the right to consider legal proceedings, either on a standalone basis, or as part of joint proceedings in the future, should this be deemed necessary and appropriate.
- 1.5 It is important to note that existing services will continue to be delivered by the sovereign Councils until vesting day on 1st April 2028.

2. Arrangements for Creating the Structural Changes Order and Voluntary Joint Committees

- 2.1 Following the Secretary of State's decision, the Government wrote to Lincolnshire Chief Executives to confirm that a Structural Changes Order (SCO) will be laid in Parliament to establish the new councils and transitional arrangements, supported by a single implementation team drawn from affected councils and overseen by two Joint Committees – one for each new authority. To support the It is expected that the SCO will be laid in Parliament in late 2026.

- 2.2 To support the preparation of the SCO, Lincolnshire councils were required to clarify a number of points relating to the names of the two new authorities, warding arrangements, Councillor numbers, and matters relating to the Implementation Team and Returning Officer. A copy of this letter is attached as Appendix 3. A joint Lincolnshire response was submitted on 17th August 2026 and a response on the issues covered and draft Structural Changes Order is now awaited.
- 2.3 The SCO will provide the statutory framework for transition. Before the May 2027 elections, one Joint Committee will need to be established for each new unitary area. The SCO is likely to require that these are established within 14 days of the SCO coming into force. Each Joint Committee will be a time-limited member body bringing together representatives of the affected councils to oversee preparations, provide political direction, approve key transition proposals within its remit and assure progress towards safe and legal shadow arrangements. Proposed representation on the Joint Committees is set out in the letter included as Appendix 3, with West Lindsey District Council being allocated one seat on each Joint Committee.
- 2.4 Recognising the timeline for the establishment of statutory joint committees required by the SCO and the significant amount of work that will need to be undertaken, the Government encourages areas to establish voluntary joint committees. Whilst the decision-making powers of these voluntary joint committees will be limited, they will be beneficial in progressing relevant issues for subsequent approval by the statutory joint committees. The draft Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix 5 (to follow).

Greater Lincolnshire Leaders have committed to establishing the two Voluntary Joint Committees under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 by early autumn, ahead of the SCO where practicable, so that member oversight and preparatory activity can develop at pace. Composition of the Voluntary Joint Committees shall be the same as is anticipated on the formal Joint Committees to be established post the SCO and as such, West Lindsey District Council shall have one seat on each of the two Voluntary Joint Committees.

Following the 2027 local elections, the Joint Committees will be replaced by the respective shadow authorities, which will prepare the first budget, appoint senior officers and take the decisions required for vesting day.

- 2.5 The Head of Paid Service of Lincolnshire County Council, has been confirmed by Government as the Senior Responsible Officer for Local Government Reorganisation in Lincolnshire and will lead establishment of the single, central implementation team. The implementation team will draw officers from all affected councils to implement transition arrangements for both new unitary areas. Details on roles, resources, workstreams and governance for the central implementation team are currently being finalised by Lincolnshire Chief Executives. A further paper will be presented to Thriving Council Committee at the

appropriate time in respect of financial considerations and decisions related to implementation and transition.

3. 2027 Elections to the new Shadow Authorities

- 3.1 Elections to the new shadow authorities will take place in May 2027, subject to Parliamentary approval of the Structural Changes Order. The first term of office for elected members will be five years, with the first year served as members of the shadow authority. During the first shadow year, responsibilities for elected members will include appointing statutory and senior officers, agreeing the first budget and establishing the governance and service arrangements required for vesting day. Thereafter, the next ordinary elections are currently scheduled for May 2032, at which point members will be elected for a four-year term.
- 3.3 West Lindsey District Council remains a sovereign council until Vesting Day on 1st April 2028 and existing members of WLDC will continue to attend Council meetings and conduct Council business in the usual way. The two new shadow authorities will not assume responsibility for any sovereign council services during this time.
- 3.3 On 1st April 2028, existing sovereign councils in Lincolnshire will cease to operate and the two new unitary authorities will take full responsibility for all local government services. Members elected to the two shadow authorities in May 2027 will continue to serve their term of office as Councillors of the new unitary authorities until May 2032. As required by legislation, all new unitary authorities will be governed by an Executive or Cabinet model following the government's decision to end the committee system model of governance.

4 West Lindsey Readiness

- 4.1 Prior to the Government's decision, the Council progressed proportionate "no regrets" activity both internally and through the Greater Lincolnshire LGR Ready Programme. This has included baseline and data work across digital and technology, contracts and procurement, workforce, finance and council tax, assets, legal and governance, supported by programme management arrangements. West Lindsey has played an active role in supporting the system through its Project Management Office function and with representatives across all workstreams.
- 4.2 Internally, an LGR programme structure, workstream leads, risk and issue management, impact assessment tools, a People Change Charter and regular management oversight have been established. Staff and members have received briefings and updates through all-staff sessions, weekly communications, the intranet LGR hub and targeted development opportunities. This activity has sought to maintain business-as-usual delivery while building organisational understanding and readiness.

- 4.3 In looking ahead and ensuring the council is in the best possible position to deliver the scale of change Local Government Reorganisation demands, an independent external health check was commissioned to review the Council's LGR plan and supporting processes.
- 4.4 The review found strong and visible leadership, a well-established commitment to readiness and governance proportionate to the pre-decision phase. It also recognised the energy and willingness of officers to move into delivery.
- 4.5 In conclusion the report has found that the post-decision phase now requires greater strategic clarity, and robust implementation and resource plans. Particular focus is required on the principles and practicalities for disaggregating West Lindsey services between two successor councils, ensuring consistent communications to residents and positive support of members and staff through the process.
- 4.6 An overview of Local Government Reorganisation Transition which will include the report and findings, will be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 08th September 2026, and officers will progress the work required to implement the recommendations made in the health check.

5 Future Resource Implications

- 5.1 LGR is a significant and complex whole organisation change programme which must be delivered alongside the Council's existing statutory duties, service commitments and corporate priorities. The Council will need sufficient programme leadership, project management, legal, finance, workforce, digital, data, procurement, communications and service expertise to support two transition pathways while protecting service continuity through to 1 April 2028.
- 5.2 Good practice emphasises the importance of a single, clearly governed implementation function, shared plans, defined roles, disciplined critical-path management and early workforce planning. It also recommends that leadership and specialist teams must have capacity to deliver LGR while continuing day-to-day services. For West Lindsey, the split geography increases the likelihood that targeted backfill, temporary capacity and specialist advice will be required.
- 5.3 To enable timely mobilisation, it is recommended that the council's s.151 Officer's existing delegated authority to approve the use of existing earmarked reserves for expenditure on LGR-related project activity be increased from £50,000 to £100,000.
- 5.4 A further, more detailed report on finance and resource implications will be brought to the Thriving Council Committee once there is sufficient clarity on transition design principles, the scope and staffing requirements of the central implementation team, work required specifically of West Lindsey, cost-sharing arrangements and any Government support. That report will set out the proposed resourcing model, governance and funding requirements in greater detail.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Following publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024; on 5th February 2025 Government issued a Statutory Invitation letter inviting all local authorities in two-tier areas to submit proposals for a single-tier of local government in the area. In Greater Lincolnshire, this invitation was issued to all ten local authorities, including West Lindsey District Council (“the Council”).

In November 2025, Government received six final proposals for LGR, three of which were based on the same geographical boundaries.

On 5th February 2026, the Government commenced a period of Statutory Consultation running for seven weeks until 26th March 2026. As a named consultee, the Council was invited to respond.

Government has used the consultation responses to inform the decision made on which of the LGR proposals put forward for Greater Lincolnshire to implement.

The decision taken by Government was to implement the proposal put forward by City of Lincoln Council, which was a four-unitary model: North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire remain unchanged, with a new Lincoln unitary comprising the City of Lincoln plus 12 North Kesteven wards and seven West Lindsey wards, and a new Lincolnshire unitary covering the remaining county area.

The Structural Changes Order, once enacted, will form the legislative basis for the new unitary authorities. Section 101 Local Government Act 1972 provides for the establishment of a Joint Committee.

Financial: FIN/73/27/CL/SL

Now the Government has made a decision on how LGR will be delivered across Greater Lincolnshire, legislative changes will be enacted, including a Structural Changes Order to create the new unitary authority(s).

After the Structural Order is laid, a Section 24 notice will come into effect. This places legally binding financial restrictions on existing local authorities involved in Local Government Reorganisation, including the Council.

Specifically, a Structural Changes Order will mean that any land disposals over £100k, entering into any capital contracts over £1million, and entering into any non-capital contracts over £100k will require written consent from the successor Council.

Based on current timelines and information, it can be anticipated that the Structural Changes Order will be laid in winter 2026, with the Section 24 notice coming into effect shortly after the elections to the new shadow authorities in May 2027.

The decision letter issued to leaders on 16 July 2026 confirmed a £63 million national capacity fund for local government reorganisation. This includes £900,000 in transition support for each new unitary authority, up to a further £150,000 per new unitary to support leadership capacity and continuity in children's services, adult social care and public health, and up to £1 million nationally for areas with complex fire and rescue authority transitions.

Taken together, the Government expects each new unitary authority to receive more than £1 million in capacity funding, with detailed allocations to be confirmed in due course.

Further details of the financial and resource implications for the Council will be presented to the Thriving Council Committee as transition arrangements and implementation requirements become clearer.

Staffing:

LGR is a significant, whole-council change programme which will place additional demands on staff capacity and resources across corporate and service areas. This work must be delivered alongside the Council's statutory duties, existing service commitments and corporate priorities, requiring careful management to maintain business-as-usual delivery and service continuity through to vesting day on 1 April 2028.

The Government's decision creates particular workforce implications for West Lindsey because the current district will be divided between two successor authorities. Officers will need to support two transition pathways and contribute to the single implementation team, including work on service disaggregation, workforce information, finance, legal and governance, digital and data, contracts, assets, communications and service design. This is likely to require prioritisation of activity and, where necessary, targeted backfill, temporary capacity and specialist advice to ensure that staff are able to support transition without compromising current services.

The decision will affect the whole workforce and it will be important that staff continue to be kept informed, involved and supported throughout the transition. Existing arrangements, including the People Change Charter, staff briefings, regular communications and targeted development opportunities, provide a basis for this work. As further information becomes available on transition design, implementation requirements and the roles expected of West Lindsey, detailed capacity and resource plans, together with workforce development and support plans, will be developed and reported through the appropriate governance arrangements.

LGR implications:

This paper deals specifically with LGR and as such implications are considered and assessed throughout the paper, removing the need to include specific implications in this section.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

In appraising the final LGR proposals, consideration has been given to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications by Government. However, it is acknowledged that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be a key consideration as part of the development of the LGR programme and implementation.

Data Protection Implications:

Effective collaboration through the development of shared assumptions and datasets is a key requirement within the government's assessment criteria. It is therefore expected that councils will openly and effectively share data and information, with government prepared to intervene where this is not the case.

In Greater Lincolnshire, a data sharing agreement is in place, including provisions to safeguard and ensure handling of data is GDPR compliant and that high standards of data management are adhered to at all times.

This data sharing agreement remains under review to ensure that it remains suitable for each of the stages of LGR and detail and sensitivity of data being shared at any given point during reorganisation.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None arising from this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None arising from this report.

Health Implications:

None arising from this report.

Risk Assessment:

The principal risks arise from the scale, pace and complexity of implementing Local Government Reorganisation while maintaining statutory services and business-as-usual delivery.

In particular, if the Council does not engage effectively in the two transition pathways, establish clear governance and implementation arrangements, and secure sufficient programme and specialist capacity, it may have reduced influence over decisions affecting the disaggregation of West Lindsey's services, assets, systems, contracts, workforce and finances.

This could result in service disruption, additional or unplanned costs, loss of organisational knowledge and adverse impacts on residents, communities and staff. These risks will be managed through active participation in the Joint Committees and implementation team, delivery of the Council's readiness programme and health check actions, robust risk and financial controls, workforce and communications planning, and regular reporting through the appropriate governance arrangements.

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

[English Devolution White Paper 2024](#)

[Statutory Invitation from the Minister for Local Government & English Devolution to Greater Lincolnshire Council Leaders - 05.02.2025.](#)

[Local Government Boundary Commission for England LGR FAQs](#)

[WLDC LGR Interim Proposal Report to Full Council 18.03.2025](#)

[MHCLG: Summary of Feedback on Interim Plans - 03.06.2025](#)

[WLDC LGR Update Paper to Full Council - 07.07.2025](#)

[WLDC LGR Update Paper to Full Council - 08.09.2025](#)

[WLDC LGR Resources Paper to CPR 25.09.25](#)

[MHCLG Statutory Consultation for Greater Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire & North-East Lincolnshire](#)

[WLDC LGR Consultation Response to Full Council 16.03.26](#)

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

X

No

☐



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP

*Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities & Local Government*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Leaders in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire
and North East Lincolnshire
By email

16 July 2026

Dear Leaders,

Thank you for your continued work to deliver local government reorganisation in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. This Government is delivering the most ambitious programme of local government reform in a generation, replacing the inefficient two-tier system with new unitary councils so that all parts of our country can access strong services, and are ready for devolution. We need to devolve power out of Whitehall so that we can rebalance wealth, power and opportunity across our country. But devolution must be built on strong local councils that can deliver good public services, support growth, and remain closely connected to the communities they serve.

Doing this right means recognising the unique contributions that different areas make to people's lives, as well as to the national economy. Some of our smaller cities are highly productive, but have been constrained by tight boundaries, set decades ago, which stop them from building the homes they need. Others are more rural, with significant demand for social care services and affordable housing. Local government should be set up to address the unique circumstances of each area and design public services tailored to each community.

Reorganisation provides us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to ensure that councils genuinely represent the communities they serve today and stand the test of time. We know that people care about their own villages, home towns, high streets and communities. In many parts of the country, existing boundaries do not match local economies, public services, or local identities.

We won't achieve effective devolution or enable effective place-based public services with outdated and misaligned structures that slow down delivery, fragment public services, hamper housebuilding and slow down important decision making. We need to make sure that new councils are grounded in place and are genuinely connected to their communities.

Decisions

I have considered your proposals carefully against the criteria set out in the invitation letter of 5 February last year, alongside the responses to the consultation, representations made, requests for modifications made alongside the proposals and all other relevant information.

Following this assessment, I have decided to move forward with implementation of the **four unitary proposal submitted by City of Lincoln Council**. In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, I will exercise my power to modify the proposal to achieve the boundary change requested alongside their proposal. For ease, this is now referred to as “my selected option”.

These would comprise the current areas of:

- City of Lincoln Council, plus 12 wards from North Kesteven District Council and seven wards from West Lindsey District Council (referred to in the proposal as ‘Lincoln City’);
- Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, South Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, North Kesteven District Council less 12 wards and West Lindsey District Council less seven wards (referred to in the proposal as ‘Rural Lincolnshire’)
- **North East Lincolnshire:** to remain unchanged
- **North Lincolnshire:** to remain unchanged

In my view, my selected option will enable a better outcome overall for the area than the unmodified proposal as described below. I want to thank you for all the work that has gone into developing proposals that seek to deliver new unitary councils that will help to grow the local economy and provide better public services for the people of Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. Your ongoing collaboration will be vital to ensure that the proposal from City of Lincoln, with requested modification (hereafter referred to as ‘my selected option’) is implemented by April 2028 with the interests of residents at its heart.

Turning to the reasons for my decision, in my judgement, although all the proposals met the criteria, I consider my selected option to be the best option overall. In particular, my selected option supports place-based growth by recognising the economic role of Lincoln, and enabling increased housing delivery within the city, alongside balancing the distinct urban and rural character across the area.

In more detail, my selected option performs well in the following areas:

- **Supporting place-based growth and housing delivery:** In my view, my selected option best addresses Lincoln’s current under-bounding with a geography that balances sensible economic areas with retaining the distinct urban and historic identity of Lincoln as a city. I judge that my selected option will give Lincoln the space it needs to grow, whilst allowing Lincoln to better align its geography and governance with its functional urban economic area. I consider that this will strengthen housing delivery and enable more coherent planning and infrastructure service integration within the city footprint, allowing this council to focus on the distinct economic needs of the city region – and I note the plans to deliver around 17,000 homes in the expanded Lincoln area by 2038, rising to around 30,000 by 2050. I judge that my selected option, with the requested boundary changes, performs strongest here given none of the other proposals strike the right balance between enabling this growth of Lincoln, strengthening housing delivery, whilst preserving the distinct urban identity - for example the two unitary option and alternative four unitary option both restrict growth to the south, including separating Lincoln from North Hykeham; and the three unitary option and alternative four unitary

option merge Lincoln entirely with various areas with different identities across the wider invitation area.

- **Services tailored to local needs:** My selected option will support better service delivery by creating a distinct new urban authority as well as a new more rural authority. I note that this will enable local services to be tailored to reflect different needs across different communities. I judge that my selected option will therefore better balance the delivery of high-quality services through a locally responsive approach, retaining scale where needed while tailoring services such as housing that would most benefit from being focussed on distinct urban and rural needs. I found that the two unitary option and the alternative four unitary option both had limitations in terms of service delivery and coherent public service geographies, including in particular cutting off Lincoln from its direct neighbour North Hykeham. The two unitary option cuts across other major public service boundaries causing complexity, and the alternative four unitary option risks service delivery becoming misaligned with how people live, work, travel and use services. I have judged that the unmodified base proposal for my selected option leaves Lincoln on its existing, under-bounded footprint; the modification brings surrounding communities that rely on Lincoln for work, services, infrastructure and housing into the same authority, reducing the mismatch between service demand and decision-making and allowing for better place-based service delivery. While I recognise the benefits of the three unitary option in limiting disaggregation of services, I judge that the proposed large single Lincolnshire authority in the three unitary option risks being less responsive to local communities and in particular the distinct needs of urban and rural areas when compared with my selected option.
- **Support for devolution, with clear place-based governance and representation:** In my view, my selected option will support devolution most effectively, by creating distinct place-based authorities that are close to the needs of their populations. It will also give Lincoln a dedicated voice within the Combined Authority with a council that aligns economic levers within its economic area, which will be important in supporting the Mayor to drive economic growth given Lincoln's economic significance to the area. It separates Lincoln from the wider rural county, creating a dedicated urban authority focused on growth and regeneration, whilst also allowing the 'Rural Lincolnshire', North-East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire Councils to focus on their local priorities.

My selected option includes a boundary change to expand Lincoln by incorporating surrounding wards from North Kesteven and West Lindsey, with the remaining areas forming a separate Rural Lincolnshire authority while North and North East Lincolnshire remain unchanged. I acknowledge the added complexity this may introduce but, following careful consideration, in my view there is a strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for this boundary change as it will deliver the best outcomes overall from reorganisation for the reasons set out above. In summary, this change will help resolve the under-bounding of Lincoln, the boundaries of which no longer reflect how people live, work and access services, whilst retaining Lincoln's distinct urban identity and character. The expansion around Lincoln will also better align economic powers and governance with Lincoln's functional economic urban area, strengthen housing delivery in Lincoln, and enable more coherent planning and service integration.

I considered the expected costs and benefits set out in the proposals, as well as the ability of each new council to be financially resilient. I have noted that my selected option may take longer to pay back the upfront costs of reorganisation than the other proposals; however I am satisfied, based on our assessment against the criteria, that this option could perform similarly or represent an improvement in sustainability over current structures.

I also considered the fact that three of the councils in the area would be below the 500,000 population figure, albeit the current two unitaries – North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire – remain unchanged. The 500,000 figure has always been a guiding principle, not a fixed threshold. While I recognise that the population sizes of the proposed new councils are uneven and the proposed Lincoln City unitary is small, I am of the view that this is acceptable as I believe that my selected option strikes a better balance across the criteria and avoids the risk of remoteness from the three unitary option and the risk of fragmented public services and boundaries under the other options. For all the reasons set out above, I am satisfied that creating a new council under the 500,000 figure is justified on the basis that it will produce a better overall outcome for local government in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.

Next steps

In relation to next steps, as you are aware a Structural Changes Order, which will be subject to Parliamentary approval, is required to abolish existing councils, establish new structures and make transitional arrangements. I have carefully considered the information in the proposals as well as the further representations you have made on the content of this Order.

My officials will shortly write to your Chief Executives setting out the next steps and timeline for implementation, including my initial decisions on transitional arrangements that will be included in the draft legislation. This will enable you to take forward the work needed to begin preparation for implementation, in advance of Parliamentary approval of the Order. Critically, and drawing on learning from previous rounds of reorganisation, this will include a single Implementation Team formed of officers from across the area, and elections to the new unitary councils in May 2027. For the avoidance of doubt, these elections to the new unitary councils will replace any scheduled local elections, and affected councillors will have their terms extended.

A broad support offer is in place for councils, including support to councils through our sector advisors and through funding to the Local Government Association for an enhanced support offer. We have already announced £63m in capacity funding to support the reorganisation process, and I am pleased to provide further detail today on how this funding will be allocated.

Of the £63 million capacity funding, as well as the unprecedented £900,000 transition support to each new unitary already announced, we are also committing up to £150,000 per each new unitary as supplementary funding for Leadership Capacity and Continuity in Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Public Health. This is part of a wider package of support worth up to £10m for children's services, adult's social care and public health leadership, which will also fund targeted development, mentoring and peer support for current, new and aspiring leaders.

In addition, up to £1m of funding overall will be available to support the small number of areas with complex fire and rescue authority transitions.

Taken together, this means that areas undergoing local government reorganisation will receive more than £1 million per new unitary created. This is the first time reorganisation has been supported in this way and shows this Government is committed to supporting councils to get these reforms right. We will confirm details of these allocations in due course.

Taken together, this means that each new unitary authority will receive over £1m each in capacity funding. This is the first time reorganisation has ever been supported in this way and shows the Government's commitment to supporting councils to get these reforms right.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you to deliver the vital improvements that reorganisation can facilitate.

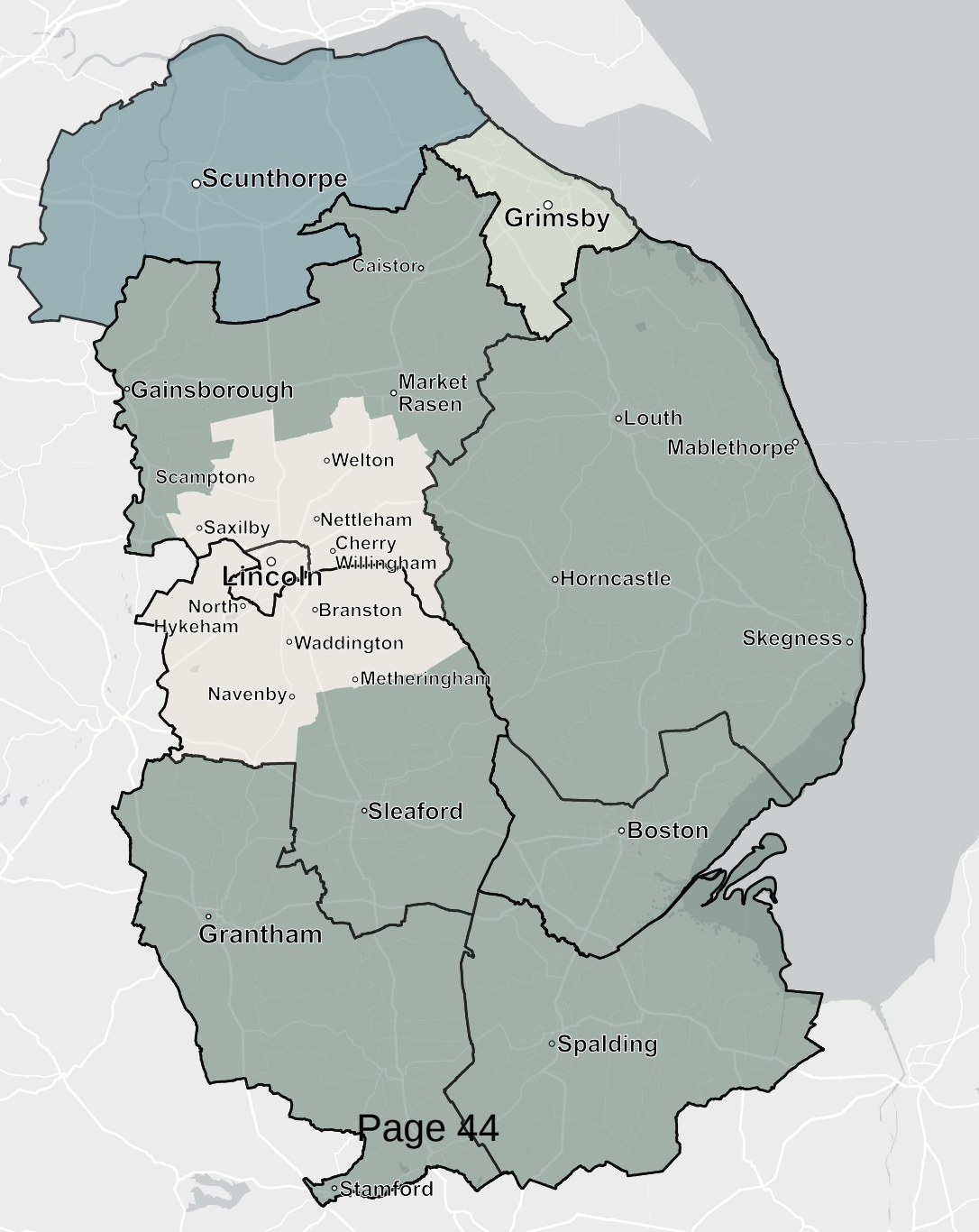
I am copying this letter to your chief executives, MPs, the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steve Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government





Beatrice Andrews
*Co-Deputy Director, Local Government
 Reorganisation*
**Ministry of Housing, Communities &
 Local Government**
 2 Marsham Street
 London
 SW1P 4DF

Chief Executives of Lincolnshire, North
 Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire
 Councils

20 July 2026

Dear Chief Executives,

Thank you for your continued engagement and hard work throughout this process.

As you know, the Secretary of State has decided to move forward with implementation of the **four unitary proposal submitted by City of Lincoln Council**. In doing so, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Secretary of State will exercise the power to modify the proposal to achieve the boundary change requested alongside their proposal, with the exception of the part parishes. This is, of course, subject to Parliamentary approval. We will now prepare the necessary Structural Changes Order, which will be shared with you in due course for review and any factual amendments. This letter provides information on the decisions Ministers have taken in relation to that Order, the additional information that we require from you by **17 August**, the allocations of grant for the new unitary councils, and the next steps in the process.

Overview of the Structural Changes Order

As we have previously discussed, the Order will establish the new councils and abolish the existing councils. Your councils will remain responsible for services in your areas until they are abolished on 1 April 2028 and will be under a duty to co-operate with each other and with the new councils. The Order provides the transitional arrangements, with the core of that being elections to 'shadow' councils in 2027 and providing them with preparatory functions, including the preparation of budgets and plans, to enable the assumption of local government functions and powers on 1 April 2028. It will also provide duties to implement a Leader and Cabinet model, appoint statutory officers, and adopt codes of conduct and members' allowances.

The Order will provide for matters that Ministers have decided upon following consideration of information in your proposals and your representations submitted in response to my letter of 19 May 2026. Some other matters have also been identified where we will need further input from you by **17 August** in order to finalise the Order and move through the stages described below.

Ministers have also noted that there have been a number of councils who have requested further time to respond on some matters, such as names and councillor

numbers. While decisions have been reached, having regard to proposals, representations and all other information available to them, to allow progress to be made, Ministers have been clear that they will consider any further unanimous representations (i.e. from all affected councils within the area of a new unitary) made by **17 August**. The final decision on what to include in the legislation is ultimately for the Secretary of State to ensure any new councils are well placed to go live.

Matters that Ministers have decided

Ministers have now taken decisions on key areas within the Order and we are working closely with our lawyers to prepare a draft, which we anticipate we will share with you in September.

Names and councillor numbers

The new unitary councils, and the number of councillors that will represent them, are to be:

Name of new council	Area covered (if needed)	Number of councillors
Lincoln Council	City of Lincoln Council, plus 12 wards from North Kesteven District Council and seven wards from West Lindsey District Council	65
Lincolnshire Council	Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, South Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, North Kesteven District Council less 12 wards and West Lindsey District Council less seven wards	100

It is necessary that the new councils have a legal name, that will be set out in the secondary legislation establishing them. Once established, the new councils will have the same powers as other local councils to change their name, should they wish to do so; local authorities may change their name under Section 74 of the Local Government Act 1972 if they convene a council meeting for that purpose and secure the support of two-thirds of members voting at that meeting. It is also possible for councils to use a name other than their legal name for branding and local identity purposes.

We have also identified some sensitivities on naming conventions for new council names that have been considered by Ministers in coming to these names. First, 'City'

will not be included in the legal name for councils as conferral of city status is a matter of Royal prerogative. There are mechanisms available for the preservation of city status separately (see below) and councils with city status may choose to adopt it as their legal name or be known by it. It is also not possible to use the -ern suffix (i.e. Southern or Northern) or to include dashes in council names.

Joint Committees

The Order will provide that all existing councils should be involved, so implementation is a shared endeavour, while ensuring a lead role for those who understand the proposal being implemented and lead the key services being disaggregated and aggregated. A Joint Committee will be established for each new council. More information on the role of Joint Committees can be found in our [guidance note](#).

For the Joint Committees for Lincoln Council and Lincolnshire Council, 50 per cent of the membership are to be councillors representing the County Council and 50 per cent are to be councillors representing Districts/Boroughs collectively as set out in the table below. The proceedings and identification of the Chair and Deputy Chair are to be determined by the Joint Committee.

Proposed Unitary Authorities	Councils <i>*All areas incl. members from County Council</i>	Final recommended structure		
		Districts	County	Total
Lincoln	Lincolnshire County, City of Lincoln, *Part of West Lindsey, *Part of North Kesteven	2 full members Lincoln, 1 representative for each part district area Total: 4	4	8
Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire County, *part of West Lindsey, *Part of North Kesteven, South Kesteven, Boston, South Holland, East Lindsey	1 member per District Area and part District Area Total 6	6	12

Implementation Team

There will be one Implementation Team, and officers from all predecessor councils are to be included. The Leader of the team will be the Head of Paid Service of Lincolnshire County Council. There will be a deputy team leader to be agreed locally from a district in each new unitary area. These will be the minimum requirements, and it will be for the implementation team to agree locally how these operate, including substitutes or additional deputies to reflect local circumstances.

New unitary	Implementation team leader	Deputy implementation team leader
Lincoln	Lincolnshire County Council Head of Paid Service	To be agreed locally from the district/borough councils within the area of the new council.
Lincolnshire		To be agreed locally from the district/borough councils within the area of the new council.

We expect deputy leads to have a significant role in co-leading their respective Joint Committees. More information on the role of the Implementation Teams can be found in our guidance note.

To support the work of the Implementation Team, we would encourage you to use your sector advisor, Tony McArdle, to act as an independent critical friend.

Electoral arrangements:

The Government is committed to protecting local democracy and electoral arrangements that are fit for purpose. The Order will replace any scheduled local elections in May 2027 with elections to the new councils. This is in line with recent reorganisations and brings benefits of stability, with new councillors serving most of their first year on the 'shadow' council. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England will have time to complete a programme of electoral reviews in all new councils before the next elections.

Areas where we need further information

We require further information from you by **17 August** to finalise the Order on Returning officers, warding arrangements and parish elections. If you think this deadline is going to be challenging, please get in touch, as a delay will have implications for the Parliamentary timetable as set out below.

Returning Officers

Many of you asked to nominate returning officers for the inaugural elections once a decision was taken on which proposal was to be implemented. Please confirm which

council's Head of Paid Service should be named as Returning Officer for each new council area.

Warding arrangements

We would be grateful if you could provide us with your suggested interim warding arrangements for each of the new councils for inclusion in the Order. These can be based on existing wards, divisions and parish boundaries. Please note that polling districts cannot be used. We will require this in a table format:

Name of new ward	Current Electoral areas that comprise it (county divisions, district wards or parishes/parish wards)	Number of councillors

Please include links/footnotes to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England orders establishing the current electoral areas where necessary, and ensure that the correct spelling is used that exactly matches the legal name of the current electoral areas. A map is helpful additional information, but is not sufficient on its own.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance, as set out on their [website](#) and in our joint webinars last year is a good place to start, while recognising that the usual criteria are unlikely to be met in the same way as a full review. The Commission are able to offer advice and guidance as you draw up these boundaries. Please do reach out to them directly if you have not already. Ideally, the proposed warding would be collectively agreed by the councils in the area of each new council. The final decision remains for Ministers on what is included in the Order.

Parish elections

As requested, parish elections will be aligned with the new unitary elections, and we will need some more information from you on this to prepare the Order. We would like to understand the current electoral cycles for parish councils in the area of each new council (i.e. in which years there are parish elections) and your preferences as to if and how alignment with the new councils' elections should best be achieved.

Allocations of grant funding

The Secretary of State has agreed to provide funding of £900,000 per new unitary authority to assist with the transition costs. For Lincoln and Lincolnshire this means a total of £1,800,000. This funding is intended to support the effective establishment of new councils, and as such should be spent on activities that directly relate to those outcomes. If external support is needed then it should leave a lasting legacy – short term consultancy is unlikely to offer good value for money on this basis. We envisage spend could include:

- Activity that supports your work on service disaggregation and aggregation
- Early investment in data and digital infrastructure and cyber resilience that will underpin everything new councils do

- Establishing robust programme management arrangements to support the development of implementation plans and the new authorities
- Putting arrangements in place to be ready to support new councillors and senior officers once elections have been held – such as new IT equipment.
- Putting early arrangements in place for the transition of children's services, adult social care and public health

We want to make payments as soon as possible in 2026/27 by Section 31 grants so as not to delay your work. As described above, there will be a deputy team leader within the Implementation Team for each new unitary council who will be an officer from a district or borough or unitary within the area of the new unitary council. Accordingly, we intend to pay the grant directly to the councils that are the employers of the deputy team leaders. Alternatively, if you inform us that you have agreed locally it should be paid to a different council we can do this – we expect this would be by unanimous agreement of all those councils within the area of the new unitary council. We would be grateful if you could confirm the council to receive the funding by **17 August** so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Ministers also announced that they are committing **up to £10m funding** for Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Public Health leadership capacity and continuity from within our existing £63 million capacity fund. This includes areas receiving up to a further £150,000 per each new unitary council to help manage the practical demands of reorganisation while maintaining focus on critical frontline services and wider reform priorities. We will be in touch in due course regarding the distribution of this funding.

Next steps

We hope these decisions will enable you to start to put arrangements in place voluntarily, ahead of the Order being shared, to progress local government reorganisation. We consider that in particular you will want to make arrangements for the Implementation Team. This will support the preparatory work that can be progressed prior to the Order coming in to force, recognising that the Order will place duties on your councils to cooperate.

You will want to consider the point at which it is helpful to move to more formal arrangements with Councillors that mirror the joint committees that will be required by the Order. While Surrey chose to do this quite quickly, this was driven by the limited time before their inaugural elections.

We envisage that joint committees should be meeting on a regular basis for up to six months before the inaugural elections. We are committed to continuing to work in partnership with you with a shared objective of delivering new unitary councils in Lincoln and Lincolnshire that provide residents with excellent public services.

We thought it would also be helpful to set out next steps relating to the process, section 24 Directions and further legislation.

Process

Once we have finalised the Order, we anticipate sharing this draft informally with legal advisors to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments, for informal scrutiny and feedback. Following this informal scrutiny, we will be in a position to ask

Ministers to formally lay the draft instrument before Parliament. It will then go through the Parliamentary process. This includes formal consideration by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments and the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee for the House of Lords, a debate by a Committee of each House, and then, subject to their agreement, approval motions in each House. We anticipate that the Order will be made, and so come into force, in 2027.

Section 24 Directions

In addition to the Order, we expect to issue a direction under section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act once the Order is in force. This will require the predecessor councils to obtain consent from the shadow councils before entering into certain contracts or for certain asset disposals.

The purpose of the section 24 direction is to ensure new agreements will be in the best interests of the new councils or the residents of the area, and do not undermine or diminish the benefits or savings anticipated as a result of reorganisation, or which may have an effect on the financial position of the new councils. We encourage you to share information about spend that could in the future be captured by such a direction, as set out in our [guidance note](#). We will later share a draft direction and explanatory note for you to consider.

Further legislation

Following the Order, we will also work with you on the further legislation that we expect will be needed to cover matters such as local government pensions, housing revenue accounts, ceremonial matters that need specific provision, such as Lord Lieutenants or Charter Trustees, and matters relating to where a council is a member of a body or organisation that needs to be updated. An example is available at [The Local Government \(Structural Changes\) \(Supplementary Provision and Amendment\) Order 2023](#). We envisage this supplementary order could cover a number of reorganisations and would come into force in time for 1 April 2028.

With regard to ceremonial matters, these can also be preserved via the existing suite of general regulations which make arrangements for transfer of functions, responsibilities, assets, liabilities and rights and privileges from predecessor to successor councils. Councils affected by a reorganisation may also make their own agreements about how certain assets should be handled.

With regard to city status in particular, this is conferred by the Monarch and applies to a defined locality and arrangements need to be put in place to ensure that this status is preserved. In cases where the existing local authority structure no longer aligns with the area originally granted city status, Charter Trustees are the usual legislative solution used in these circumstances and may be established for unparished areas. These trustees can hold historic property, such as charters or insignia, on behalf of the whole area.

We will be in touch to arrange a meeting in August to further discuss the matters in this letter.

We are copying this letter to Leaders, Mayor of the Combined County Authority and your Sector Advisor.

Yours sincerely,

Beatrice Andrews
Co-Deputy Director, Local Government Reorganisation

Glossary of Terms

Aggregation

Aggregation refers to the process of combining data, resources, services, or functions from multiple councils into a new authority.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

The most senior corporate, executive, or administrative officer in charge of managing an organisation. This role is sometimes referred to as the Chief Executive.

Devolution

In England, devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government. It means decisions are made closer to the local people, communities, and businesses they affect.

Devolution has already taken place in Greater Lincolnshire. We now have the Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral County Combined Authority, which covers North and North East Lincolnshire Council and the County of Lincolnshire.

The English Devolution White Paper

The English Devolution White Paper, published on 16 December 2024 is the Government's statement of its plans to reform local government. This includes a wide range of proposals on devolution but also plans for local government reorganisation.

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bills

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bills was published on 10 July 2025. The Bill builds on the Government's English White Paper (December 2024) and signals a significant shift of powers from central government to local leaders. Key points in the Bill include the establishment of a new tier of authority in England (the strategic authority) and the intention for all councils in England to secure devolution that works for them, their local economies and their residents.

Implementation phase

A phase is the timeframe during which the implementation plan is in acted.

Implementation plan

A document required legislation; it must contain detailed plans and timetables showing how the new unitary authorities will be delivered effectively.

Local government reorganisation (LGR)

Local government reorganisation is the process by which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The government White Paper states that unitary councils can lead to better outcomes for residents, save significant money which can be invested in public services, and improve accountability with fewer politicians who are more able to focus on delivering for residents.

Joint committees

A joint committee is a formal body established by the Structural Changes Order to oversee preparations for the new council until the shadow authority is elected. Unlike a joint voluntary committee, it has statutory responsibilities.

Joint voluntary committees

A joint voluntary committee may be set up by councils, by agreement, before the Structural Changes Order is made. It provides a forum to coordinate early preparations but, unlike a joint committee, it has no statutory responsibilities.

Mayor

In the context of devolution, a mayor is a directly-elected leader of a geographic region. Directly-elected mayors with expanded powers are expected to provide accountability and clearer leadership. They will be best positioned to drive economic development in their regions.

Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA)

A Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) is a type of local government body that is led by a directly-elected mayor. The MSA is responsible for overseeing strategic programmes such as local transport, economic development, strategic planning and other high-level services.

The powers available to a mayor in an MSA span various critical areas, ensuring coordinated and effective governance across the region. Additionally, the concept of devolution plays a significant role in the functioning of an MSA, as it involves the transfer of powers and responsibilities from central government to local authorities, allowing for more localised decision-making and tailored solutions to regional needs.

In the case of Greater Lincolnshire this is the [Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined County Authority](#)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Government department which is responsible for local government reorganisation and devolution.

Section 24

Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 allows the Secretary of State to issue a direction that restricts the financial and contractual activities of local authorities that are to be dissolved under a structural change order. This is to ensure that the current councils do not make significant financial or contractual commitments that could affect the future authorities' ability to manage their resources effectively.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

The senior responsible owner is accountable for a programme or project meeting its objectives, delivering the projected outcomes and realising the required benefits within the policies set by ministers.

Deputy Senior Responsible Officer (Deputy SRO)

The Deputy SRO supports the Senior Responsible Officer in leading a programme or project and may act on their behalf when required. The SRO remains ultimately accountable for its successful delivery.

Shadow Authority

A shadow authority is established to carry out the functions of a new unitary council until that authority formally comes into effect. This is commonly called “vesting day”.

The shadow authority will manage the transition period and ensure that the new unitary councils are ready to take over all functions and responsibilities from the current councils. This includes setting up governance structures, appointing key officers, and ensuring that all necessary preparations are made for the future councils to become fully operational.

Strategic Authority

Strategic authorities are a new, category of devolved authorities, set out in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. Strategic authorities will have responsibility for overseeing strategic programmes such as transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement, and other high-level services.

Structural Changes Order

The Structural Changes Order (SCO) is the legal instrument that creates the shadow authorities. It also puts in place the process by which those authorities will assume responsibility for the delivery of services in the following years.

Two-tier authority

Two-tier authorities are where:

- County councils provide services that cover the whole county such as education, waste disposal and adult social care
- District councils (sometimes called borough or city councils) are smaller and provide local services such as refuse collection, environmental health, and leisure facilities
- Parish and town councils are smaller and have differing local responsibilities

Unitary authority

Unitary authorities are a single tier of local government responsible for all local services in an area. They may cover a whole county, part of a county or a large town or city.

Vesting Day

Vesting Day is when the new unitary authorities formally come into effect and take over from the shadow authorities. In Greater Lincolnshire this is anticipated it will be 1 April 2028.

Agenda Item 9b



Council

Monday 7th September 2026

**Subject: Recommendation from Governance and Audit Committee -
National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Decisions**

Report by:	Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities
Contact Officer:	Russell Clarkson, Head of Planning (Russell.clarkson@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Executive Summary:

Under the provisions of the Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025, the Secretary for State has powers to prescribe what planning functions may be determined by a committee, sub-committee or officer; and to determine the size and composition of planning committees.

The Secretary of State has confirmed they now intend to enact these powers through further legislation. *The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026* were made on 15th July 2026 and will come into force on 31st October 2026 (“the Regulations”).

The Regulations require local planning authorities (‘LPAs’) in England to make arrangements for specified planning functions to be discharged by committees or by officers.

Planning applications listed in schedule 1 of the Regulations are required to be determined by officers only.

Planning applications listed under schedule 2 may only be referred to a committee where the member and officer nominated by the LPA agree that the application raises an issue of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area, or raises a significant planning matter. Any such application not referred to a committee must be delegated to an officer.

The nominated member and officer may also agree to take an “own-interest application” to the committee (i.e. an application made by the authority itself; or an officer or member of the authority where the authority or any of its

members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.)

The Regulations will also limit the size of planning committees to not more than 13 members.

This report seeks the approval of the Full Council to amend the Constitution in accordance with the Regulations to ensure the Council is legally compliant.

Appendices to Report

- The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) That Part IV of the Constitution is amended to ensure compliance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026;
- (b) That the Chairman of the Planning Committee be appointed as the Nominated Member and the Deputy Chairman to be appointed as the substitute.
- (c) That the Head of Planning be the Nominated Officer with the Director of Planning, Communities and Regeneration together with the two Development Management Team Leaders to be appointed as substitutes.
- (d) That delegation is given to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Director of Planning, Communities & Regeneration and the Chairman of the Planning Committee to make the amendments required to the Constitution to ensure compliance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.
- (e) A review of the process be undertaken following six months of implementation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under local government law, planning decisions made by a local authority must be through a committee function, and not a function of the executive. Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides broad powers for the discharge of committee functions, by either a committee, sub-committee or delegation to an officer.
- 1.2 Every council has its own scheme of delegation to identify the circumstances where planning decisions are to be taken by the planning committee, rather than delegated to officers to determine. At West Lindsey District Council, the responsibility for functions, including planning decisions, is set out in Part IV of the Council's Constitution (Responsibility for Functions).
- 1.3 In the year ending December 2025, 96% of planning applications in West Lindsey were determined by officers under delegated powers. This is in line with both the East Midlands average (96%) and the average across England as a whole (96%) for the same period¹.
- 1.4 In the King's Speech (2024), the government announced that it would '*modernise*' the way planning committees operate to '*best deliver for communities and support much needed development*'. The government consequently introduced measures through the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (the Act) to:
 - give a new power to the Secretary of State to set out which planning functions should be delegated to planning officers for a decision and which should instead go to a planning committee or sub-committee;
 - give a new power to the Secretary of State to control the size and composition of planning committees;
 - impose a new requirement for members of planning committees to be trained, and certified, in key elements of planning.
- 1.5 From May to July 2025, the Government undertook a technical consultation on how it may implement a new national scheme of delegation for deciding which planning applications should be referred to a committee. In March 2026, the Government published its response to that consultation and confirmed its intention to proceed with a new national scheme of delegation, to be applied across all authorities in England.
- 1.6 It undertook further consultation (which ran 26th March – 23rd April 2026) on draft regulations and guidance, as to how this would then operate in practice.

¹ Table P134 – Live Table on Planning Application Statistics
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics#local-planning-authority-performance-tables>)

- 1.7 On 1st June 2026, 'Statutory Guidance - Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England'², was published.
- 1.8 On 15th July 2026, *The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026* were made (hereinafter referred to as "the Regulations"). A copy is appended to this report. The Regulations will come into force on 31st October 2026.
- 1.9 The Regulations set out a national scheme of delegation of planning functions for local planning authorities in England. The Regulations will also limit the size of planning committees to no more than 13 members.
- 1.10 The Regulations also require the Secretary of State to have carried out a review of the Regulations by 31st October 2028.

2 National Scheme of Delegation of Planning functions for England

- 2.1 The Statutory Guidance - Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England (published 1 June 2026) explains:

"The government's aim behind the national scheme of delegation is to ensure that there is greater clarity and consistency about the role of planning committees in planning decision making. Committees should focus on the key proposals that matter to an area, enabling other, often more minor and technical, decisions to be made by planning officers."

- 2.2 The Regulations require that a relevant local planning authority in England must make arrangements so that any **'Schedule 1 application' made to that authority is determined by an officer of that authority.**

- 2.3 Planning applications set out within Schedule 1 include:

- Householder developments;
- minor residential development (consisting of up to 9 new dwellings (flats or houses) on a site smaller than 0.5 hectares);
- minor commercial development (i.e. alterations to existing shops, cafes and businesses);
- Applications for approval of reserved matters, following the grant of outline planning permission for developments of less than 500 dwellings / 50,000 square metres floorspace;
- a number of supplementary and technical consents such as applications to discharge planning conditions; permission in principle applications; lawful development certificates; biodiversity gain plans; 'prior approval' applications and non-material amendments.

² [Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

However, applications which would otherwise fall under Schedule 1, will fall within Schedule 2 where:

- a local authority considers that the application for planning permission is connected to a Schedule 2 application for listed building consent or for the variation or discharge of a condition on a listed building consent;
- the application is being made retrospectively for works already carried out (under section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

2.4 **Schedule 2 of the Regulations lists planning application types that may be referred to a committee, only if certain circumstances are met.** Applications set out under schedule 2 include:

- applications for planning permission which are not householder, minor commercial or minor residential applications;
- Applications for approval of reserved matters following the grant of outline planning permission, for schemes over 500 dwellings / 50,000 square metres floorspace;
- Applications seeking retrospective permission for works already carried out (under s73A(1)) – including works that would otherwise have fallen in schedule 1;
- Applications to vary planning permission (under S73A); and
- special controls such as listed building, advertisement consents and tree preservation order consents.

2.5 Schedule 2 applications may only be referred to a committee where the 'nominated member' and 'nominated officer' as nominated by the LPA agree that, in their view (the reg5(3) 'gateway test'):

- A. the application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area; or*
- B. the application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations*

They must also have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State, in making that decision.

2.6 Irrespective of whether it falls within schedule 1 or 2, An “**own-interest application**”, can also be referred to committee where the nominated member and officer both agree (without having to meet the 'gateway test').

2.7 An “own-interest application” is an application made (whether or not jointly with any other person) by the authority itself; or by an officer or member of the authority; or, (in the view of the nominated member and the nominated officer), the authority or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.

Changes to Part IV of the Constitution

3.1 Paragraph 9 of the statutory guidance explains:

*“Under the national scheme of delegation, current practices set out in local authority constitutions, such as the power for ward councillors to require cases to be called in for committee consideration or having trigger points for referral to committee if a certain number of objections is reached, will not be possible. **Local authorities will need to amend their constitutions to align with the national scheme of delegation. Failure to do so may make decisions on whether to delegate applications to officers or refer them to committees for determination liable to judicial review.**”*

3.2 Paragraph 4 makes clear:

“For the avoidance of doubt, where local planning authorities do not comply with the Regulations from the date they come into force (31 October 2026) and their planning committees make decisions on applications which must be delegated officers, those decisions may be subject to judicial review by anyone aggrieved by the decision. This may lead to the quashing of the decision.”

3.3 The Constitution currently delegates the determination of planning applications to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, other than in certain specified circumstances, which may then require referral to the Planning Committee. This includes requests made by the Local Ward Member; or Parish Council.

3.4 The Constitution will need to be altered to reflect that such decisions to be taken from 31st October 2026 will need to be made in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

Appointment of “Nominated Member” and Nominated Officer”

3.3 The Authority will need to appoint a “nominated member” and “nominated officer” who will need to agree whether a schedule 2 application, or ‘own-interest application’ should be referred to the Planning Committee. The statutory guidance states the following (paragraph 10):

- a) the nominated officer should be the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent officer who has extensive professional planning experience. However, local planning authorities will also need to ensure they have other senior planning officers who can provide cover if needed to avoid any unnecessary delays in the referral process (or where there is an own interest application and the Chief Planning Officer or equivalent officer has an interest it).*

b) the nominated member should be the chair of the planning committee or, where such a role does not exist, the vice chair or equivalent member. As in the case of nominated officers, the authority will need to ensure there are arrangements in place for other members to cover should the nominated member not be available (or where there is an own interest application and the nominated member has an interest in it).

3.4 Accordingly, it is recommended that through the Constitution, it sets out the appointment of the sitting Chairman of the Planning Committee as the “**Nominated Member**”. The Deputy Chairman should be appointed as his substitute.

3.5 Following the guidance, it is recommended that the Head of Planning is appointed as the “**Nominated Officer**”. It is recommended that the two Development Management Team Leaders are appointed as their substitutes. The Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities can also act as the ‘Nominated Officer’ if required. Nominated Officers cannot act concurrently on the same gateway application.

Transparency and reporting

3.6 The statutory guidance states:

“It is for individual local planning authorities to put in place their own arrangements for how the consideration of cases for referral to committee will operate in practice” (paragraph 12); and,

“As a minimum, the local planning authority should keep a record of the cases the nominated officer and nominated member have considered for referral to committee, the outcome of their consideration and the reasons for their decision. They should report this to the planning committee on a regular basis and make it available on their website.” (paragraph 34)

3.7 A ‘Referral to Committee’ decision record will be created for each application discussed between the nominated member and nominated member. The decision record will capture the outcome of the consideration and the reason for the decision.

3.8 Schedule 2 application discussions and the referral to committee decisions will usually be discussed at the monthly Chairs Briefing but can be agreed in writing (via email).

3.9 The statutory guidance states (paragraphs 13-14):

“It is not a requirement of the national scheme of delegation that nominated officers and nominated members consider all Schedule 2 applications or all own-interest applications for potential referral to committee. Local planning authorities may, through their constitutions, decide which Schedule 2 or own-interest applications should be considered for referral. The

regulations provide for the option for Schedule 2 applications to be considered for committee against the gateway test but do not require all schedule 2 applications to be considered – they will otherwise be delegated to officer.

Where local planning authorities anticipate that there may be a significant number of Schedule 2 or own-interest applications which may need to be considered for referral to committee they may wish to put in place a triage system to ensure that the nominated officer and nominated member of the committee are not overwhelmed and to avoid any unnecessary delays in planning decision making.”

3.11 It is therefore recommended that a triage system is put in place to determine which schedule 2 applications are referred to the Nominated Member & Nominated Officer for discussion. It is considered that as a minimum, this would include all ‘own-interest applications’ and those schedule 2 applications that:

- The Nominated Member requests the application for discussion;
- The Nominated Officer considers it appropriate to do so (i.e. they consider it may meet the ‘gateway test’; or has had significant public interest);
- It is subject to outstanding material planning objections from the relevant Parish Council(s);
- It is subject to outstanding material planning objections from the Ward Member(s);
- It is subject to outstanding material planning objections from a statutory consultee.

3.12 A review of the process shall be undertaken after six months.

Alternative Options

4.1 The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 come into force on 31st October 2026. The Statutory Guidance, published on 1st June 2026 makes clear *“For the avoidance of doubt, where local planning authorities do not comply with the Regulations from the date they come into force (31 October 2026) and their planning committees make decisions on applications which must be delegated officers, those decisions may be subject to judicial review by anyone aggrieved by the decision. This may lead to the quashing of the decision.”*

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	Do nothing.	Applications not determined in accordance with the new regulations would result in the Council not acting in accordance with the law and decisions would be open to a challenge under Judicial Review, with associated costs

		and decisions may then be quashed.
2	Require all schedule 2 applications to be discussed by the Nominated member and Nominated Officer.	This would lead to delays in determining otherwise uncontentious applications – the speed of decision-making is a national key performance indicator (KPI).

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 require the prescribed legislative arrangements are implemented from 31st October 2026. This report supports compliance with those Regulations, including enabling the necessary amendments to the Constitution and associated governance processes.

Financial: FIN/61/27/CL/SL

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Staffing:

The role of the Head of Planning covers the requirements set out in legislation to be a 'nominated officer', with other Senior officers within the Development Management Service available to act as a substitute if required.

LGR implications:

The National Scheme of Delegation will apply to all Local Planning Authorities in England. It means that at the point of Vesting Day – both the new Lincoln and Lincolnshire unitary authorities will already have a consistent Scheme of Delegation in place across its respective administrative boundary, for determining planning applications.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Not applicable.

Data Protection Implications:

Not applicable.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

Not applicable.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

Not applicable.

Health Implications:

Not applicable.

Risk Assessment:

The report proposes a way forward that meets national statutory planning requirements, thus mitigating the risk to the authority of legal challenge.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**Planning Reform Working Paper: Planning Committees (February 2025)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paperplanning-committees/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees>

Reform of planning committees: Technical Consultation – Government Response (March 2026)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-planning-committeestechical-consultation/outcome/reform-of-planning-committees-technicalconsultation-government-response>

Planning committee reform: statutory consultation on draft regulations and guidance – government response (1st June 2026)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-committee-reform-draftregulations-and-guidance/outcome/planning-committee-reform-statutoryconsultation-on-draft-regulations-and-guidance-government-response#approachto-reserved-matters-applications>

Statutory Guidance - Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England (published 1st June 2026)

[Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: Guidance for local planning authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

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

☐

2026 No. 854

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, ENGLAND

LOCAL AUTHORITIES, ENGLAND

**The Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning
Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026**

Made - - - -

15th July 2026

Coming into force - -

31st October 2026

The Secretary of State makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 319ZZC to 319ZZE and 333(2A) and (2B) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(a).

The Secretary of State has consulted in accordance with section 319ZZE(6)(a) of that Act.

In accordance with section 333(3ZAB) of that Act, a draft of these Regulations has been laid before Parliament and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.

Citation, commencement, extent and application

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

(2) These Regulations come into force on 31st October 2026.

(3) These Regulations extend to England and Wales, but only apply in relation to England.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

“arrangements” means arrangements by local authorities under section 101 of the 1972 Act(b);

“committee”, in relation to a relevant local planning authority(c), means a committee or sub-committee of that authority;

-
- (a) 1990 c. 8. Sections 319ZZC to 319ZZE were inserted by section 54(1) of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (c. 34). Section 333(2A) was inserted by paragraph 14(2) of Schedule 6 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (c. 5). Section 333(2B) was inserted by section 130(1)(a) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (c. 55).
- (b) 1972 c. 70. See section 319ZZF(4) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8), as inserted by section 54(1) of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (c. 34), for the definition of “the 1972 Act”.
- (c) See section 319ZZF(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8) as inserted by section 54(1) of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (c. 34) for the definition of “relevant local planning authority”.

“DMPO” means the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015(a);

“dwelling” means a house or a flat;

“excluded flat development” means development in respect of a building containing flats, or development within the curtilage of such a building, that involves either or both of—

(a) a change of use(b);

(b) a change to the number of flats;

“flat” means a separate and self-contained set of premises constructed or adapted for use for the purpose of a dwelling and forming part of a building from some other part of which it is divided horizontally;

“householder application” has the same meaning as in DMPO as it has effect when these Regulations come into force(c);

“large outline permission” means an outline planning permission which permits development involving either or both of—

(a) the provision of 500 or more dwellings;

(b) the provision of a building or buildings where the floorspace to be created by the development is 50,000 square metres or more;

“Listed Buildings Act” means the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990(d);

“minor commercial application” has the same meaning as in DMPO as it has effect when these Regulations come into force(e);

“minor residential application” means—

(a) an application for planning permission for development that—

(i) includes only dwellings and development for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of dwellings,

(ii) comprises at least one but not more than nine dwellings, and

(iii) is to be carried out on a site having an area smaller than 0.5 hectares;

(b) an application for planning permission for development (other than excluded flat development) of a building containing flats, or development within the curtilage of such a building, for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the flats or any of the flats; or

(c) an application for any consent, agreement or approval required by or under a planning permission, development order or local development order for development within paragraph (a) or (b);

“nominated member” has the meaning given in regulation 3;

“nominated officer” has the meaning given in regulation 3;

(a) S.I. 2015/595.

(b) Section 55(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8) provides that “development” includes “the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land”.

(c) See regulation 2(1) of S.I. 2015/595.

(d) 1990 c. 9.

(e) See regulation 2(1) of S.I. 2015/595.

“outline planning permission” has the same meaning as in DMPO as it has effect when these Regulations come into force^(a);

“own-interest application” has the meaning given in regulation 6;

“reserved matters” has the same meaning as in DMPO as it has effect when these Regulations come into force^(b);

“reserved matters approval application” means an application for the approval of reserved matters;

“Schedule 1 application” means an application that—

- (a) is of a kind specified in Schedule 1 to these Regulations,
- (b) is not a Schedule 2 application, and
- (c) is not an own-interest application;

“Schedule 2 application” means an application that—

- (a) is of a kind specified in Schedule 2 to these Regulations, and
- (b) is not an own-interest application;

“TCPA 1990” means the Town and Country Planning Act 1990^(c).

(2) Where an application is to be determined by an officer of a relevant local planning authority pursuant to arrangements made under regulation 4, 5(2) or 6(3), the authority must not make arrangements that limit the officer’s discretion as to how to determine that application.

(3) Where arrangements are in force under section 101(1)(b) of the 1972 Act for an application made to a relevant local planning authority (“A”) to be determined by another relevant local planning authority (“B”), these Regulations apply in relation to that application as though it had been made to B instead of A.

(4) Where arrangements are in force under section 101(5) of the 1972 Act for two or more relevant local planning authorities to discharge any of their functions jointly, these Regulations apply in relation to those functions as if—

- (a) references to a committee of a relevant local planning authority included references to a joint committee of those authorities;
- (b) references to an officer of a relevant local planning authority included references to an officer of any of those authorities.

Nominated members and officers

3.—(1) A relevant local planning authority may nominate—

- (a) a member of the authority to act as the nominated member for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6;
- (b) an officer of the authority to act as the nominated officer for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6.

(2) When nominating a member or officer under paragraph (1), a relevant local planning authority may—

- (a) nominate different members or officers for different purposes;
- (b) provide for substitute nominated members or nominated officers.

^(a) See regulation 2(1) of S.I. 2015/595.

^(b) See regulation 2(1) of S.I. 2015/595.

^(c) 1990 c. 8.

Applications that must be determined by an officer

4. A relevant local planning authority must make arrangements so that any Schedule 1 application made to that authority is determined by an officer of that authority.

Applications that may be determined by a committee or by an officer

5.—(1) A relevant local planning authority must make arrangements so that any Schedule 2 application made to that authority is determined in accordance with paragraphs (2) to (4).

(2) Any Schedule 2 application that is not referred to a committee in accordance with paragraph (3) must be determined by an officer of that authority.

(3) The nominated member and nominated officer may agree to refer a Schedule 2 application to a committee if in their view it raises—

- (a) one or more issues of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area, or
- (b) one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.

(4) In considering whether to make a referral under paragraph (3), the nominated member and the nominated officer must have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 319ZZE(4) of TCPA 1990.

Own-interest applications

6.—(1) An own-interest application is an application to a relevant local planning authority of a kind specified in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 to these Regulations where—

- (a) the application is made (whether or not jointly with any other person) by or on behalf of—
 - (i) that authority,
 - (ii) a member of that authority, or
 - (iii) an officer of that authority, or
- (b) in the view of the nominated member and the nominated officer, the authority or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest in the application.

(2) A relevant local planning authority must make arrangements so that any own-interest application made to that authority is determined in accordance with paragraphs (3) to (5).

(3) Any own-interest application that is not referred to a committee in accordance with paragraph (4) must be determined by an officer of that authority.

(4) The nominated member and nominated officer may agree to refer an own-interest application to a committee.

(5) In considering whether to make a referral under paragraph (4), the nominated member and the nominated officer must have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 319ZZE(4) of TCPA 1990.

Limit on size of committee determining applications

7. A committee determining an application pursuant to arrangements under regulation 5 or 6 must not comprise more than 13 members.

Review

8.—(1) By 31st October 2028, the Secretary of State must—

- (a) carry out a review of these Regulations, and
 - (b) publish a report setting out the conclusions of the review.
- (2) The review must, in particular—
- (a) set out the objectives intended to be achieved by these Regulations,
 - (b) assess the extent to which those objectives are achieved,
 - (c) assess whether those objectives remain appropriate, and
 - (d) set out any proposals for amending these Regulations.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Matthew Pennycook
Minister of State

15th July 2026

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 1

Regulation 4

Applications that must be determined by an officer

1. An application made under section 17(1) of the Land Compensation Act 1961 (certificates of appropriate alternative development)(a).

2. An application made under section 26H(1) of the Listed Buildings Act (certificate of lawfulness of proposed works)(b).

3. A householder application.

4. A minor commercial application.

5. A minor residential application.

6. An application for permission in principle(c).

7.—(1) An application made under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) in respect of which the original planning permission was a Schedule 1 planning permission.

(2) In this paragraph—

“original planning permission” means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions were granted under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990;

“Schedule 1 planning permission” means a planning permission granted pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.

8. An application made under section 96A(4) of TCPA 1990 (non-material changes to planning permission or permission in principle)(d).

9.—(1) In respect of a planning obligation that the authority concerned considers is connected with a Schedule 1 approval—

(a) a request to agree to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(1)(a) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations)(e);

(b) an application to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(3) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations)(f).

(2) In this paragraph, “Schedule 1 approval” means any permission, agreement, consent or approval (other than a planning obligation) pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.

(a) 1961 c. 33. Section 17 was substituted by section 232(3) of the Localism Act 2011 (c. 20) and was amended by section 189(3) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (c. 55).

(b) Section 26H(1) was inserted by section 61 of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24).

(c) For the definition of “permission in principle”, see section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8).

(d) Section 96A was inserted by section 190(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (c. 29). Subsection (4) was amended by regulation 3(4)(c) of S.I. 2017/276.

(e) Section 106A was inserted by section 12(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34); section 106A(1)(a) was amended by section 34(2) of the Greater London Authority Act 2007 (c. 24).

(f) Section 106A(3) was amended by section 34(3) of the Greater London Authority Act 2007 (c. 24).

10. An application made under section 191(1) of TCPA 1990 (certificate of lawfulness of existing use or development)(a).

11. An application made under section 192(1) of TCPA 1990 (certificate of lawfulness of proposed use or development)(b).

12. The submission of a biodiversity gain plan under paragraph 13(2)(a) of Schedule 7A to TCPA 1990(c).

13. A reserved matters approval application in respect of an outline planning permission other than a large outline permission.

14. An application made under article 27(1) of DMPO (applications made under a planning condition).

15. An application pursuant to provision in Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015(d) for—

(a) prior approval, or

(b) a determination as to whether prior approval is required.

SCHEDULE 2

Regulation 5

Applications that may be determined by a committee or by an officer

1. An application for listed building consent made under section 10(1) of the Listed Buildings Act (making of applications for listed building consent).

2. An application made under section 19(1) of the Listed Buildings Act (variation or discharge of conditions of listed building consent).

3. An application for planning permission that the authority concerned considers is connected with an application of a kind specified in paragraph 1 or 2.

4. An application for planning permission that is not—

(a) a householder application,

(b) a minor commercial application, or

(c) a minor residential application.

5.—(1) An application made under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) in respect of which the original planning permission was a Schedule 2 planning permission.

(2) In this paragraph—

“original planning permission” means a planning permission which is the first in a sequence of two or more planning permissions, where the second and any subsequent planning permissions were granted under section 73(1) of TCPA 1990;

“Schedule 2 planning permission” means a planning permission granted pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.

(a) Section 191 was substituted by section 10(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34).

(b) Section 192 was substituted by section 10(1) of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34).

(c) Schedule 7A was inserted by paragraph 2 of Schedule 14 to the Environment Act 2021 (c. 30).

(d) S.I. 2015/596.

6. An application made under section 73A(1) of TCPA 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out)(**a**).

7.—(1) In respect of a planning obligation that the authority concerned considers is connected with a Schedule 2 approval—

- (a) a request to agree to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(1)(a) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations);
- (b) an application to modify or discharge that obligation under section 106A(3) of TCPA 1990 (modification and discharge of planning obligations).

(2) In this paragraph, “Schedule 2 approval” means any permission, agreement, consent or approval (other than a planning obligation) pursuant to an application which is of a kind specified in this Schedule.

8. A reserved matters approval application in respect of a large outline permission.

9. An application made under regulation 9(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (application for express consent to display advertisement)(**b**).

10. An application made under regulation 16(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 (application for consent under tree preservation order)(**c**).

(a) Section 73A was inserted by paragraph 16(1) of Schedule 7 to the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (c. 34).

(b) S.I. 2007/783.

(c) S.I. 2012/605.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations require relevant local planning authorities (“LPAs”) in England (as defined by section 319ZZF(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8) (“TCPA 1990”)) to make arrangements for specified planning functions to be discharged by committees (including sub-committees) or by officers.

Regulation 4 provides that the function of determining an application of a kind listed in Schedule 1 must be delegated to an officer, unless—

- the application is also of a kind listed in Schedule 2 (for example, a minor residential application which the LPA considers is connected with an application for listed building consent), in which case regulation 5 applies, or
- the application is made by the LPA itself, or a member or officer of the LPA, or the LPA otherwise has an interest in the application (an “own-interest application”), in which case regulation 6 applies.

Regulation 5 provides that the member and officer nominated by the LPA under regulation 3 may refer the function of determining an application of a kind listed in Schedule 2 to a committee, if they agree that the application raises an issue of economic, social or environmental significance to the local area, or raises a significant planning matter. Any such application not referred to a committee must be delegated to an officer. Regulation 5 does not apply to an own-interest application; regulation 6 applies instead.

Regulation 6 provides that the function of determining an own-interest application may be referred to a committee by agreement of the LPA’s nominated member and nominated officer, at their discretion. Any such application not referred to a committee must be delegated to an officer.

Regulation 7 provides that any committee determining an application pursuant to these Regulations may have a maximum of 13 members.

Regulation 8 provides that the Secretary of State must undertake a statutory review of these Regulations and publish it by 31st October 2028.

In making and operating arrangements under these Regulations, section 319ZZE(4) and (5) of TCPA 1990 requires LPAs to have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Regulations 5(4) and 6(5) require nominated members and nominated officers to have regard to any such guidance when considering whether to refer an application to a committee.

A full impact assessment of the effect on the costs of business, the voluntary sector and the public sector was undertaken in relation to the primary legislation and has been published alongside this instrument, together with an explanatory memorandum, at www.legislation.gov.uk. The full impact assessment is available for inspection at the Planning Directorate, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

£8.90

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/uksi/2026/854>

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