WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 8 September 2025 at 7.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Matthew Boles (Chairman)
Councillor Stephen Bunney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett	Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway	Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Christopher Darcel	Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Adam Duguid	Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence	Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Peter Morris	Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Pilgrim	Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Tom Smith	Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor Baptiste Velan	Councillor Moira Westley

In Attendance:

Bill Cullen	Interim Head of Paid Service
Peter Davy	Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Rachael Hughes	Head of Policy and Strategy
Ellen King	Policy & Strategy Officer – Corporate Strategy & Business Planning
Katie Storr	Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Also in Attendance: 3 representatives from Dunholme Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Group

Also Present: 2 members of the public

Apologies
Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Liz Clews
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Roger Patterson

Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Trevor Young

32 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND MINUTE'S SILENCE FOR FORMER COUNCILLOR KEITH PANTER

Having just remembered former District and Town Councillor Keith Panter in prayers prior to the meeting, in formally opening the meeting, the Chairman asked Members to remain standing for a minute's silence in respect of their former colleague.

On resuming seats, before moving to the agenda, the Chairman took a moment to reflect on his time serving alongside former Councillor Panter, a stalwart for his local community, good humoured, good fun and passionate about serving the community, representing, in particular, the armed forces and veterans. Councillor Panter had embraced the opportunity of being Town Mayor and embraced the role to it's fullest, known for his love of music and dancing at Civic events. The Chairman offered his sincerest condolences to former Councillor Panter's friends and family, for a man who would be fondly remembered.

Other Members paid moving tributes to their former colleague, speaking of his service to the community during Covid, his driving force behind the Gainsborough Neighbourhood Plan development, his commitment to the veteran's community and again his love of fun, good humour, his town and its people and his love to serve both with passion and drive.

Bringing tributes to an end the Chairman formally welcomed representatives from Dunholme Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Group, who would later in the meeting formally present their Reviewed Plan to Council.

33 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Dobbie advised the Chamber he would be abstaining from the vote and outlined his reasoning relating to minute 30 specifically.

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

> **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held on 7 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Note: Councillor David Dobbie requested that his abstention against the above decision be recorded.

34 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

35 TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE 2025/26 CIVIC YEAR

In introducing the item, the Chairman paid tribute to his out-going Vice-Chairman, thanks were expressed for the manner in which he had conducted the role and support the had given, with a round of applause from the Chamber.

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chairman of Council, with Councillor John Barrett being proposed and seconded.

There being no further nominations it was:

> **RESOLVED** that Councillor John Barrett be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the remainder of the 2025/26 civic year.

The Chairman of the Council congratulated Councillor Barrett on his appointment.

Councillor Barrett made and signed the statutory declaration of acceptance of office, in the presence of the Head of Paid Service, and indicated that it was an honour and a privilege to have been elected as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the civic year. He looked forward to supporting the Chairman in every way possible during his tenure and would strive at all times to promote and uphold the good name of West Lindsey.

36 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.**

37 ELECTION OF LEADER

Nominations for the position of Leader had been sought in accordance with Article 6 of the Constitution, with only one nomination having been received.

Councillor Jackie Brockway had been proposed by Councillor Maureen Palmer and seconded by Councillor Stephen Bunney.

A request for a recorded vote was made, with a second member supporting that request, the motion was put to a recorded vote, with votes being cast as follows: -

For: Councillors Barrett, Bennett, Bierley, Boles, Bridgwood, Brockway, Bunney, Carless, Darcel, Duguid, Flear, Fleetwood, Key, Lawrence, Lee, Morris, Palmer, Pilgrim, Rodgers, Smith, Snee J, Snee M, Swift and Westley. (24)

Against: Councillors Dobbie and Hague (2)

Abstentions: Councillors Howitt-Cowan and Velan (2)

With a total of 24 votes cast for, 2 votes against, and 2 abstentions the motion was declared **CARRIED** and as such it was:

> **RESOLVED** that Councillor Jackie Brockway be elected Leader of the Council for the remainder of 2025/26 civic year.

Councillor Brockway addressed Council to express her thanks at having been elected and made the following short address: -

> "First of all, could I thank those Councillors who have voted for me to take on this role. This will be a leadership of a different kind where I will try to use what is a very privileged position to be an enabler and a facilitator so that we can all be confident in sharing our talents and abilities for the good of West Lindsey.
>
> I'd also like to thank those who have voted against me or who have abstained because the honourable dissenting voice and a healthy positive challenge are important for the creation of robust policy.
>
> I would particularly like to publicly express my confidence in the integrity and the dedication of the Officers who support us daily, who work tirelessly to deliver services to our residents, often in very difficult circumstances. Finally, tonight we aim to create the West Lindsey model of local governance. This goes way beyond the usual concept of coalition. This is a full and good-hearted co-operation between like-minded people whose aim is to serve West Lindsey so that residents, Officers and Councillors can flourish in confidence.
>
> Thank you"

38 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER

The Leader having been elected to position, nominated her Deputy Leader as Councillor Mrs Moira Westley. Having been seconded and with no further nominations, on being put to the vote, it was: -

> **RESOLVED** that Councillor Mrs Moira Westley be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council for the remainder of 2025/26 civic year.

Councillor Westley expressed her thanks and made a short acceptance address as follows: -

> "I would like to thank my fellow Council members for granting me the privilege of being Deputy Leader for the remainder of the civic year.
>
> It has been heartening to see how all the different groups within the Council have come together over the past few weeks to form a new joint administration, putting politics and party aside, to bring the West Lindsey community to the forefront of everyone's priorities, as we are, first and foremost, councillors dedicated to

representing our individual communities within the wider West Lindsey district.

The years and months left of WLDC present an exciting opportunity for us as a Council to leave a legacy for all our communities. With a new Chief Executive starting his tenure next month, we can build on the excellent work already undertaken by previous administrations.

As we head into the uncertainty of Local Government Reorganisation and what that will look like for WLDC, what we can do is ensure that we leave the district in a strong position, deliver some lasting community projects, and showcase the skills and talents of the amazing WLDC team and workforce.

WLDC may have an uncertain future in its current form, but with the new administration and CEO in place there is already a sense of renewed hope and optimism, and I look forward to working in partnership with you all".

39 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman

The Chairman addressed the Council and whilst the summer period had generally been quiet, with the Chairman having attended a few events, one which he wished to draw to the Chamber's attention was his attendance at Aegir Special School in Gainsborough, for the premiere of short film made, produced and staring the students, something made possible via the grant funding from West Lindsey.

A media company had worked with their children to produce a fantastic short film and it had been really quite impressive to see the children that were involved in the process and the hard work they undertaken. The end result had been a really high-quality production, and Members were encouraged to take the time to have a look.

The Chairman also highlighted that the BBC Radio 4 "Any Question" programme was going to be held at Gainsborough Old Hall on Friday the 22nd of September starting at 8.00pm Tickets were available to be an audience member. It was pleasing to see an event at Gainsborough, that would garner national coverage, which was good for both the town and the Old Hall.

Leader

Having only just taken office the newly elected Leader advised Council that she would be starting her first round of meetings the next day including the District Joint Committee, District Leaders and Chief Executive meetings and meetings associated with MCCA, alongside the Chief Executive. She also had a number of briefings scheduled over the coming weeks to ensure that she was fully abreast of all matters and fully aware of the needs of West Lindsey to enable her to fulfil her duties to the best of her ability when representing the Authority at meetings.

Head of Paid Service

The Interim Head of Paid Service addressed Council opening his announcements by acknowledging the evening's meeting marked a significant reset for the Council, not only politically but organisationally.

Remarking on the main focus being on serving our communities and the businesses that we host in the District the best we can. To do this effectively, relationships needed to be strong, council business needed to be conducted in the right spirit with mutual respect and the right values and behaviours permeating through everything the Council did.

He spoke of the talented, committed, and passionate people, Members and Officers alike, within the Council and how uniting these assets would ensure West Lindsey became even stronger in its endeavours to deliver the best possible services and outcomes to its communities.

Since the last Council as evidenced by the meeting's agenda significant advances, not only in political arrangements for the Council, but also in organisational change that had commenced in the background, preparation for refocusing of the Council's priorities, and also enabling the organisation to be more efficient and effective in its decision -making internally, responding to the national Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in January 2025.

Most importantly, the Council had continued to deliver for the communities and the Head of Paid Service outlined just a few of the key initiatives and programmes that had been delivered over the summer period over and above the business as usual.

The community grants programme 2025/26 continued to go from strength to strength. With a total of 19 grant awards made to projects across West Lindsey. Almost £200,000 had been awarded to projects such as new speed indicator devices, play park improvements, community events and community building works.

The Council had also successfully applied for school games funding from Sport England to deliver the Winter School Games programme. The programme would be delivered in partnership with local partners, national governing bodies and community organisations.

The Council would also be working with secondary schools to deliver the leadership opportunities for local young people to inspire the next generation.

As part of the Council's community defibrillator scheme, over the summer an additional 15 facilities at new locations across the District had been installed, bringing the total in West Lindsey to 125. Defibrillators supplied by the Council had been deployed eight times in the past year, helping saving lives across this district.

Gainsborough's Trinity Arts Centre had been shortlisted as a finalist in the APSE award for best service team, sport, leisure and culture earlier this summer, building on the Council's finalist status at the Destination Lincolnshire awards earlier in the year. The Council had narrowly missed out on £5m funding from the Arts Council for improvements to the Centre, however the work stood the Council in good stead to secure future external funding bids.

Marking a significant milestone in the regeneration of Gainsborough, the official opening of the Savoy Cinema had been in July, the public realm enhancements to the Market Square completed, and the handover of the beautifully transformed cafe on Whitten Gardens along the riverside.

The third annual Gainsborough Wordfest was due to take place in the town centre on Saturday the 13th, open to residents from across the District. The exciting event was a wide celebration of creativity and storytelling, with a rich programme of free activities across multiple themes, inviting visitors of all ages to explore the written word in a variety of imaginative and engaging ways.

Officers from the Enforcement and Customer Services teams had been attending various venues during the last month across the District, including Sudbrooke, Caistor, Scotter, Upton and Lea, to discuss local concerns with local residents. It had also provided teams the opportunity to highlight the work that they were undertaking across the District in tackling fly tipping, dog fouling and antisocial behaviour.

The Council had also been undertaking some key consultation and engagements exercises over the summer, one around the budget consultation and LGR due to end on the 15 September; one on the Local council tax support scheme, with consultation having ended 6 September; and the Car Parking Strategy due to end 6 October.

The Interim Head of Paid Service referred to the serious incident over the bank holiday weekend, at a property in Waddingham, and at which Officers from the Council had helped with the response. The nature of the incident was outlined along with the work undertaken by various teams across the Council in responding to the incident, including the setting up of rest centres for families dispersed from their accommodation. Officers were continuing to work with Police as part as part of the tactical joint working with partners.

The Head of Paid Service placed on record his thanks to all those Officers associated with all the initiatives mentioned through his announcements with particular thanks expressed to Grant White and his colleagues for the incident response in Waddingham.

Confirmation had been received last week that the Council had received an award of over £5m, on behalf of all central Lincolnshire authorities. West Lindsey’s share would support households across the district to insulate their homes for the winter.

With the new Chief Executive, assuming post on 29 September, Mr Cullen outlined the working relationship established to date and the hand over arrangements. Finally, in light of this being his last Council meeting, the Interim Head of Paid Service took the opportunity to express his thanks for the incredible support he had been given by staff and Members since arriving. He spoke of pleasure and privilege at having worked with such passionate, talented, and committed people, which had enabled him to move some key areas forward at a pace as demonstrated by the evening’s agenda.

40 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

41 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 9

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

42 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 Jackie Brockway was invited to read aloud her motion to the meeting, as follows: -

> "West Lindsey is currently undergoing radical changes in its administration and opposition.
>
> A large majority of Councillors would like to work together more closely in a manner which transcends party politics, in order to improve our collective service to West Lindsey residents and businesses. This change aims to improve the resilience of the Council and to increase experience available to as many Councillors as possible.
>
> I invite Councillors to support the following ten-point commitments:

1. That the West Lindsey Administration be acknowledged as the administration of the council.

2. That the Leader of the council should hold the Leader's position only and should not hold chairmanships or vice-chairmanships on any committee at WLDC.

3. That Councillors, whenever possible, should hold no more than one Special Responsibility position and should receive no more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.

4. That Councillors from different parties within the WLA are allowed to substitute for each other to cover absences, so long as they are members of the formally constituted WLA.

5. Each committee should have one vice-chairman. In the absence of the named person a vice-chairman should be nominated from the body of the committee for the duration of the meeting.

6. That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of any West Lindsey Council committee should not be in the same political party unless the political balance of the Council prevents this.

7. That the new Administration commits to a timely refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan with the adoption of new values and behaviours to reflect the priorities on the new Administration and welcomes the member and staff engagement that is planned in September

8. That the new Administration welcomes the review of internal governance arrangements currently underway to streamline decision making and become more delivery focussed

9. That the Council commits to respond positively and in a timely manner to the Corporate Peer challenge recommendations to ensure the positive work of the council is fully reflected and acknowledged by the LGA Peer Team in its follow up visit next year.

10. That the Council continues to collaborate with its Lincolnshire local authority partners on LGR to ensure that the challenges and opportunities for West Lindsey are fully recognised in proposals that are submitted to government for the benefit of our communities.

I so move
Councillor Jackie Brockway"

With the motion duly seconded debate ensued, a Member in reference to point 10 suggested that not enough consideration had been given to the reflect the natural integration of services across the Central Lincolnshire region (Lincoln City, West Lindsey and North Kesteven) and that this could have been a viable LGR proposal in his view.

Opposition Members also questioned the merit of point 2, suggesting it was unnecessarily limiting in nature, and outlined scenarios where it would prevent potentially the best person resuming a role.

Reference point 9 of the motion, and the word timely, Opposition Members sought to understand the exact time-line.

The mover of the motion responded to the points, she shared the Member's view regarding there having been potential in a Central Lincolnshire proposal for LGR, unfortunately, Leaders from other Authorities did not share that view. Point two of the motion she considered captured the ethos of the new Administration and her leadership style, to enable. Her view was that the resilience of the council would be increased significantly if more councillors were involved in decision -making strengthening the Council's position.

The newly appointed Leader gave her commitment to update all Members, on any meetings she attended regarding LGR or relevant conversations, meetings of the District Joint Committee or MCCAA Boards. The matter relating to the Peer Review featured later on the agenda.

Having been proposed and seconded on being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that the motion as written be **ACCEPTED**.

43 ADOPTION OF THE DUNHOLME NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

The Chairman, prior to introducing the report, again welcomed representatives from Dunholme Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Group, Councillors Pache, Kettley and Forrester 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 Dunholme. This would be the third reviewed neighbourhood plan to be adopted within West Lindsey. The reviewed plan would replace the original neighbourhood plan for Dunholme to form part of the development plan and thereby have a major influence on planning application decisions in the Dunholme parish.

The Dunholme Neighbourhood Plan Review had involved two rounds of public consultation and had been successful at both examination and referendum. The Referendum had been held on 24 July and the outcome of this was shown in section 3.6 of the report.

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 Councillor Pache, Chairman of Dunholme Parish Council to address the Chamber.

Councillor Pache spoke of the intense community consultation and engagement which had taken place to develop the reviewed Plan. He spoke of the commitment dedication and sheer hard work undertaken by those involved in developing the Plan. The community also recognised that no development within their Parish was not a realistic option but by creating and reviewing their neighbourhood plan they could go some way to preserve the way of life offered by what was a beautiful settlement.

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

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

> **RESOLVED** that the Dunholme Neighbourhood Plan Review, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, be formally adopted (made) to form part of the West Lindsey Development Plan for the Dunholme parish area, replacing the Dunholme Neighbourhood Plan adopted January 2017.

44 REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS ON COMMITTEES / SUB COMMITTEES

The Chairman presented the report, which set out details of the political groups on the Council, the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each Committee, and the allocation of seats on each of the Committees based on political groupings, noting the reasons for the review as detailed in the report and with the last review having been undertaken at the Full Council meeting held on 7 July 2025.

This was a matter, which had been determined by the Head of Paid Service under his delegated authority, in Consultation with the Group Leaders, with all Group Leaders having indicated their agreement to the allocations, as such, there was no requirement for a vote.

With no questions or comments posed, the following was **DULY NOTED: -**

(a) the details of the political groups, as set out in Appendix A of the report,

(b) the number of Members to be appointed to serve on each committee and sub-committee; and

(c) the allocation to different political groups of seats on committees/sub-committees, as set out in Appendix B of the report.

45 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CIVIC YEAR 2025/26

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 the 2025/26 Civic Year.

Members were advised that the published report had contained some blanks where nominations had still been awaited from the Group Leader of the West Lindsey Administration Group namely: -

- 1 seat on Prosperous Communities Committee
- 1 seat on Governance and Audit Committee
- 1 seat on Planning Committee
- 1 seat on both Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

The Group Leader requested additional time to give her nominations and as such, it was suggested that a motion delegating authority to the Head of Paid service to fill the vacancies, post the meeting of Council, on notification from the Group Leader be passed. Having been proposed and seconded, including the suggested addition it was **RESOLVED** that**:**

(a) in accordance with the provisions of section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the wishes expressed by political groups, Members be appointed to serve to the Council's Committees for the remainder of the 2025/26 civic year as follows: -

Chief Officer Employment Committee (11 Members)

Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan

Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Moira Westley

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (11 Members)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Baptiste Velan
Councillor Trevor Young

Governance and Audit Committee (8 Members)

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor …………………………………. (Admin Group)

Licensing Committee (11 Members)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor ……………………………………….. (Admin Group)

Regulatory Committee (11 Members)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor ……………………………………….. (Admin Group)

Planning Committee (11 Members)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor ………………………………(Admin Group)

Prosperous Communities Committee (11 Members)

Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Chris Darcel
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Lesley Rollings
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor ………………………………(Admin Group)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 members)

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Jacob Flear

Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Jeannette McGhee
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mandy Snee

Standards Committee (8 Members)

Councillor Emma Bailey
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Jackie Brockway
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Adam Duguid
Councillor Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Baptiste Velan ; and

(b) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Paid Service to fill the remaining Committee seats, on notification from the Group Leader, and this notification be not later than 3 weeks from the date of the meeting.

46 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN FOR THE REMAINDER CIVIC YEAR 2025/26 AND TO CONFIRM THE NORMAL COMMENCEMENT TIME FOR EACH COMMITTEE

Having re-appointed the Committees, the report under consideration sought to appoint Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to each of the Committees and for Council to re-affirm the normal commencement time for each meeting.

The report also sought to reduce the number of Vice-Chairmanships to one per Committee, in line with the ethos of the motion passed earlier in the meeting.

Nominations had been printed in the published report, and the Chairman advised that a counter nomination had been received for the position of Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The counter-nomination was verbally withdrawn from the meeting.

Having sought additional counter nominations, but with none being made, the Chairman indicated that if Members were content the recommendations would be taken en-bloc. Members indicated their contentment to the process but there was a request made for a recorded vote which was duly supported by a second member.

As such, the recommendations were put en-bloc to a recorded vote, with votes being cast as follows: -

For: Councillors Barrett, Bennett, Bierley, Boles, Bridgwood, Brockway, Bunney, Carless, Darcel, Duguid, Flear, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Key, Lawrence, Lee, Morris, Palmer, Pilgrim, Rodgers, Smith, Snee J, Snee M, Swift and Westley. (25)

Against: Councillors Dobbie and Hague (2)

Abstentions: Councillor Velan (1)

With a total of 25 votes cast in favour, 2 votes against, and 1 abstention the recommendations were declared **CARRIED** and as such it was:

RESOLVED that:

(a) the number of Vice-Chairmanships be reduced to one per committee;

(b) the following persons be appointed as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, for the remainder of 2025/2026 Civic Year to the following Committees:

Committee	**Chairman**	**Vice Chairman**	**Normal Start Time**
Chief Officer Employment	(Leader's Nominee) Councillor Peter Morris	Councillor Trevor Bridgwood	Meetings convened as required
Corporate Policy & Resources	(Leader's Nominee) Councillor Owen Bierley	Councillor Paul Swift	6.30pm
Planning	Councillor Ian Fleetwood	Councillor Jacob Flear	6.30pm
Governance & Audit	Councillor Stephen Bunney	Councillor Angela Lawrence	2.00pm
Licensing	Councillor Jim Snee	Councillor Maureen Palmer	6.30pm
Overview & Scrutiny	Councillor Jeanette McGhee	Councillor Roger Patterson	6.30pm
Regulatory	Councillor Jim Snee	Councillor Maureen Palmer	6.30pm
Prosperous Communities	Councillor Emma Bailey	Councillor Tom Smith	6.30pm
Standards	Councillor Adam Duguid	Councillor Mandy Snee	Meetings convened as required

(c) the normal commencement time for each of the Committees be as set out in the table at (b) above.

47 TO RE- APPOINT TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Chairman again introduced the report and advised the Chamber that in light of the political re-set of the Council, the newly appointed Administration had requested that a number of outside body appointments be revisited along with the membership of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, which sat outside of the political balance rules.

Members were advised that the published report had contained some blanks where nominations had still been awaited and these were listed aloud to the Chamber.

The awaited nominations for three of the outstanding bodies were provided verbally to the meeting, as follows: -

- Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (reserve Member) – Councillor Stephen Bunney;
- Rural Services Network (SPARSE) – Councillor Jackie Brockway
- Trustees of the Charles Cooper Trust – Councillor Matthew Boles

The Leader requested additional time to provide the remaining outstanding nominations, and again it was suggested that a motion delegating authority to the Head of Paid service to fill the vacancies, post the meeting of Council, on notification from the Leader be passed. Having been proposed and seconded, including the suggested addition it was **RESOLVED** that**:**

a) Members be Appointed to the Outside Bodies, in accordance with the provisions set out at Section 1.3 (i) – (iv), and in line with the nominations detailed in the table at Appendix 1 of the publish report and provided verbally at the meeting, including two new outside bodies namely: -

   * LGA Special Interest Group – Internal Drainage Boards
   * STEP Strategic Collaboration Group

(b) Members detailed in Section 2.3 of the report be appointed to the Joint Staff Consultative Committee until May 2027 namely;

Members
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Moira Westley

Reserves
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Tom Smith

Councillor Jackie Brockway ; and

(c) delegated authority be granted to the Head of Paid Service to fill the remaining Outside Body vacancies, on notification from the Leader.

48 WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REPORT

Members considered a report which presented an update on progress against the recommendations made in the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge report.

The Local Government Association (LGA) required all councils to undertake a full Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) once every five years. West Lindsey District Council's latest CPC took place in January 2025 and the report before Members highlighted the findings and recommendations of the Peer Team.

In responding to the findings of the Peer Team, the Council was required to produce an Action Plan setting out how the recommendations would be implemented. The report provided, for information, an update on work to-date against the recommendations, with particular focus on progress in relation to three areas of work, these being:

1. A refreshed Corporate Plan based on the priorities of the Council through the lens of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR);

2. Designing a new organisational structure that was aligned to the core themes of the refreshed Corporate Plan; ensuring the Council had the right capacity in the right places to deliver key priorities and prepare for the implementation of LGR; and

3. Implementing a new internal governance and monitoring framework that aligned with the new Corporate Plan, streamlined decision-making touch points and empowered both staff and Members to focus on delivering the priorities of the Council over the next three years.

Finally, Councils were required to take part in a progress review to assess progress against the recommendations, the report sought approval from Council to arrange a follow-up review in the first half of 2026.

The amount of work undertaken by Officers over the summer was acknowledged by Members who were supportive of the next steps as outlined.

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

RESOLVED that:

(a) the findings and recommendations from the Council's LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2025 (Appendix 1) be received and noted;

(b) the progress that had been made to-date against the recommendations be noted; and

(c) the proposal for a Peer Challenge Progress Review to take place in the first half of 2026, subject to agreement with the Local Government Association, be approved.

49 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

Members considered a report which provided an update to Council on the latest position regarding progress with plans for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire.

Members were reminded that on 7 July, Council had resolved to undertake supportive engagement with other local authorities in developing proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Greater Lincolnshire. At that point in time there were four proposals in development for the area.

Since then, Members were advised the number of proposals in development had increased, as detailed in the report.

All final proposals had to be submitted to Government no later than 28 November 2025. The report provided Members with the most up-to-date position as work continued across Greater Lincolnshire to prepare for LGR and primarily focused on three areas:

1. Latest Government communication and guidance;
2. Engagement with other local authorities and public sector partners;
3. Public engagement, including early findings from the Council's own ongoing engagement exercise

The update ensured Members had all the latest information available to them to support ongoing considerations of which of the proposals, currently in development best met the needs of West Lindsey residents and businesses, based on the criteria set out in the Statutory Invitation, namely:

- A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.
- Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.
- Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.
- Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.
- New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements
- New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

Members advised a further paper would be presented to Council on 10 November for decision on West Lindsey's position ahead of the submission deadline.

Following a thorough introduction by Officers, debate ensued. A number of Members spoke of their displeasure at LGR, and of their belief that removing a Council like West Lindsey would not drive community benefit, with media speculation about the cost savings and change in Minister, Members questioned whether LGR as a policy could be scrapped, but heard the Government were still committed to LGR and the timetable which had previously been published and outlined in the report.

There was much debate across the Chamber about the likelihood of LGR delivering for local communities, with powers taken further away from local community representatives and creating a greater democratic deficit.

The difference between LGR and devolution were clarified to the Chamber. Members also spoke of how Town and Parishes had not been factored into the equation, acknowledging how in rural communities, they were large in number and provided a number of services.

Following much debate with very little support for the merits of LGR, having been proposed and seconded, on being put to the vote it was: -

> **RESOLVED** that the latest update on plans for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire be received, and the current position in respect of:
>
> i) Latest Government guidance, correspondence and timelines;
> ii) West Lindsey engagement and collaboration in the development of final proposals across Greater Lincolnshire;
> iii) Public engagement across Greater Lincolnshire, including early findings from West Lindsey's engagement exercise;
>
> be noted in particular.

50 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - NEW FEE RELATIVE TO MARKETS FOR 2025/26

The then Chairman of the Corporate of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee presented the report which sought Council approval that a new fee and charge be introduced for Markets, specifically an Event pitch, at a proposed priced of £50 applicable to event traders only.

It was stressed that registered or casual traders attending usual markets would pay the standard fee on event days, traders who only attended events (who can come from across the UK) would be charged the new event rate.

It was considered the proposed fee reflected the cost of promoting and organising the events, and the benefits of the increased footfall. The Council also included power and security. The fee remained competitive but reflected the space as premium for special events.

The current pricing schedule for such event traders was provided for information and was currently in line with the casual trader rate for a Saturday market.

The recommendation was proposed before a period of questioning ensued. In response to questions, it was confirmed that the fee did not affect independent traders, unless that independent trader only traded on event days.

It was again clarified that any trader already registered with the Council or trading casually on normal markets would not be subject to the new event fee, as such it would have no impact on regular traders. Only those traders, who only applied to trade, when the Council was hosting an event, would be subject to the new rate. The recommendations were duly seconded.

A Member made reference to those trading at event markets, who did not rent a pitch or space, for example balloon sellers, LED light sellers and sought to understand if they were subject to a fee to trade.

Members also enquired as to whether the fee was VAT inclusive.

In the absence of the information, Officers undertook to advise the Members of the position in respect of both questions outside of the meeting.

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

> **RESOLVED** that the recommendation from the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be accepted and the new fee, namely an Event Pitch / Stall Fee of £50.00 for event traders only, be approved for immediate implementation.

51 RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2024/25

The then Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee introduced the annual treasury management report for 2024/25 recommended by the Committee. The report provided an update on progress against the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council in March 2024 for 2024/25 financial year and was a requirement of compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice.

The report contents were summarised to the Chamber with Members noting interest rates during the period had been above those expected when the original treasury management strategy had been written. Therefore, the Council has benefited from increased interest rates on its investments, generating £1.166m during 2024/25. This had overachieved the budget by £515k.

By closely monitoring cashflow and the capital programme underspending in year, external borrowing had been kept down where possible. This has meant the exposure to increased interest costs payable had been minimised resulting in a spend on interest payable of £760k.

Members noted some existing borrowing would need to be refinanced in the short term, but borrowing would be taken as late as possible to take advantage of projected interest rate reductions.

The Chairman of the Committee was pleased to confirm that there had been no breaches of the prudential indicators during 2024/25.

The recommendations were moved. In response to a question regarding whether there were any ethical rules in place to safeguard the Council from investing with high-risk vendors or high carbon output firms, for example, the Section 151 Officer outlined the Treasury Management Investment criteria starting with security, liquidity, yield. Environmental, social and governmental considerations were then considered. More green investments were being offered but often at a slightly lower yield than a standard investment.

However, if a green investment was on the counterparty list approved by Council, then an investment was permissible and where rates were only very marginally different, the Council would always try and move towards green investments.

With the recommendation duly seconded on being put to the vote it was: -

> **RESOLVED** that the Annual Treasury Management Report and actual Prudential Indicators 2024/25 be approved.

52 DISPENSATION FOR COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE - COUNCILLOR LIZ CLEWS

The Chairman introduced the report, the purpose of which was self-explanatory. Members expressed their good wishes to Cllr Clews and her family and asked that a token of thought be sent from the Chairman's office.

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

> **RESOLVED** that Councillor Clews' non-attendance at meetings of the Authority, due to ill health, for a six-month period be approved and a dispensation be granted 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.

53 CLOSING REMARKS

Before closing the meeting, this being the last Full Council for the interim Chief Executive, the Chairman took the opportunity to thank Mr Cullen for the support he had given the organisation over the last few months. He spoke of the up-beat atmosphere around the organisation, and of the positive feedback he had received from Officers. The work Mr Cullen had undertaken in his short time was evident from the Council papers considered during the meeting.

Other Members expressed thanks and gratitude for Mr Cullen's, support, commitment and inclusive style and wished him well for future endeavours, followed by a round of applause.

Mr Cullen in turn paid tribute to West Lindsey's Members and Officers and spoke of his enjoyment in having undertaken the role. He was of the view that West Lindsey had strong foundations and committed Members and Officers to position the District well through the unknown path of Local Government Re-Organisation.

With a final round of applause, the Chairman called the meeting to a close.

The meeting concluded at 8.54 pm.

Chairman