



Full Council

8 September 2025

Subject: Dispensation for Councillor Attendance – Councillor Liz Clews

Report by:

Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To consider a dispensation under the Local Government Act 1972 to excuse the non-attendance of Councillor Liz Clews at a meeting within a six-month period.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Council is asked to approve Councillor Clews' non-attendance at meetings of the Authority due to ill health for a six-month period and grant a dispensation for a further six months (up to 12 May 2026), pursuant to Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, to avoid her disqualification as a Member of West Lindsey District Council.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Contained with the report.

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act, gives Local Authorities this power, subject to Council approval, before the six months expires.

Financial :

No additional financial costs.

Allowances continue to be payable in a members absence. Allowances stop being payable when a members resigns, loses offices, or chooses to forgo them.

Staffing :

N/A

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

N/A

Data Protection Implications :

None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

None

Health Implications:

None

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

n/a

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

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No

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Key Decision:

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

Yes

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No

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1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor.
- 1.2 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that “if a member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority (a dispensation) before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority.”
- 1.3 Attendance can be at any committee or sub-committee, or any joint committee, joint board or other body where the functions of the Authority are discharged or who were appointed to advise the Authority on any matter relating to the discharge of their functions (substituting would meet the requirements)
- 1.4 This requirement can be waived and the time limit extended if any failure to attend was due to a reason approved by the Authority, in advance of the six-month period expiring.

2 Request Received

- 2.1 Unfortunately, due to ongoing illness Councillor Liz Clews, Scotter and Blyton Ward Member, has not been able to attend any Council or Committee meetings, since the Annual Council Meeting held on 12 May 2025.
- 2.2 The Monitoring Officer has received a request for the Council to consider approving an extension to the usual six-month attendance rule enabling her to remain in office to allow her further time to be able to resume normal duties.
- 2.3 A formal request is therefore made to Council that an extension to the six-month rule be granted for Councillor Clews due to ill health.

3. Legal Position

- 3.1 Council can only consider approval of any reasons for non-attendance before the end of the relevant six-month period, which will be 11 November 2025.
- 3.2 Councillor Clews is unlikely to be able attend Council meetings before that date or for the foreseeable future, whilst she awaits further medical intervention.
- 3.3 Once any councillor loses office, through failure to attend for the six-month period, the disqualification cannot be overcome by the councillor

subsequently resuming attendance nor can retrospective approval of the Council be sought for an extension in time.

- 3.4 If the Council decided not to approve the dispensation, subject to continued non-attendance, a casual vacancy would arise on the Authority on 12 November 2025, and Councillor Clews' term of public office would end due to disqualification.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Council is asked to approve Councillor Clews' non-attendance at meetings of the Authority due to ill health for a six month period and grant a dispensation for a further six months (from 12 November 2025 up to 12 May 2026), pursuant to Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, to avoid her disqualification as a Member of West Lindsey District Council.
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