

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 14 October 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Jeanette McGhee (Chairman)
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

In Attendance:

Inspector Michael Head	Lincolnshire Police
Nova Roberts	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Andy Gray	Housing & Environmental Enforcement Manager
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Claire Bailey	Senior Change, Projects and Performance Officer
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer
Molly Spencer	Democratic & Civic Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Roger Patterson (Vice Chairman)

15 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 29 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

16 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

17 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Democratic and Civic Officer provided an update against the Matters Arising. It was reported that the item relating to the Battery Storage Legislation had been marked as black status, in anticipation of a report being presented at the next meeting in November.

The item concerning Parish Council reserves had received a response from the Section 151 Officer, which had been circulated to Committee Members on 6 October. This item had also

been moved to black status.

In relation to Emergency Plans and the support provided by West Lindsey District Council to Parish Councils, contact had been made with the relevant Officers. A written response was expected prior to the next meeting, and as such, the item remained at green status.

With no further comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

18 PRESENTATION ITEM: LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE

The Chairman introduced the item and welcomed Inspector Head from Lincolnshire Police.

Inspector Head presented to the Committee a range of matters relating to neighbourhood policing and operational developments within West Lindsey.

It was noted that Inspector Head had entered his third year in post, having succeeded Inspector Gary Brockie in October 2022. During this period, significant changes had been implemented within the neighbourhood policing model, with further adjustments anticipated due to the financial position of the force.

The Committee was informed that a report issued by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services had identified five key areas of concern. These included the need for the force to attend calls for service in accordance with published target attendance times, to improve the allocation, supervision and investigation of crime in order to ensure that victims received appropriate support, and to ensure that sufficient capacity and capability existed to manage the risks posed by Registered Sex Offenders. Additionally, it had been noted that there was a need to enhance the understanding of demand across the force and to establish adequate strategic planning processes.

The Committee was advised that an evidence-based approach to policing had been adopted to ensure optimal allocation of resources. It was reported that the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) had been reduced. Although seven PCSOs had been promised for West Lindsey, only four had been received, all of whom had been based in Gainsborough. PCSOs had been allocated to areas identified as experiencing high levels of harm. Collaborative work with partner agencies had been undertaken to address anti-social behaviour, with a focus on problem-solving initiatives.

West Lindsey had been divided into nine separate Beat Codes. Previously, each Beat Code had operated with its own neighbourhood policing team and set of priorities. In order to improve coverage, a transition to a 'Superbeats' model had been initiated. The West Lindsey Response Team had continued to provide coverage across the area.

Under the new model, West Lindsey had been effectively split into two areas, each served by a Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). This arrangement had been designed to improve coverage during periods of staff absence due to leave or sickness, and to increase the number of public contact points. It was reported that the NPT had operated with only one Sergeant for approximately 18 months due to long-term sickness. Sergeant Mark Pearson had joined the team at the end of September, thereby strengthening the supervisory structure.

Details were provided regarding the composition of Team One and Team Two, including the breakdown of officers assigned to each.

A breakdown of crime statistics was presented, showing comparative data from September 2025 and September 2024, as well as rolling 12-month periods from October 2024 to September 2025 and October 2023 to September 2024. Volume and percentage changes had been reported for each area, designated NC01 through NC09. The Committee was informed that four response teams were in operation and working from Gainsborough and Market Rasen. Each team comprised one Sergeant and ten Police Constables. These teams were responsible for responding to both 999 and 101 calls.

Two officers had been temporarily assigned to the NPT from August 2025 to form a High Harm Team. Their focus was on high-harm offenders within Gainsborough. Early results had been described as excellent, with several Criminal Behaviour Orders having been applied for. Information was provided regarding Criminal Behaviour Orders, including the conditions imposed on individuals, the potential for custodial sentences in cases of breach, and the typical duration of such orders, which could extend up to two years.

The Committee was advised that partnership working continued to be a key element of the neighbourhood policing strategy. The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager at West Lindsey District Council also provided an update on partnership working arrangements. It was reported that operational collaboration remained strong between the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Community Safety, and the Council. A shared county-wide information system was in use to manage and monitor anti-social behaviour, which had enabled effective information sharing across agencies.

Monthly tactical meetings had continued to take place, with representation from relevant departments. West Lindsey District Council's Enterprising Communities Manager was responsible for overseeing all CCTV operations, while the Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager's team managed operational matters. The scope of these meetings had been extended to include housing associations such as ACIS, P3, and others. It was noted that the frequency of meetings could be increased if required.

Joint working also took place with Licensing, Trading Standards, and enforcement teams, including the execution of warrants on shop premises. Officers had been able to engage directly with the community while exercising their powers.

In relation to youth anti-social behaviour, West Lindsey District Council had taken the lead on initial contact. A three-stage process was in place, and at the second stage, individuals were met by representatives from both The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager's team and the Neighbourhood Policing Team, accompanied by their parents. Engagement with local schools was being maintained to assist in identifying individuals involved in incidents where identities could not be confirmed by other means. Hotspot patrolling was carried out, which had increased the visibility of policing teams and PCSOs. It was emphasised that such activity had only been possible due to additional funding. Furthermore, two West Lindsey officers had been working additional hours twice per week to support these efforts.

Inspector Head then responded to a number of questions submitted in advance of the meeting by Members.

In response to a question regarding potential cost-saving measures within the force that would not compromise service delivery, it was stated that the force continually sought to operate more efficiently and innovatively. Reference was made to the causes of concern identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, which included the need to attend calls for service in line with published target attendance times, improve the allocation, supervision and investigation of crimes to ensure victims received appropriate support, ensure sufficient capacity and capability to manage risks posed by Registered Sex Offenders, enhance the understanding of demand, and ensure that adequate strategic plans were in place. The matter of budget management training and accountability had also been raised, and it was confirmed that officers were expected to manage resources responsibly and would be prepared to justify expenditure if required.

A further question had been raised concerning the reassurance of minority groups in light of perceived societal shifts. In response, it was confirmed that the police would continue to operate without fear or favour, maintaining impartiality and fairness in all aspects of policing.

A question had been submitted regarding West Lindsey's position in relation to crime levels, particularly in light of survey data indicating strong public support for increased police funding. It was reported that a number of initiatives had been introduced to address local crime concerns. These included the work of the Community Links Team, which aimed to divert individuals at risk of criminality away from offending behaviour, the establishment of a High Harm Team, the creative use of anti-social behaviour powers, and the development of a Community and Alcohol Partnership. Strong joint working with West Lindsey District Council was also highlighted, alongside targeted operations such as Operation Climb.

Concerns were raised regarding the length of time taken for serious cases to be heard at Crown Court, with reference made to national and local averages. It was acknowledged that court backlogs were a national issue and that the timeframes associated with the Courts and the Crown Prosecution Service were outside the control of the police. Nonetheless, it was recognised that such delays could impact service delivery and public confidence.

Finally, a question had been asked about the impact of recent changes to offender recall procedures and early release schemes, particularly in relation to repeat offenders. It was reported that no analytical data was available to support an increase in crime linked to these measures. Evidence-based policing had indicated that a small number of individuals, referred to as the 'power few', were responsible for a significant proportion of crime. It was noted that there were currently limited schemes within West Lindsey aimed at reducing reoffending.

Inspector Head concluded his presentation by expressing appreciation for the strong and effective working relationship with West Lindsey District Council. Particular thanks were extended to the Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager and his teams for their continued support and collaborative efforts.

The Chairman thanked Inspector head for his presentation and invited Members of the Committee to comment.

A Member expressed appreciation on behalf of Waddingham Parish Council, West Lindsey District Council, and Lincolnshire County Council for the police response to an incident

which had occurred in Waddingham. The positive engagement was acknowledged and thanks were extended to the officers involved.

Concerns were raised regarding the need for increased focus on outlying towns and rural areas, in addition to Gainsborough. It was suggested that West Lindsey District Council would be supportive of efforts to ensure that these areas received appropriate attention. Reference was made to the northern area surrounding Market Rasen, where reports of rural crime affecting farms and isolated residents had increased. It was proposed that consideration be given to highlighting the unique demands of rural policing when seeking funding, especially in relation to travel times and resource deployment.

In response, it was confirmed that officers had been tasked with maintaining passive overnight attention in rural areas, subject to incident demand and operational tasking. One officer had made contact with an individual involved in Country Watch, although it had not been confirmed whether this support extended to the Market Rasen area.

Further comments were made regarding the prevalence of violent and alcohol-related incidents in rural wards. It was noted that violent crime statistics could encompass a range of offences, including common assault and incidents involving fear of assault. While specific figures were not available, it was explained that outcomes could vary and included cautions, youth interventions, and referrals to Youth Offending Teams. It was also observed that similar levels of assault had been recorded across different areas, which may reflect an increase in reporting rather than a rise in incidents. Gainsborough's Trinity Academy had been identified as a location where engagement had taken place due to concerns involving students. Domestic incidents had also been reported. It was emphasised that not all cases were linked to drug or alcohol misuse, and no definitive explanation for the increase had been identified.

Commendation was offered for the work undertaken by the police with limited resources. It was acknowledged that effective community engagement and partnership working had been central to the success of local policing efforts. Officers were praised for their approachability and professionalism, and thanks were extended for their continued dedication.

A question was raised regarding the targeting of specific drug types during enforcement activity. It was confirmed that Class A drugs were prioritised due to their association with serious organised criminality and violence. While Class C drugs had also been encountered, they had not presented the same level of concern. Shop thefts were noted as an additional area of focus.

Concerns were expressed about the challenges of public communication and the perception of policing levels. It was suggested that while negative issues were often highlighted, positive developments were not always sufficiently publicised. Improvements in Market Rasen, including the use of drone technology, was mentioned as an example of successful innovation that had not received adequate recognition. It was suggested that West Lindsey District Council's communications team could assist in promoting positive messages and outcomes.

With discussions drawing to a close, the Chairman and Committee Members thanked Inspector Head for his contributions and attendance.

19 2026/27 PROGRESS & DELIVERY MEASURE SETTING APPROACH

An update was provided by the Performance and Programme Manager regarding the proposed approach and timeline for setting the Council's Progress and Delivery measures for the 2026/27 period. It was confirmed that a further report, containing additional detail and outlining Member engagement, would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting on 18 November. The importance of effective performance management was emphasised, with recognition given to the key role played by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in monitoring performance, as set out in the Council's Constitution.

Members were informed that the Council undertook an annual review of its performance measures to ensure they remained fit for purpose. For the current review, a focus had been placed on strengthening the alignment between performance measures and the Corporate Plan.

To support this objective, a proposal had been made to update the reporting template. The revised format would move away from portfolio and service-level reporting and instead concentrate on the strategic themes of the Corporate Plan. It was acknowledged, however, that not all performance measures would directly align with the refreshed Corporate Plan. To ensure continued visibility of council-wide performance, a complementary Operational Performance report had been proposed. This work formed part of a broader transformation programme, which was linked to the refresh of the Corporate Plan, being developed in parallel with Local Government Reorganisation, and the introduction of a new set of organisational Values and Behaviours.

Central to the proposed approach was the establishment of a new programme theme board structure, designed to streamline existing governance arrangements and place greater emphasis on delivery. An overview of the approach had been presented to the Leaders Group on Monday, 13 October 2025, and feedback from that meeting would be incorporated into the November 2025 report for Overview & Scrutiny.

Members were invited to provide feedback on the proposed approach and timeline, with the intention that their input would help shape the final report and ensure the process reflected Member expectations.

The Chairman thanked the Performance and Programme Manager and opened for Members to comment.

It was noted that the move towards a more streamlined reporting structure made considerable sense, particularly in terms of measuring efficiency and supporting the scrutiny function. The importance of holding officers, Members, and the Council collectively to account was emphasised. Support was expressed for the approach, with a suggestion that the working group established by the Committee could be broadened to include representation from Full Council, thereby ensuring a wider range of perspectives.

Members agreed that while it was important to celebrate success, meaningful progress could only be achieved through a focus on areas requiring improvement. It was proposed that greater emphasis be placed on identifying opportunities to enhance service delivery.

The Chairman welcomed the alignment of performance reporting with the Corporate Plan and echoed support for the proposed approach. It was noted that the revised structure would provide clearer oversight of how the Council was working towards its strategic goals, while ensuring that key issues remained visible and did not become lost within broader reporting frameworks.

With no further comments or questions, it was

RESOLVED that work commence to review the Progress & Delivery framework in accordance with the following elements:

- Align measures to the refreshed Corporate Plan introducing new measures where gaps exist
- Review targets for measures that consistently exceed expectations
- Identify and reassign measures not aligned to CP into operational reporting
- Migrate from portfolio, service-based reports to strategic theme-based templates

20 FORWARD PLAN

With no comments or questions the forward plan was **DULY NOTED**.

21 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

An update was provided by the Democratic and Civic Officer regarding forthcoming items scheduled for consideration by the Committee. It was confirmed that, in addition to the item titled West Lindsey District Council's Approach to Battery Energy Storage in the Planning System, the meeting on 18 November would also include the 2026/27 Progress and Delivery Measure Setting report.

Members were also advised that the meeting scheduled for 24 February 2026 would include the Review of the Draft Annual Report and Operating Methodology.

The Chairman noted that a motion had been submitted to Council in September of the previous year, requesting a comprehensive needs assessment to be undertaken by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) in relation to GP practices. Concerns were expressed that no report had yet been brought before the Committee in response to this motion and Members requested an update on its progress.

It was proposed that the Committee could formally request a report on the matter and invite the relevant officer to attend a future meeting. In response, the Chairman advised that an initial update would be preferable at this stage, to allow officers time to progress the work. It was noted that the ICB was currently undertaking related work, which was expected to be presented to Lincolnshire County Council.

A further suggestion was made that a written update from officers be provided prior to the submission of the report to Lincolnshire County Council. The Chairman acknowledged that the report in question was classified as a confidential item and that the timeframe for producing a full report was limited. Consideration was given to the possibility of undertaking

pre-scrutiny work in advance of the formal report.

Members discussed the Pride in Place initiative and its relationship to the wider committee structure. It was noted that the item was expected to be considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee, although no formal information had been made available at this stage. A view was expressed that all Members received reports from all committees to ensure transparency and awareness, with the understanding that items would be brought back to Overview and Scrutiny if issues arose.

The Chairman welcomed the continued monitoring of the initiative and supported maintaining oversight through the Committee's work plan. A suggestion was made to include Pride in Place on the Committee's work plan. It was acknowledged that the item would progress through the relevant policy committees, and Members agreed to await its development through those channels.

It was enquired whether a standing agenda item could be introduced to provide brief updates on matters considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, reflecting the views of Overview and Scrutiny. The Chairman encouraged all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend policy committee meetings where possible, to support cross-committee understanding and engagement. Members were also advised that caution should be exercised in distinguishing between an Executive governance model, where decisions could be taken in isolation, and the committee system of West Lindsey District Council, where decisions were made by majority vote in a committee meeting.

Concerns were raised regarding the timeliness and visibility of information shared between committee chairs. It was questioned whether some items were being withdrawn during Chair's briefings prior to committee meetings, resulting in the relevant committee not having sight of the papers. It was suggested that coordination between the Governance and Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny should be strengthened to ensure that such items were not lost from the committee process.

In response, the Senior Democratic and Civic Officer clarified that the Forward Plan served as the mechanism through which all Members were informed, and could be involved in, the progression of items.

Training was referenced as a means of improving understanding of the Forward Plan and committee processes, with it being noted that there was a training session scheduled for the following week. It was confirmed that progress was being made in this area and that the same principles applied to the Governance and Audit Committee.

The meeting concluded at 7.58 pm.

Chairman