

## **WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 13 November 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Boles  
Councillor Frazer Brown  
Councillor Ian Fleetwood  
Councillor Paul Key  
Councillor Jeanette McGhee  
Councillor Tom Smith  
Councillor Baptiste Velan  
Councillor Moira Westley  
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

**Also Present:** Councillor Stephen Bunney

**In Attendance:**

Paul Burkinshaw	Chief Executive
Peter Davy	Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Nova Roberts	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Natalie Kostiuk	Customer Experience Officer
Lyn Marlow	Customer Strategy and Services Manager
Cara Markham	Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager
Sue Leversedge	Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151)
Caroline Capon	Corporate Finance Team Leader
Luke Matthews	Senior Building and Projects Officer
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Paul Swift  
Councillor Trevor Young

**Membership:** Councillor M. Snee was appointed substitute for Councillor P. Swift

### **49 TO OPEN THE MEETING AND APPOINT A VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present, in particular to Mr Paul Burkinshaw, the new Chief Executive. The Chairman explained that apologies had been received from Vice Chairman Councillor P. Swift and as such, sought nominations to appoint

a Vice Chairman for the meeting.

A Member of the Committee proposed Councillor M. Boles, which was duly seconded.

With no further nominations, the Chairman took the vote, and it was

**RESOLVED** that Councillor M. Boles be appointed Vice Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

## **50 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD**

There was no public participation.

## **51 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that there had been one amendment made to the published minutes, that being the naming of the consultants in relation to the work around Local Government Reorganisation. The previously circulated minutes had not included the consultant details as it had been discussed under closed session, however the contract had now been awarded and therefore the minutes had been amended to reflect that. With Members content with the explained amendment, and having been moved and seconded it was

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday, 25 September 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest as this point in the meeting.

## **53 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

The Chairman reiterated the Committee's thanks to Claire Hill for her work around the banking facilities available in Gainsborough, noting that a response had been received from LINK, as circulated to Members and updated in the Matters Arising Schedule. With no further comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions as at 5 November 2025, was **DULY NOTED**.

## **54 IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW TWO STAGE COMPLAINTS PROCESS**

Members gave consideration to a report regarding the implementation of a new two stage complaints process. It was explained by the Customer Experience Manager that in 2018, the Council had a one stage complaints process, managed by the Customer Experience Manager who investigated and responded to all complaints with the assistance of Senior

Officers and Team Managers. This had proven to be successful, and the number of complaints referred to, investigated by, and upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) had decreased since 2018.

Members heard, however, that not all Local Authorities had a robust and successful complaints process in place, therefore the LGSCO had launched a new complaint handling code which provided recommended guidance on how all Local Authorities should manage their complaints process. The code was launched in February 2024, working with 20 pilot council from April 2024. In February 2025 the LGSCO issued best practise guides and training to support Local Authorities to adopt the code, which would be applied to their case work from April 2026.

It was explained that Members were asked to approve the move to a two stage process, with it being noted that the Council could choose to maintain the existing one-stage process, however this would be contrary to the guidance of the LGSCO.

The Chairman thanked the Officer and noted a slight amendment to the second recommendation as published in the report. With Members indicating their support for the new process, thanks to the Customer Experience Manager, and contentment with the minor amendment, the recommendations were duly moved and seconded. On taking the vote it was

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the recommendation of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman that all Local Authorities should operate a two stage complaints process be supported; and
- b) any future minor housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services following consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

**55 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2025/6**

The Committee heard from the Customer Strategy and Services Manager regarding the proposed Council opening hours for the period between Christmas 2025 and New Year's Eve 2026, including options for early closing on New Year's Eve and all day closure on Friday 2 January 2026.

Members indicated their support for the proposals, stating their thanks to all officers for their hard work and dedication. Having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the closure of the Council offices at 2pm on 31 December 2025 be approved; and
- b) the closure of the Council offices on Friday 2 January 2026 be approved.

## **56 RESOURCING AND FUNDING CULTURE**

The Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager addressed Members regarding the options and recommendations for the ongoing delivery of the cultural strategy and programming in West Lindsey. It was explained that the report outlined the resource requirements to sustain and grow the cultural offer in the district, setting out the context of existing resources, established programming and the adopted West Lindsey Cultural Strategy. The cultural programme was explained, with headline costs and indicative engagement figures used to illustrate impact, and an example budget of a signature event to show how funds were used. It was recommended that the cultural strategy be fully resourced by the cultural reserve being annually topped up; the Cultural Development Manager role being retained, and an Events Officer being recruited to safeguard future delivery.

Members of the Committee, and the Visiting Member, expressed their ongoing support for the cultural events team, and admiration for what had been achieved in recent months and years. The continuation of existing events was considered fundamental to the cultural offering, forming the basis for additional events to grow and take root across the district.

In response to a question regarding the funding, it was clarified that the fund was to be maintained each year at £100k, which would require 'top-ups' of differing amounts, not that £100k was going to be added each year. Additionally, it was clarified that the fund was used for match-funding on grant applications, with events to be funded as far as possible through grants from organisations such as the Arts Council. The involvement of Gainsborough Town Council was also noted and appreciated.

Members once again highlighted the success of recent events and the additional benefits which arose, for example the boost to community inclusion and visitor economy. With clear support from the Committee, the printed recommendations were duly proposed and seconded. On taking the vote it was

### **RESOLVED that**

- a) an annual contribution to increase the balance on the Cultural Strategy Reserve to a maximum of £100k, commencing 2026/2027, be approved; and
- b) recruitment of an Events Officer to deliver cultural legacy events and the Lincolnshire Show be approved; and
- c) the Cultural Development Manager post be added permanently to the establishment.

## **57 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING QTR 2 25/26**

The Committee heard from the Financial Services Manager regarding the Quarter Two Budget & Treasury Monitoring report for 2025/26 as of the end of September. It was explained that in relation to revenue budgets, the forecast outturn position was a net contribution to reserves (or underspend) of £177,000, which was an increase of £158,000

from the forecast position reported at quarter one.

Members heard that the significant variances against expenditure budgets included salary underspends of £28,000, which included the impact of the pay award of 3.2% agreed in July; a corporate contingency budget of £51,000 which was no longer needed; an underspend against fuel of £45,000, which included an expectation of fuel prices increasing slightly over the remainder of the year. It was highlighted that these underspends were offset by a pressure of £32,000 on insurance premiums due to the impact of an increase in fleet numbers for food waste collections and changes in property values.

The significant variance against income budgets included net interest receivable forecast at £83,000 above budget; drainage board levy support grant of £59,000; and an increased income for big bin hire service, bulky waste collections and commercial waste of £42,000. This was offset by a Housing Benefit subsidy pressure which was currently forecast at £83,000, due to supported accommodation placements with unregistered landlords where full subsidy could not be claimed. Members heard that there was also a pressure of £20,000 against legal services following the signing of a new SLA with Lincolnshire County Council.

In relation to the capital programme, it was explained there was a reported net underspend of £2.361m against the revised budget. It was detailed that £1.889m was to be carried forward into next year. £1.4m of this related to the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme as the phasing of the grant to be received was to be spread across three years, from 2025/26 to 2027/28, with £440,000 payable in 2025/26. There was also a reported net underspend of £0.472m. This related to the balance on the Home Upgrade Phase 2 scheme which had been repaid to the Midland Net Zero Hub. Works were approved in large batches and funding was released on that basis, however, over the life of the scheme some measures were not installed and therefore the funding was returned.

A Member of the Committee put on record his thanks to the Financial Services Manager and her team, recognising their fabulous work especially given the framework and circumstances they worked within. In praising the team, he duly moved the recommendations as written within the report.

The Chairman echoed those sentiments and invited further comments from Members.

During the course of discussions, Members raised a number of queries and it was agreed that additional information be circulated. These were specifically seeking details as to why there was a significant underspend on the home upgrade grant, under which scheme were two properties acquired by the Council, and why had there been there a drop in the income generated from enforcement notices and why had it increased again.

With regard to the truck cartel claim contribution to reserves, it was queried whether this had been an unexpected windfall and whether there were other outstanding legacy cases which may come in. It was confirmed it was a windfall from a legacy legal case which had been in progress for a number of years and there had not been any real expectation on funds being received. It was confirmed there were no other outstanding cases, however Officers would inform Members should there be similar circumstances in the future.

With thanks again to all involved in the financial services work, and with congratulations to the Financial Services Manager on her recent promotion, the recommendations were duly

seconded and voted upon. It was

**RESOLVED** that

**REVENUE**

- a) the forecast out-turn position of a £0.177m net contribution to reserves as of 30 September 2025 (see Section 2) relating to revenue activity, be accepted; and
- b) the use of Earmarked Reserves approved by the Chief Finance Officer using Delegated powers (Section 2.4.1), be accepted; and
- c) the contribution to Earmarked Reserves - £0.074m (2.4.2) be approved.

**CAPITAL**

- d) the current projected Capital Outturn position of £13.732m (Section 3) be accepted; and
- e) the amendments to the Capital Schemes as detailed in 3.2 be approved.

**TREASURY**

- f) the report, the treasury activity and the prudential indicators (Section 4) be accepted.

**58 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26**

The Chairman welcomed the Corporate Finance Team Leader and congratulations on her appointment to the role and return to the council. Members then heard from the Corporate Finance Team Leader regarding the Mid-Year update for Treasury Management Indicators in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003. It was explained that the report provided updates on progress against the treasury management strategy which was approved by Council in March 2025 for 2025/26.

The report was required to comply with the CIPFA code of practise on treasury management and to keep Members updated with the current situation.

It was highlighted that the report had been written during a time where core inflation had slightly reduced, and Bank of England interest rates had reduced which had followed a period of both higher inflation and relatively high interest rates. The report contained commentary on the Council's treasury position and also included commentary on the economy by the Council's treasury advisors MUFG Corporate Markets. It was noted that since the report was written the UK base rate had held at 4%.

Members were advised that interest rates had been reducing with more reductions forecast in the medium term, however the Council was receiving additional investment income as shown in the quarterly monitoring reports. This was because of reduced capital expenditure and higher cash balances than forecast. With interest rates reducing and forecast to reduce

further, it made the decision to borrow difficult, as the Council did not want to find itself locked into a high rate loan when the base rate decreased. For this reason, where borrowing had been required for cashflow purposes, short term loans had been used.

Members were advised of the movements in the Council's prudential indicators which had changed as a result of a revised capital programme for 2025/26, as outlined in the quarter two budget monitoring report. The Corporate Finance Team Leader reported there had been no breaches of the Council's prudential indicators in the first half of the year.

Attention was directed to section three of the report, showing an economics update which had been supplied by the treasury advisors MUFG Corporate Markets, which was useful to understand the national and international context within which the Council was operating when undertaking its treasury activities. Additionally, appendix B provided the latest list of approved countries for investment as at 30 September, however, typically the Council only invested within the UK.

Members were asked to recommend the report and approval of the revised prudential indicators at sections 5.2, 6.1 and 6.2 to Full Council.

In response to a question regarding the likelihood of choosing to invest outside of the UK, it was explained that options were reviewed, however in taking a prudent approach and to manage cash flow, the preferred stance was to invest short-term and within the UK.

A Member of the Committee reiterated previously made comments regarding the achievements of the Finance Team, whilst also noting that the pending Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) could see the positive account balances being merged with other councils. This would potentially minimise the benefit to West Lindsey. He supported the sound financial decision making, however suggested that it may be wise to consider spending some funds ahead of LGR. The Chairman and Members of the Committee indicated their agreement with those concerns.

Having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

**RESOLVED** that it be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council to note the report, the treasury activity and recommend approval of the revised prudential indicators at sections 5.2, 6.1 and 6.2.

## **59 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 26/27**

The Committee heard from the Financial Services Manager who presented a report detailing the proposed fees and charges to be implemented from 1 April 2026, for services within this committee, as well as those recommended by the Prosperous Communities Committee. The budget implications reflected both the impact of proposed amendments to fees, and the forecast demand for each service.

It was explained that 41% of the charge lines were statutory and were published once released by the relevant body. The release of the statutory planning fees was awaited, and it was noted this had occurred in November the previous year. Therefore, they were based on the September CPI rate which was confirmed earlier this month as being unchanged from

August at 3.8%.

The remaining 59% of charge lines were non-statutory and were locally set by the Council. For each service provided, total cost recovery was aimed for where possible, however benchmarking data was taken into consideration, as was the budget managers' knowledge of the market and demand. Members were advised that the main cost driver for the majority of chargeable services was staff time, therefore the pay award increase of 3.2% was applied as the inflationary uplift for 2026/27 with a further 2.5% increase applied as an estimate each year from 2027/28 onwards.

In relation to non-statutory fees, 39% had seen no proposed change, it was highlighted this primarily related to markets and car parks. With regard to car parks, a revised car park strategy was imminent so no amendments to fees were proposed at this time. With regard to markets, trader numbers were being maintained and so it was not proposed to apply any increases at this stage. It was highlighted there was a proposed fee reduction for Tuesday fees for vans and trailers to encourage more traders of this type. There was no stall erection required for these traders therefore it was deemed appropriate to reduce the fees to be more in line with market stalls.

Members were advised that in relation to the garden waste charge, the Prosperous Communities Committee had considered three options for the 2026/27 subscription fee and recommended the fee of £48, which was a £2 or 4.3% increase on the current year, and represented cost recovery for the service.

It was also highlighted that 60% of non-statutory fees were proposed to increase, the majority of which were based on an increase of 3.2% rounded to the nearest £ or 50p. The total impact of the fees and charges review on the MTFP for 2026/27 was an increase in income of £81,500, rising to £126,400 in 2030/31. Members were asked to recommend the proposed fees to Council for approval, and for inclusion within the 2026/2027 revenue budget.

Additionally, Members were being asked to consider the request for one day's free car parking to support Christmas events in Gainsborough and Market Rasen. It was explained that in 2022, Members had approved a day's free car parking for three years from 2023 to 2025, with the actual dates each year being signed off by Delegation to the Chief Executive. The delegation had now expired, therefore Members were asked to approve free parking for 2025 and the dates provided, and also for the following three years, again delegating authority to the Chief Executive to sign off the date each year.

Members of the Committee expressed their support for the approach taken, and were content budgets were managed efficiently. The wait for the settlement figures from Government was acknowledged, and the hope expressed that it would be issued in a timely manner.

A Member of the Committee noted the difficulty with interpreting the detailed level of information provided, and in knowing whether there could be some manoeuvrability or not. The colour coding of the statutory versus non-statutory fees was welcomed, however it was enquired as to whether Member consideration of the proposals could occur earlier in the process.



With regard to costs around the Trinity Arts Centre, it was requested that the impact on the local community was taken into consideration when setting the fees and charges. The example was provided of community groups in other areas having to re-locate or cease operating as they had been unable to afford the steadily increasing costs of, such as, venue hire. It was noted that many groups who used the Trinity Arts Centre were small, local groups, who would not be able to absorb frequent price increases. It was acknowledged that those concerns were taken into account when reviewing the proposed fees and charges.

During the course of debate, Members indicated a wish to discuss the contents of the exempt appendices. The Chairman sought agreement that there were no further comments relating to the public paper, and, having been moved, seconded and voted upon it was

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**Note:** The meeting entered into closed session at 7.42pm

Members of the Committee raised specific questions regarding the fees relating to Building Control and Commercial Waste Services. With additional information required from the service managers in order to proceed, it was suggested by the Monitoring Officer that those two fees could be removed and returned to the Committee at the next meeting, once the additional information had been made available.

In response to further concerns raised regarding Member involvement in the fees and charges review process, the Chief Executive, in acknowledging the robustness of the process, noted that Members could choose to include an additional recommendation regarding a review of the process and presentation of the proposed fees and charges paper, to enhance Member involvement and understanding.

**Note:** The meeting returned to open session at 8.06pm

The Chairman thanked all Members for their comments, and, based on previous discussions, a Member of the Committee proposed that the proposed fees and charges in relation to Building Control and Commercial / Trade Waste services be deferred for the next meeting of the Committee. It was also proposed that a recommendation be added to address the concerns raised regarding Member involvement in the fees and charges process.

With these two amendments proposed, seconded, and clear support indicated by the Committee, the recommendations, as amended, were duly proposed, seconded and voted upon. It was therefore

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Members recommend to Council for approval and inclusion within the 2025/2026 Revenue Budget the proposed Fees and Charges at Appendix A, as well as those recommended by Prosperous Communities Committee detailed at Appendices B and C\* (\*commercially sensitive), with the

exception of Building Control and Commercial / Trade Waste services; and

- b) the recommendation from the Prosperous Communities Committee be accepted and free car parking be approved for Friday 14 November 2025 (Gainsborough) and Saturday 6 December 2025 (Market Rasen) when Winter Events were to be held (Section 5.2); and
- c) the recommendation from the Prosperous Communities Committee be accepted and the request for one day of free parking be approved in Gainsborough and Market Rasen when Winter Events are to be held, for the years 2026, 2027 and 2028, and Delegated Authority be granted to the Chief Executive to determine and vary the date on which free parking is held each year up until 2028, in consultation with Event Organisers and the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee (Section 5.2); and
- d) Officers be tasked to progress work to review the presentation of the fees and charges and to include Member Development options to ease the budget setting process.

## **60 MARKET STREET RENEWAL LTD - GOVERNANCE CHANGES**

Members were requested to approve the change of Company Secretary for Market Street Renewal Ltd, on the basis of recent staff changes within the council.

Members indicated their understanding and agreement, and, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

**RESOLVED** that Mrs Sue Leversedge be appointed Company Secretary for Market Street Renewal Ltd.

## **61 SURESTAFF/WLDC STAFFING SERVICES - GOVERNANCE CHANGES**

Members were requested to approve the change of Company Secretary for Surestaff, WLDC Staffing Services and West Lindsey Trading Ltd, on the basis of recent staff changes within the council.

Members indicated their understanding and agreement, and, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

**RESOLVED** that Mrs Sue Leversedge be appointed Company Secretary for Surestaff, WLDC Staffing Services and West Lindsey Trading Ltd.

## **62 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

With no comments or questions, the Committee Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

### **63 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**Note:** The meeting entered into closed session at 8.12pm

### **64 EXEMPT APPENDICES: PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2026/2027 - RELATING TO PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE SCHEDULES, CCTV, BUILDING CONTROL AND TRADE WASTE**

Members considered the exempt appendices in closed session, details of which can be found under minute item 59: Proposed Fees and Charges 2026/27.

### **65 TRINITY ARTS NORTHERN BOUNDARY WALL - UPDATE & OPTIONS**

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Senior Building and Projects Officer, detailing the condition of the northern boundary wall at the Trinity Arts Centre, and options under consideration for repair. Members were already familiar with many of the details of the report as the matter had previously been considered by the Committee.

The Senior Building and Projects Officer advised Members of updated circumstances, including independent legal advice which had been received, and explained the process which would be followed subject to a decision being made by the Committee. Members of the Committee reiterated concerns regarding the nature of the listed building, the ongoing maintenance, and the responsibility of the Council to balance legal requirements and the use of public monies.

In response to queries regarding the regularity of routine inspections, and whether there may be other works required to other buildings, it was explained that routine condition surveys were undertaken on a five year basis and formed the work plan for the subsequent five years.

The Committee received advice from the Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive regarding decisions required from the Committee. Members expressed clear and differing views on how to approach the works required. Having had a proposer and seconder for the recommendations, specifically, option (a) within the report, and in recognising there were no further or additional comments to be made by the Committee, the Chairman took the vote. On achieving an equal split vote, the Chairman's casting vote was used and it was therefore

**RESOLVED** that

- a) the findings of the legal advice (as detailed in the legal implications and the attached appendices) be noted; and
- b) the drawdown of the specified amount within Option 1 in the report, from

the Maintenance of Facilities Reserve, to make safe the northern boundary wall at the Trinity Arts Centre following full re-submission and successful granting of Planning and Listed Building Consent, which included future maintenance works that would be due to the wall over the next 3-5 years, be approved; and

- c) final funding approval following procurement exercise be delegated to the Director of Finance and Assets (S151 Officer) in consultation with the chair of the Corporate Policy & Resources committee; and
- d) the amendment to the capital programme 2026/2027, to increase the Capital Enhancements to Council Properties scheme by the approved amount, be approved.

The meeting concluded at 8.55 pm.

Chairman