

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 29 January 2026 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Roger Patterson (Chairman)
Councillor Lynda Mullally (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Maureen Palmer
Councillor Karen Carless

In Attendance:

Paul Burkinshaw	Chief Executive
Nova Roberts	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Grant White	Communities Manager
Andy Gray	Housing & Environmental Enforcement Manager
Ellen King	Policy and Strategy Officer
Molly Spencer	Democratic & Civic Officer
Kimberley Pickett	Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (External)
Emma Wilkinson	Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (External)

Apologies:

Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Roger Pilgrim
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee

Membership:

Councillor Karen Carless was appointed substitute for Councillor Mandy Snee
Councillor Frazer Brown was appointed substitute for Councillor Peter Morris

32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

With no comments or questions, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 18 November 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

33 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

34 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Democratic and Civic Officer informed Members that the Matters Arising related to Emergency Plans was completed and passed to the Performance and Programme Manager who informed Members of the Committee that, following the Committee's discussion in October 2025, attempts had been made to meet Members before Christmas to convene the Working Group. Due to limited availability, a suitable date had not been identified, and the Working Group had therefore not been established.

Members were informed that the work originally intended for the Working Group had since been incorporated into the development of the thematic business plans.

To ensure Member involvement, the proposed performance measure set had been circulated to all Councillors following the October 2025 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, providing an opportunity for Members to submit comments and contribute to the review. Therefore, the Matter Arising had been marked as completed.

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

35 PRESENTATION ITEM: LINCOLNSHIRE RESILIENCE FORUM

The Housing and Environmental Enforcement Manager introduced Kimberley from Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, noting that she would present the community resilience work undertaken through the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum. It was explained that significant progress had been made over the past year to strengthen emergency planning, with trained Officers now in place and recent incidents managed effectively through partnership working. The presentation outlined how communities had been developing their own local resilience plans.

It was explained to Members of the Committee that the LRF's aim was to raise public awareness of flood and non-flood related emergencies in the county and provide a foundation to build stronger, more resilient communities able to proactively plan for responding to and recovering from incidents whilst maintaining the welfare of their residents.

The LRF was explained as bringing together emergency services, local authorities, health providers, the Environment Agency, voluntary groups, and other key organisations.

Community Emergency Response Teams were explained as a group of tactically trained local volunteers who were ready to act and support their community by preparing for responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Examples were provided of local emergencies and how the community response teams had reacted with community resilience.

A Member of the Committee raised an issue regarding a recent incident in which a cordon had been put in place and homes had been evacuated. It was noted that, although the

community had an emergency plan and key holders were able to open facilities quickly, initial contact had been made with the parish clerk rather than the relevant emergency planning personnel. This had created some difficulty, and the Member highlighted the need for clearer initial communication during such events. A further example was given of a later incident in Market Rasen, where contact had again been made in the Member's capacity as a County Councillor rather than through the community emergency response arrangements.

In response, Kimberley clarified that the example referenced had been intended to illustrate the value of community resilience rather than to suggest that a formal community emergency response team had been deployed. It was confirmed that lessons had been identified through the debrief process and that improvements were being implemented. Work was ongoing to support communities in recruiting and empowering volunteers and in promoting awareness of local emergency response arrangements.

The outlined the aim of establishing a consistent baseline of community resilience across parishes was explained to Members of the Committee. Communities were being supported to develop plans, form a core group of volunteers, and put basic structures in place, with the intention that stronger Community Emergency Response Teams could then be built over time.

It was explained that the focus was on helping communities plan for, respond to, and recover more quickly from emergencies. Support was offered throughout the process, with Kimberley acting as the Community Resilience Officer for Lincolnshire. Assistance included help with drafting plans and ongoing guidance as teams developed.

Members were advised that each parish area was provided with a Community Emergency Response starter kit containing basic equipment to aid communication and initial response. The kit was intended for a team of ten volunteers, with communities able to expand their equipment as they wished.

Once plans had been completed and agreed, teams were given contact details for the duty emergency planning officers, who were available at all times. It was confirmed that, where volunteers were acting under the direction of the emergency planning team and had completed the required documentation, their activities would be covered by the County Council's indemnity insurance.

Different alert statuses were explained, Kimberley demonstrated the online mapping tool that allowed community groups to search their parish and check the status of any Community Emergency Response Team. It was explained that the system indicated whether a team was established, in development, or not yet formed, and provided the emergency planning contact email for further enquiries. Communities were encouraged to explore the tool and to contact the service if they wished to begin the process.

Members were informed that promotional materials, including a new leaflet covering fire safety, community resilience, and flexible volunteering options, had been produced to support engagement at public events. Kimberley also referred to the "Ready for Anything" volunteer scheme, which allowed individuals to opt in for occasional support without the

commitments of joining a formal response team.

It was reported that a community resilience conference would take place on 7 October 2026 at the Petwood Hotel, open both to existing volunteers and those seeking further information. The event aimed to share good practice from across Lincolnshire. Kimberley emphasised the importance of ongoing training and engagement to ensure that community plans remained active rather than becoming static documents.

The Chairman thanked Kimberley for her presentation and opened the floor to Members.

Members thanked Kimberley for the presentation and noted that community resilience work was developing at different paces across Parishes, with some Councils concerned about taking on additional responsibilities. Interest was expressed in the emergency response starter kit as a way to promote the scheme at local events.

Kimberley confirmed that Community Emergency Response Teams were community-led rather than Parish-Council-led, with broader community involvement essential to avoid over reliance on the same volunteers. Parish Councils served mainly as a contact point, while responsibility for maintaining plans rested with the community teams.

Members raised ongoing flooding issues in Sturton by Stow, highlighting the significant impact on affected residents. Kimberley acknowledged the stresses associated with flooding and signposted Members to resources on the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum website, including the “Blue Pages” directory and “Flood Mary”, a social media account which shared low-cost mitigation ideas based on personal experience. Kimberley encouraged signposting residents to these resources for further practical advice.

The Chairman referred to recent incidents in Ingham and praised the strong community response. He emphasised the importance of helping residents maintain daily routines during emergencies and suggested wider promotion of resilience information to parishes and local service providers.

A Member noted that parish engagement with emergency planning had historically been inconsistent and suggested that additional support from councillors could assist. He emphasised that resilience planning covered a wide range of incidents beyond flooding and highlighted the importance of coordinated local groups during the early stages of an emergency.

In response, Kimberley welcomed Members’ support and explained that she used interactive sessions with communities to help them identify key elements of their plan. She noted that she was the sole Community Resilience Officer for Lincolnshire, making Councillor advocacy particularly valuable. Officers added that District Council staff regularly promoted resilience planning during parish engagement and would provide further materials to assist councillors in encouraging take-up.

In bringing discussions to a close, the Chairman thanked Kimberley and Emma for a thorough and informative presentation, and thanked Members for their engaging discussion.

Following the presentation, the Chairman sought nominations to elect a Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

Having been proposed, seconded and voted upon it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Mullally be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the meeting.

36 WLDC CORPORATE PLAN 'OUR WEST LINDSEY, OUR FUTURE' 2026-2030

The Chief Executive introduced the draft Corporate Plan, the supporting thematic business plans, and the new internal governance arrangements, explaining that Members were invited to offer comment on the presented documents.

He outlined the context for the review, noting recommendations from the Local Government Association's corporate peer challenge, recent organisational and political leadership changes, and wider uncertainty linked to local government reorganisation. Regular review of the Corporate Plan was highlighted as essential to maintaining a clear strategic direction.

Members of the Committee were informed that the Corporate Plan focused on three core areas: delivering good quality local services, ensuring the Council operated as a well-managed and trusted authority, and enhancing places and outcomes for residents and businesses. These were reflected in an overarching vision and the refreshed themes of thriving people, thriving place, and thriving Council. Updated organisational values and behaviours, aligned with the new workforce plan, were incorporated into the document.

The Chief Executive explained that the previous Executive Business Plan had been replaced with thematic business plans to give clearer alignment to the Corporate Plan. These plans would be considered by the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 12 February 2026 before submission to Full Council on 2 March 2026, alongside the budget.

He reported that internal governance arrangements had been streamlined in response to the peer challenge, with three strategic delivery panels established to coordinate delivery of the plan. Performance against the thematic business plans would be reported quarterly to Policy Committees, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee able to examine issues in more detail. Work was ongoing to introduce Member representation on the delivery panels to provide political oversight.

Committee Members were advised that the thematic plans continued to be refined and that updated versions would be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, reflecting comments raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A Member of the Committee raised comments regarding the proposed governance boards, noting that previous arrangements had sometimes resulted in duplication between Member and Officer groups. The Member welcomed the introduction of a lead Member role within

each panel, suggesting that this could improve coordination and reduce unnecessary meetings. It was further proposed that lead Members might report annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enhance wider Member involvement in scrutiny. The Member also queried the method for appointing lead Members and suggested that broader political representation could strengthen accountability.

The Chairman highlighted the positive working relationships between Councillors and Officers and emphasised the value of collaborative working across the organisation. He referred to the need for effective scrutiny alongside constructive engagement. The Chairman also raised concerns relating to the future of local government reorganisation and the potential implications for local planning control, noting the importance of maintaining an up-to-date local plan to safeguard the district's interests. He expressed support for the Corporate Plan as a forward-looking document already demonstrating evidence of delivery.

A Member of the Committee commented on the clarity and presentation of the draft Corporate Plan and asked whether District Councillors could be included within the section relating to collaborative working with Parish and Town Councils, noting their role as connectors within communities.

The Chief Executive welcomed the positive feedback and confirmed that strengthening relationships with Parish and Town Councils was an important area of work, particularly in the context of potential local government reorganisation. He noted that further development of those structures was planned and agreed that District Councillors played a key part in local engagement.

The Chief Executive also responded to earlier points raised during the debate, highlighting that quarterly performance reporting against the thematic business plans would ensure regular Member oversight. Work was ongoing to determine how lead Member roles would align with the new governance arrangements once the Corporate Plan and budget had been approved. He emphasised the importance of continued collaboration between Members and Officers and outlined the move towards more agile internal structures, replacing multiple previous boards with three strategic delivery panels supplemented by task-specific groups as required.

It was noted that the Corporate Plan covered the period 2026–2030 but that delivery would need to be considered in the context of potential local government reorganisation. Committee Members were assured that priorities and deliverables were being reviewed with this in mind.

With no further comments or questions, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) Members had reviewed and commented on the draft Corporate Plan 'Our West Lindsey, Our Future', which covered the period 2026 – 2030 as set out in Appendix 1.

- b) Members had reviewed and commented on the three draft Thematic Business Plans covering the Corporate Plan themes of 'Thriving People' (Appendix 2), 'Thriving Places' (Appendix 3) and 'Thriving Council' (Appendix 4)
- c) Members had noted the new governance arrangements as outlined in para. 5 of the report which ensured effective and efficient delivery of the council's priorities.

37 SCRUTINY OF PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER TWO (2025/26)

The Performance and Programme Manager introduced the item, explaining that Members were asked to scrutinise the minutes relating to the Quarter 2 Progress and Delivery Report. It was noted that the report had been considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee on 2 December 2025 and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 11 December 2025, and that the corresponding minutes were attached for review. Committee Members were asked to consider the responses provided by both Committees and to confirm that appropriate challenge had been applied to the performance information.

A Member of the Committee confirmed that the minutes from the two Policy Committees appeared clear and demonstrated appropriate challenge. It was noted that some Key Performance Indicators were now less relevant and might need review, but overall, the scrutiny undertaken by the Committees was considered satisfactory.

Another Member raised questions regarding fly-tipping data, asking whether quarterly information could be broken down into rural and urban areas, as this would support engagement with Parish Councils. The Member also asked whether more regular updates could be shared with District Councillors so they could better report outcomes to local communities.

In response, the officer confirmed that all reports were recorded on the system and that he would speak with operational staff to determine whether the requested data could be provided and circulated.

The Chairman commented that both Committees had applied strong challenge and that the report demonstrated continued improvement and high performance across services. He acknowledged the contribution of Officers and welcomed the reduction in fly-tipping, encouraging continued reporting by residents.

A further Member noted the availability of the Council's reporting app, which included mapping functions. It was suggested that more regular access to such data, potentially in the form of routine updates, would be beneficial.

The Lead Officer advised that, where Members required specific information in preparation for Parish or other local meetings, Officers were able to provide tailored data covering both collection and enforcement activity. Members were invited to request information as needed.

A Member of the Committee welcomed this support and expressed appreciation for the work

undertaken by the enforcement team within her wards, noting the positive impact being achieved.

With no further comments or questions, it was

RESOLVED that the Committee had examined the responses given to the report by the Prosperous Communities and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committees and had assured themselves that the appropriate level of challenge had been made by those Committees to the information contained in the report.

38 FORWARD PLAN

With no comments or questions the Forward Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

39 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Democratic and Civic Officer informed the Members of the Committee that the Acting Chief Superintendent had been invited to attend the February 2026 meeting. A response had been received confirming that the matter would be discussed at his forthcoming meeting with the Chief Executive, the Leader, and the Deputy Leader on 11 February 2026.

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

The meeting concluded at 7.55 pm.

Chairman